re:Design

The annual magazine for alumni and friends of the
Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering
University of Washington
Summer 2010
What is HCDE?

This past year has been a rewarding year of growth in a time when the State of Washington is severely cutting budgets. But HCDE faculty, staff, and students are resourceful and as the stories in this issue of re:Design show, they are prospering in their research, their academics, and their sheer numbers.

Last year the department took a permanent cut of $160,000 in its state budget and this year we are expecting another cut. These cuts have been difficult to absorb, but our fiscal, curriculum, and faculty teams have been very proactive and creative. Our programs are growing. Next autumn our BS program will have 13 percent more students, our MS program 6 percent more, and our PhD program 63 percent more.

This year brought lots of new activities to the department. The new HCDE student association is inaugurating Sieg Hall with its first HCDE mural (pg. 5). Our faculty, students, and alumni starred in their first HCDE videos (see hcde.washington.edu). Professors Kientz and Lee received NSF Career awards (pg. 22). Faculty and students investigated such things as the MakerBot (pg. 14), the Qbox (pg. 20), and the Kindle (pg. 18). We launched the beginnings of a new program in Global Technology and Communication (pg. 13).

I have confidence in the HCDE team to negotiate difficult choices and am proud that our community has thrived so well! I started the Spyridakis Leadership fund and many of you chipped in. Your donations to all of our funds have made a great difference in our ability to grow during tough times (see hcde.washington.edu/give). Your teamwork with our faculty, staff, and students is greatly appreciated and very much needed. Please let me know if you have questions or comments—I can be reached at jansp@uw.edu.
What is HCDE?

One year after its name change and Sieg Hall housewarming, the HCDE department is booming.

In addition to a significant increase in applications to the department, there has been a dramatic shift over the last year in the type of students coming to Human Centered Design & Engineering. “Historically, the department has attracted students from a variety of academic backgrounds,” said Gian Bruno, Director of Student Services. “Most, however, would enter the program with an interest in technology, but little in the way of technical skills.”

“This 2010 incoming class is as interdisciplinary as any other, but what is striking is the level of technical knowledge these new students bring with them,” said Bruno.

When HCDE changed its name from Technical Communication, the department created three degree options at the undergraduate level: Human-Computer Interaction, Technical Communication, and an individualized course of study. While the department continues to see students interested in traditional TC concepts, there has been a flood of interest in technology and design. “Students see the word ‘design’ in our department name, and they’re intrigued. Once they learn more about our degree options, and how our department blends design with technology, they are enthusiastic,” said Stephanie White, Undergraduate Academic Adviser.

This year, undergraduate applications to HCDE doubled. The department attributes much of this growth to its new name and the formalized curriculum in HCI. “The students attracted to the HCI option quite often come to us with a solid background in technology. What they really like about the program is our emphasis on technology plus design. People didn’t know we did this sort of research when we were Technical Communication. Our new name has really helped these students find us,” said Bruno.

In addition to the changing faces of HCDE’s student population, the department has added five new faculty members—with backgrounds that range from computer science to psychology—and has secured twice the dollar amount of grants compared to the previous year.

“Once students learn more about our degree options and how our department blends design with technology, they are enthusiastic.”

“Technical Communication’ NSF scratches its head a little bit,” Spyridakis said. “Not so much with the new department name. What we are is clearer to them. This visibility also helps us involve more students in research.”

With new funds coming in, the department has engaged its students in a variety of types of new research such as projects improving electronic medical records, examining human-robot communication, and improving the mobile user experience.

Others also noticed the change in people’s reaction to the new name. “Explaining human centered design at a conference or even at a social gathering is exciting,” said Associate Professor Mark Zachry. “In the past, when you told someone you were from the Department of Technical Communication, they would smile faintly and move on. It was always a real conversation stopper.”

Hard economic times did not spare HCDE however. The department encouraged everyone to switch to electronic course materials. It also eliminated auxiliary activities, such as sponsoring an engineering writing center, and added two more students to each class.

“Once students learn more about our degree options and how our department blends design with technology, they are enthusiastic.”

“Technical Communication’ NSF scratches its head a little bit,” Spyridakis said. “Not so much with the new department name. What we are is clearer to them. This visibility also helps us involve more students in research.”

With new funds coming in, the department has engaged its students in a variety of types of new research such as projects improving electronic medical records, examining human-robot communication, and improving the mobile user experience.

Others also noticed the change in people’s reaction to the new name. “Explaining human centered design at a conference or even at a social gathering is exciting,” said Associate Professor Mark Zachry. “In the past, when you told someone you were from the Department of Technical Communication, they would smile faintly and move on. It was always a real conversation stopper.”

Hard economic times did not spare HCDE however. The department encouraged everyone to switch to electronic course materials. It also eliminated auxiliary activities, such as sponsoring an engineering writing center, and added two more students to each class.
HCDE Celebrates Changes
An Overview of HCDE and Its Growth

By Deidre Girard

The Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering (HCDE) at the University of Washington has come a long way in the last year. From moving to a new location on campus, to adopting a new name that better reflects our pioneering research in the field of technical communication, HCDE has a lot to celebrate.

While the department has always centered on optimizing products for the end-user, the name ‘Technical Communication’ did not give outsiders a clear understanding of the diversity of topics studied within the discipline. According to Jan Spyridakis, Professor and Chair of HCDE, “the idea of the traditional technical manual expanded and changed over the last few decades because of the proliferation of the internet. The Department of Technical Communication became more interdisciplinary to keep pace, adding faculty from other areas of research to holistically analyze the idea of the user and usability.” Today, faculty in HCDE come from a variety of backgrounds, such as psychology, information studies, linguistics, literature, industrial engineering, and computer science. They study anything from robotics, to mobile technology, to design for underserved communities, but they all share a passion for how information and technology can best suit human needs.

To encompass the diversity of research in the department, a name change was proposed in 2008. A task force of faculty, students, alumni, and industry representatives met to determine what needed to be included in the new name in order to describe all that we do. The resulting name “Human Centered Design & Engineering,” said Professor Judy Ramey, “successfully brings together technical communication’s classic interest in audience analysis and rhetoric with contemporary engineering concepts.”

Not only does the name change better reflect what we do, it has also greatly increased the interest in joining our department. According to Gian Bruno, Director of Student Services, there has been an overall 80 percent increase in applications to the department at all levels—undergraduate, graduate and doctoral—since the name change. “At the undergraduate level, I have had many students say that they would not have considered ‘Technical Communication’ because they thought it was solely focused on technical writing. In our last round of applications, many students chose us over other engineering majors.” The greatest increase was seen at the graduate level, where applications increased by 400 percent over the last two years for the day Master’s program. “Many prospective [graduate] students have said they were really interested in our curriculum, but like the undergraduates, were put off by our old name,” Bruno added.

The Human Centered Design & Engineering department offers four degrees: a Bachelor of Science (BS), two Master of Science (MS) degrees—one during the day and the other an evening program—and a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD). Currently, there are 48 students in the BS degree, 38 students in the day MS, 48 students in the evening MS, and 16 PhD students.

In a recent departmental video created to explore the new name and what it means, PhD student Emma Rose says that, to her, HCDE means “innovative solutions to real world problems.” Undergraduate student Kevin Louie says that HCDE is “taking the user into account, and designing systems and interfaces that accommodate their needs.” And PhD student Rebecca Walton sums it up by saying that, “HCDE is all about people.”

With enthusiastic faculty and students, and a new name that accurately reflects the cutting edge research happening here, HCDE at UW is well positioned to be a leader in this emerging field. In fact, in reviewing the programs at our peer institutions, HCDE at UW is the only one that fully integrates user research, communication, design, and human-computer interaction (HCI). In this respect we are unique, and have the opportunity to be at the forefront of the discipline on an international scale well into the future.

Professor Ramey never thought of the term ‘technical communication’ as just writing, but thinks that HCDE is a better term because it “doesn’t diminish the sense of the user.” She went on to say that the name ‘HCDE’ gives us more visibility in the academic community and the freedom to expand the field in many directions. Ramey is currently conducting research on activity-based computing, and is also creating videos to illustrate best practices in user-experience design. This summer, HCDE faculty will convene to discuss the future of the department and new research directions to explore. Chair Spyridakis believes that in ten years the program will be even more interdisciplinary, with more HCI faculty and a stronger integration of both the rhetorical and engineering aspects of the discipline.

Sieg Hall. Photo by Mike Watt
What is HCDE?

Last fall, a small group of undergraduate and graduate students formed the HCDE Student Association (HCDESA). The idea for HCDESA came from Department Chair Jan Spyridakis and Graduate Advisor Gian Bruno, who wanted to see more student involvement in the department. The mission of HCDESA is to foster the HCDE community by hosting events and activities that provide social and academic opportunities to students.

HCDESA member and undergraduate student John Porter sees HCDESA as an opportunity to unify the HCDE community. “We come from diverse backgrounds, bring to the table unique skill sets, and represent a vast array of perspectives. Our community is very young though and still finding its identity. That’s where I think HCDESA comes into play by, among other things, placing an emphasis on the social aspect of the community [and] enabling us to get to know each other better.”

Many of HCDESA’s early endeavors have been social events, such as contributing to the HCDE holiday party and the College of Engineering Discovery Days. HCDESA members also liaise with other student groups on campus such as Usability Professionals Association and Society for Technical Communication and use the HCDE blog to promote events and activities of interest to HCDE students.

Perhaps the most tangible project to date is the design competition for a mural in Sieg Hall. HCDESA member Alena Benson brought the idea to HCDESA last winter, and a subsequent survey confirmed community-wide support. Porter said, “By replacing the old CS timeline, we’re taking ownership of our building and asking the community to make a singular visual statement about what the HCDE community is.”

Currently, HCDESA members are building a website, organizing an informal mentorship network, and investigating opportunities for HCDE students to acquire technical skills.

“I’m in HCDESA because it allows me to be a part of the program at a deeper level than I would otherwise be as a student,” says Paul Riggins, HCDESA member and evening Masters student. “I get to help shape the department and its programs, and know that I’m making a difference.”

HCDESA is always open to new members and new ideas. Email HCDESA at hcdesa@uw.edu.

By Kate MacCorkle

HCDE Student Association

Promoting Social and Professional Programs

From left to right: Judith Yaaqoubi, Kevin Louie, Alena Benson, John Porter, Kate MacCorkle (Student Chair), Darivahn Vlachos. Not Pictured: Alexis Hope, Paul Riggins. Photo by Matthew Stonebraker
New Opportunities Lead to Staff Changes in HCDE

By Alena Benson

Goodbye to Maggie and Jeff

HCDE experienced several staff changes during 2010, including two goodbyes. Longtime administrator for the department, Jeff Babauta departed HCDE in February to become the director of finances at UW’s Office of Research.

For Babauta, it wasn’t easy to leave HCDE. “It’s really difficult to wrap things up after, what was it...eleven plus years of work?” said Babauta. “I love everybody here.” Babauta now works to support research activities across the University in the Office of Research. Babauta started at HCDE as a student assistant before becoming a fiscal analyst, and later transitioned to administrator. “As the department started growing, I kind of grew with it.” Babauta contributed to much of the department’s growth during his tenure here.

Maggie Bardacke, former HCDE program coordinator, is now working in the Department of Global Health as a computer support specialist.

Bardacke worked in HCDE for two and a half years. “I enjoyed coordinating study abroad programs,” she recalled, “Both helping our students get to the Netherlands and also facilitating the Dutch students coming here.” In addition, Bardacke was responsible for coordinating large events such as graduation and crafting faculty teaching schedules.

Now Bardacke provides technical support to the UW Department of Global Health. “GH 521...is facilitating distance learning classes for both UW students and practitioners in seven African countries,” said Bardacke. “This is a challenging initiative but well worth it.”

Administrator: DJ Miller

In February, DJ Miller became HCDE’s departmental administrator. Miller has over 14 years of experience working in UW administrative and advising positions. He described his new role of HCDE administrator as a way to address challenges new to him and the department. “It was a good opportunity for me to challenge myself in a new direction...to think about how we build a solid revenue base for our department here at HCDE and secure everything we want to do and have sustainability.”

Grants Coordinator: Patty Foster

As part of the initiative to promote the PhD and research programs, Patty Foster was added to the HCDE staff as grant coordinator under a half-time appointment. “I help the faculty so they can concentrate on the part that is important to them and not have to worry about the administrative issues,” said Foster. As a grant coordinator, Foster acts as a liaison between sponsors, the university and the faculty. She ensures that grants are submitted correctly and on time, proofs proposal budgets, and helps administer grants that are won.

Undergraduate Advisor: Stephanie White

Stephanie White accepted a half-time appointment as undergraduate adviser, so Gian Bruno, Director of Student Services can focus on graduate student advising. White also sees her job as “building up the undergraduate program as much as possible. Getting our name out there, getting the students excited and involved as much as possible.” White’s previous experience involved teaching at the high school level and being the program coordinator for freshmen at the UW Bothell campus.

In Memory of Carolynda Valerio-Lucas

By Kate Long

HCDE said goodbye to dear friend and department secretary Carolynda Valerio-Lucas in February 2010. Carolynda passed away after a long battle with cancer and leaves her beautiful daughter, Simoune, who will be a junior at UW next year and is on a pre-med track.

HCDE will long remember the contribution Carolynda made to our community. Carolynda was a mom—literally and figuratively—and enjoyed playing that roll at every chance. She brought food enough for all to share; she tracked and organized birthday celebrations; and she listened more than spoke or gave advice. Carolynda was an amazing woman who taught many of us how to appreciate what we find important in life.

Carolynda’s smiling face and dedication to our department is sorely missed.

Former HCDE staff Jeff Babauta and Maggie Bardacke. Photo by Kate Long

Grants Coordinator: Patty Foster

New HCDE staff Stephanie White, Patty Foster, and DJ Miller. Photo by Nathan Bilbao

In Memory of Carolynda Valerio-Lucas

By Kate Long

HCDE said goodbye to dear friend and department secretary Carolynda Valerio-Lucas in February 2010. Carolynda passed away after a long battle with cancer and leaves her beautiful daughter, Simoune, who will be a junior at UW next year and is on a pre-med track.

HCDE will long remember the contribution Carolynda made to our community. Carolynda was a mom—literally and figuratively—and enjoyed playing that roll at every chance. She brought food enough for all to share; she tracked and organized birthday celebrations; and she listened more than spoke or gave advice. Carolynda was an amazing woman who taught many of us how to appreciate what we find important in life.

Carolynda’s smiling face and dedication to our department is sorely missed.
Award-winning Computer Scientist
Cecilia Aragon Joins HCDE Faculty

By Jonathan Morgan

Dr. Cecilia Aragon joins HCDE as the first faculty hire supported by the UW eScience Institute. Although Aragon was already collaborating with HCDE Professors Charlotte Lee and Mark Zachry, she came to the attention of the HCDE department and the eScience director, Ed Lazowska, when she attended the 2009 On-Ramps into Academia workshop, run by Associate Dean Eve Riskin.

Department Chair Jan Spyridakis stated that Aragon’s research and teaching will benefit “not only HCDE, but also the larger UW community.” She noted that Aragon will be able to provide engaging courses and research opportunities tailored to the needs of HCDE students.

Aragon’s career began as a software developer in industry, and includes nine years at NASA Ames Research Center. After earning a PhD in computer science from UC Berkeley, Aragon worked on projects geared towards visualization and collaborative exploration of large-scale scientific datasets at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory.

Aragon’s current research interests include understanding how new collaborative technologies and social media are shaping scientific practice, and developing visualization techniques and communication tools to assist large scale, distributed scientific endeavors.

Aragon has received numerous awards, most notably the 2008 Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE) award, the highest honor that the US government bestows on young scientists and engineers. She was one of Hispanic Business Magazine’s “Top 25 Women of 2009.”

Aragon is also a professional aero-batic pilot and a certified flight instructor. She holds the record for shortest time between first solo flight and membership on the United States Aerobatic Team, and has won bronze-medals in aerobatic championships.

And as the pioneer of “unusual attitude recovery training,” a technique for teaching students how to recover from emergency situations in flight, Aragon will be a valuable mentor to HCDE students who hope to fly high themselves one day.

Professor Tom Williams Retires
Still Admired and Remembered

By Alena Benson

Professor Tom Williams retired in December 2009. Williams started at UW as the Director of Publications and Information Services for the College of Engineering in 1976. The department hired him as a lecturer in 1977 and in 1988 he joined the tenure track faculty. During his time in the department, Williams developed HCDE 411, 412, 415, and 511. He also co-developed HCDE 502.

“If you know Tom at all, you would comment on his dry sense of humor,” said Julie Carpenter, who took classes and taught with Williams. “As his TA, sometimes I had to choke back laughter when he would deadpan subtle… tongue in cheek side-comments mixed in with his expert lectures.”

“It was funny, because he was such a perfectionist, but he was also a goofball!” Professor Judy Ramey recalled. “But he was a real craftsman and was very exact about his work.”

“His humor always made for a good laugh,” notes Professor Jan Spyridakis, specifically recalling Williams’ tenure as President of the Puget Sound Chapter of the Society for Technical Communication—his shenanigans at meetings and his jovial articles in the newsletter always created quite the buzz.

Williams’ professional interests began with document design and production editing and then turned to visual perception. Tom procured the first eye-tracking equipment for the Laboratory for Usability Testing and Evaluation (LUTE). A former student, Sandy Bartell, said, “What fascinated me most about Tom’s teaching was the way he blended the principles of graphic design… with the neurological and cognitive mechanisms that make some designs work and others fail.” Tom will be missed around the department but we hear that he is working at putting his knowledge of visual perception to excellent use on the tennis court.
HCDE Hosts Diversity Board Event
“Speed Dating” Matches Students with Mentors

By Carolyn Wei

The HCDE Diversity Board launched a diversity-focused mentorship program in November, 2009. The program matches volunteer alumni with undergraduate students looking for mentors in industry who can inform them about career paths, educational backgrounds, and fields.

The department already had diversity-focused recruiting tools such as the Donna Sakson Endowed Scholarship for Excellence through Diversity. Giving students access to an industry mentor after they enter the department was a piece of the puzzle in keeping them engaged with HCDE as a professional discipline. Since HCDE is a lesser known field, the department wanted to create a supportive environment to help undergraduates succeed academically and professionally.

To kick off the mentorship program, the Diversity Board, HCDE Advisor Gian Bruno, and Department Chair Jan Spyridakis hosted a banquet dinner for students to meet potential mentors. The students had been prepared with bios of each mentor so they could focus on meeting the people who seemed most relevant to them. In a speed-dating type event, two or three students at a time talked to each mentor for ten minutes and then rotated to another mentor. At the end of the event, students marked on a list the mentors who most resonated with them for the department to match up afterward.

The HCDE Diversity Board was formed in 2007 to advise the department on issues related to diverse students, faculty, and staff. The board members include alumni who currently work at Google, Microsoft, and Nuance. The launch event was funded with a $1,000 grant from The Boeing Company. If you are interested in diversity issues in the department, please contact Gian Bruno at gbruno@uw.edu.

Update: The HCDE Diversity Board was granted another $1,000 from the Boeing company to host the event again in autumn 2010.

Changes Coming to the Engineering Communication Program

By Brennen Birch

Changes are coming to the Engineering Communication Program (ECP), which encompasses two communication courses: HCDE 231 (Introduction to Technical Writing) and HCDE 333 (Advanced Technical Writing and Oral Presentation), formerly TC 231 and TC 333. These courses serve more than 1,400 engineering students yearly. The department has taken two big steps toward the planned overhaul: it hired Dr. April Kedrowicz as a consultant to redesign the curriculum, and Dr. Kerrie Kephart as the new director of ECP. Kephart will start in autumn and will take over from the directorship of Kate Mobrand as she redirects her efforts to doctoral research.

Kedrowicz comes to HCDE from her Director position in the Communication, Leadership, Ethics, and Research (CLEAR) Program at the University of Utah. Kedrowicz visited HCDE three times in 2010. Kedrowicz first gathered information about ECP as it currently exists and brainstormed new ideas to update the program. She then reported on her initial findings and shared preliminary redesigns of the curriculum.

In June, she shared her final report and proposed curriculum. Her redesign proposes that HCDE 231 help engineering students, generally sophomores, focus on the ethical ramifications of both their engineering work and their professional communication. She proposes that HCDE 333, which serves juniors and seniors, focus on the environmental, economic, and social impact of their work. Kedrowicz’s findings now fall to Kephart, the new ECP Director, to adapt and implement. Kephart comes to HCDE from the University of Texas at El Paso, where she taught academic writing to teachers, conducted research on communication in engineering classrooms and research groups. She also developed and led seminars for faculty in supporting student writing across the curriculum.

Kephart specializes in advanced academic literacy development and communication in the engineering disciplines. She has also taught courses in English as a second language. She is interested in continuing to study connections between language learning and content learning and in developing methods to support students, native and non-native English speakers alike, in learning the discourse of engineering. She said she is eager to explore the curriculum package developed by Kedrowicz and jump start ECP next fall.
Industry Professionals Teach
Part Time Lecturers Bring Real World Experience

By Nick Koveshnikov

To match its growing curriculum, HCDE is steadily diversifying its faculty, specifically by hiring part time lecturers from industry. This academic year, HCDE recruited 13 lecturers to teach a variety of day and evening courses in usability testing, human-centered design, localization, visual communication, production design, visual media, and other topics.

“We select lecturers who have significant, relevant experience in the topic matter of the courses being staffed,” said HCDE Associate Chair of Academics Mark Zachry. “We also seek out people who have an interest in working with students, identifying potential instructors who will bring significant content expertise to the classroom, but will also be committed to helping ensure that students are learning.”

“Cultural models and cultural differentiation in design and communication are critical to success for any business today,” Irmler said. “Too many companies learn from their costly failures due to the lack of an international strategy when creating and marketing products. Cross-cultural awareness is a huge asset to any designer and communications professional.”

Among this past year’s part time lecturers are also UWTC alumni: Christine Loucks-Jaret, who graduated in 1999 with a Master’s degree. Loucks-Jaret taught TC 333, Advanced Technical Writing and Oral Presentation as a grad student and in 1999, she taught a course in the certificate program, where she eventually became program manager.

“I enjoyed teaching in the certificate program for many reasons, but working directly with people who are in the process of enhancing a current career or are beginning a new one has been the most rewarding part,” she said.

Other HCDE veterans include Pamela Johnson, who has taught Production Design and Visual Media for over 13 years. Johnson said her mother, an artist, instilled in her the love of form and color, while later Tom Williams, who originally taught the course, fueled her interest in documentation design and typography. Besides being an HCDE alumni, Johnson’s background includes 24 years of working in a variety of industries, including telecommunications, data communications, software development, hardware manufacturing, documentation consulting, and K–5 science curriculum—the knowledge needed to succeed in the language industry was not part of any language department curriculum. This insight led Irmler back to UW to teach localization-related courses.

Other part time lecturers’ careers are closer to the subjects they teach. Ulrike Irmler, a Microsoft manager, taught a spring course of International UX and Communication. Irmler recalls joining Microsoft in 1997, and discovering that the knowledge needed to succeed in the language industry was not part of any language department curriculum. This insight led Irmler back to UW to teach localization-related courses.

“Cultural models and cultural differentiation in design and communication are critical to success for any business today,” Irmler said. “Too many companies learn from their costly failures due to the lack of an international strategy when creating and marketing products. Cross-cultural awareness is a huge asset to any designer and communications professional.”

With Irmler’s involvement, the HCDE launched a new certificate program in Global Technology and Communication.

Mary Beth Hasselquist (right) teaches the Visual Communication course to evening Master’s students. Photo by Mike Watt
**Professional Partnerships with HCDE**

By Brennen Birch

Recently, HCDE renewed a focus on educational partnerships with local professionals. This year, undergraduate students in HCDE collaborated with visiting user researchers and experience designers from industry giants Microsoft, Google, and Boeing, and startups such as MindBloom.

Students benefitted from the industry experience of professionals that HCDE invited to guest-teach. HCDE Professor Dave Farkas explained the value in this practice by saying, “Regular faculty may not have a strong sense of the business and organizational dimensions of an idea that’s taught in a course. A guest instructor may provide a more in-depth description of an organizational process, what the impediments are, etc.”

In Assistant Professor Julie Kientz’s User Experience Design course, Denise Carlevato, a UX researcher from Microsoft, guided students through the user experience design process. Carlevato presented students with a design problem and asked them to apply their knowledge to improve the design or user experience. Students investigated potential users, designed a prototype, and executed user experience evaluations on their work.

Students in Professor Beth Kolko’s Concepts in HCI course were visited by a Google user experience designer who introduced the class to Google-style brainstorming exercises. Jake Knapp handed out Post-It notes and extra wide markers and challenged students to come up with as many project ideas as they could in five minutes.

Farkas invited HCDE PhD graduate Jerrod Larson, a user experience specialist at Boeing, to HCDE’s Web Design and Web Publishing course to collaborate with students on the design of a website that makes available a library of design patterns on consumer-information graphics. Working in teams, students designed and prototyped their websites with wireframes, performed usability tests, and built functioning websites—one of which will become the actual pattern language website.

If you are a Seattle-area human centered design specialist and wish to contribute to an HCDE course, contact hcde@uw.edu

---

**Women in Science and Engineering**

By Paul Riggins


The WiSE program, based in the UW College of Engineering, provides a collaborative, learning-centered environment for women studying science and engineering. In a field traditionally dominated by males, WiSE helps foster opportunities for women to become successful leaders in their fields. Among other things, WiSE offers academic advising, tutoring, workshops, study centers, a pre-major program, and, of course, the annual WiSE conference.

The HCDE department made itself known at the conference’s career resource fair, held concurrently with the event’s luncheon. Volunteers at the HCDE department’s table met with high school and undergraduate students, fielding questions about the department and what it has to offer their diverse backgrounds.

Kate MacCorkle, HCDE graduate student who was present at the Department’s table, said “I met an undergrad who is applying to the HCDE program. We exchanged information and she emailed me a few days later to thank me for some advice I gave her. We’ve struck up a correspondence and I’ve promised to help her with her application essay. It’s one of those things, ‘If I had known then what I know now.’ You can help people just by sharing your own experiences. I love it.”

The 2010 conference was a great success, with over 200 high school, community college, and university students in attendance. The event included workshops on workplace issues, academic and professional success, a panel of keynote speakers, resources for academic and professional success, and more.

The keynote panel included successful women such as Phyllis Wise, Provost and Vice President of the University of Washington; Mary Lidstrom, Vice Provost for Research and a Chemical Engineering professor; and Wendy Hiester, Lead Process Development Engineer for BP.

Companies present at the conference included BP, the Snohomish County Public Works, and Lockheed Martin. UW Departments present at the event included the Departments of Civil & Environmental Engineering, the College of Forest Resources, and our own Department of Human Centered Design & Engineering.

*Logo courtesy of Kelsey Hentges, WiSE*
HCDE students Emma Rose and Behnosh Najafi worked on a project that their employer, Anthro-Tech, created to assist a newly established non-profit organization, SaveTogether. SaveTogether is dedicated to helping low-income workers save toward their life goals. Anthro-Tech provided pro-bono usability testing for SaveTogether’s recently launched website to help the young non-profit better reach their beneficiaries and donors.

Anthro-Tech, a small consultancy based in Olympia, WA, has strong ties to the HCDE department. Suzanne Boyd, founder and principal consultant at Anthro-Tech, is an Affiliate Assistant Professor in HCDE and teaches User Centered Web Design in the evening master’s program.

Rose, a current HCDE PhD student and Anthro-Tech employee, has also taught in the evening program and for the department’s Technical Writing and Editing certificate program.

She discovered the opportunity for a partnership with SaveTogether through an email list-serve. “[SaveTogether] had heard about user-centered design and usability and they felt that they needed some help with their site,” said Rose. “Don Norman, actually was the one who posted the opportunity. So it caught our eye and we thought, wow, this aligns really well with the space we work in.”

Anthro-Tech had been exploring opportunities to partner with a non-profit organization in need of pro-bono usability work. “We’re a user-centered design consultancy and our area of focus is looking at organizations, companies, and non-profits with a social impact mission,” Rose explained. “We understand that sometimes [non-profits] are in most need of our user-centered design services, but often times they have the least amount of time or resources to do it.”

Anthro-Tech’s usability study for SaveTogether provided the startup with recommendations for website design changes and insights into how users perceived the site’s message. “We did a remote usability study with eight participants to get their feedback on the website itself as well as the messaging and the communication strategy that they were engaging on the site,” recalled Najafi.

SaveTogether is an entirely web-based non-profit organization. “Unlike a traditional non-profit, they are entirely dependent on the web to reach beneficiaries and donors,” Rose pointed out. “So having an easy to understand and compelling message, as well as a usable site is critical – it’s everything. This was a good opportunity to engage the user-centered design process.”

SaveTogether’s mission is to make long-term financial stability possible for everyone, and it seeks to do so through a savings matching program. In addition to matching beneficiaries’ savings, SaveTogether provides financial and investment education to beneficiaries. “The results of the study were going to help low-income individuals and I think it’s always been very motivating for me in my professional life to work for the benefit of a greater good,” said Najafi.

“[The connections that I’ve met through the department are what put me in the position that I am in my job,” Rose explained. “I feel really, really lucky to have the job that I do and to get to do the kind of work that I do. And I attribute a lot of that to the department.”

SaveTogether’s website can be found at www.savetogether.org.

Anthro-Tech’s website is www.anthro-tech.com.
**Dutch Students Visit HCDE**

By Jessica Cropley

“BIG coffee!” was the response Silke Wesselink, a foreign exchange student from The Netherlands, gave when asked what she liked best about Seattle.

Wesselink and Sikke Jansma are two Dutch students who participated this year in the Twente Exchange program with HCDE. Wesselink and Jansma graduated in June 2010 with their Bachelor’s degrees from the University of Twente (UTwente) and subsequently spent two quarters at UW. They were enrolled in HCDE and Communications classes during winter and spring quarters.

The Department of Communication Studies is similar to HCDE, but Wesselink and Jansma described HCDE as “a lot smaller” with “more emphasis on engineering rather than communications.” Wesselink commented, “At UTwente we focus more on communication, while HCDE focuses more on design and engineering. It was nice to experience both sides of technical communication.”

At UTwente there is more emphasis on final exams than midterms and projects throughout the quarter. Students in The Netherlands learn English as a second language in high school, and Wesselink commented, “I wanted to come to America to improve my English, because being with other English-speaking people will help me understand the language better.” Jansma commented, “I wanted to experience American culture first-hand, and I was surprised with how nice and friendly Americans are.”

Wesselink and Jansma kept in contact with their family and friends in the Netherlands through e-mail, Skype video chatting, and hand-written letters. Jansma also enjoyed blogging about his experiences in the United States so his friends and family could have daily contact with him.

On the topic of using Facebook, Wesselink and Jansma responded with an enthusiastic, “oh yeah!” Both students began using Facebook more frequently once they reached the United States because they wanted to keep in touch with other friends who are studying abroad in the United States. The first social networking site in The Netherlands, Hyves, has remained very popular despite the increasing popularity of Facebook. Jansma commented, “Facebook and Hyves are easy ways to keep in contact with friends back home because we don’t have to worry about the time difference.”

Although the exchange program lasted only six months, Wesselink and Jansma enjoyed their time in America and they are thankful for the opportunity to experience American culture. Jansma commented, “Silke and I will be traveling to the East Coast before we return to The Netherlands this summer. We want to get the full experience of the United States from coast to coast.” Wesselink added, “It was such a great opportunity to visit the United States and meet so many new friends.”

**About the Twente Program**

HCDE has enjoyed many successful student exchanges with the Department of Communication Studies at the University of Twente (UTwente) in Enschede, The Netherlands. The exchange program has been in place for ten years.

UW and UTwente offer a “home tuition” program where students pay tuition to their home university and are allowed to study abroad for one to three quarters. Going on an exchange to The Netherlands is designed to be an affordable experience for students who want to study outside the United States. Students who travel abroad must be independent and self-sufficient because there are often no on-site directors for the exchange program.

Over the past ten years, 40 students have traveled between the two universities for the HCDE exchange program. Alex Pham, a current HCDE student, will be studying at UTwente this fall. He commented, “Studying abroad will be a learning experience and is worth the extra time and effort to apply for the program.”

Anyone interested in studying abroad at UTwente is encouraged to contact the HCDE office or email hcde@uw.edu for more information.
New Program Option
HCDE Reaches a Global Audience

By Julianna Jones

Are you interested in international business trends and global technology? Are you drawn to cross-cultural communication and conceptualizing design practices to reach global audiences? If you answered “yes,” then HCDE has some exciting news to report. To meet the increasing demand for a program that focuses on cross-cultural communication, international business, and the design of localized technology, HCDE has created a transcripted option within the MS and PhD programs. And as of autumn quarter 2011, the HCDE program will offer a graduate certificate as well.

The Global Technology & Communication (GTC) transcripted option gives current and prospective graduate students an option that formalizes their course of study. The GTC certificate will give students who are not enrolled in HCDE graduate degrees a formalized credential for taking three GTC courses. The GTC curriculum is unique to the University. Leaders in industry, business, and academia are searching for the skill set that the GTC course of study offers.

The GTC transcripted option consists of two required HCDE courses and an additional HCDE or International Business elective. The GTC certificate consists of three required HCDE courses. The first course is HCDE 512: International User Experience and Communication. This course examines topics such as market segmentation, cultural schemata, cross-cultural business management, international policies, and geopolitics. Students leave the course with a deeper understanding of how different cultures communicate contextually, how to design products and services that meet the needs of global users, and how to navigate international policies in product design.

The second course in both the transcripted option and the certificate is HCDE 513: Localization Management. Through a series of scenarios, students gain a rich understanding of the localization business. This course addresses localization challenges with regard to market segmentation, types of software and online services, and different projects types, and relevant inception-to-completion strategies.

Completion of the transcripted option requires that students choose one of two electives: HCDE 514 Localization and International Business, or IBUS 480 Multinational Operations Management. The certificate option requires HCDE 514, which focuses on the international technology sector and how global industry has been impacted by technology and global consumer trends, investigating business models, and the economics of international industry relationships. IBUS 480 focuses on international objectives and strategies, drawing on case studies in international operations management, investigating localization of administrative practices and operating policies, and developing multinational company structures and executives.

The GTC transcripted option or certificate helps fulfill a global need for skilled communicators who act as intermediaries between people and technology. GTC offers students the chance to build on their analytical and practical skills, recognize international trends in business and technology, and bridge the global communication divide.

Art courtesy of Julianna Jones

Animal Emergency Preparedness & Resource Network

By Amihan Beltejar

“It was incredible. I got so frustrated,” recalled HCDE MS student, Amy C. Woodfin, referring to an incident in 2003 where she had difficulty finding an animal shelter that would take four orphaned baby squirrels she found near her home in Bellingham, WA.

“What could I do for them? There was nothing online. Nobody knew where to take them. So I realized then that there was a need to have a central information bank, if you will, on not only how to prepare for emergencies, but on how to care for animals.”

Last winter, Woodfin pitched the idea for an animal emergency website to fellow HCDE graduate students, Sara DeGruttola, Rebecca DeStello, and Travis Martin. As a team, they developed the Animal Emergency Preparedness & Resource Network (AEPRN), an information resource that provides preparedness and evacuation plans for domestic animals and wildlife in emergencies.

Although a functioning prototype is no longer available, Woodfin plans to complete the website’s development in this year’s User Centered Web Design class. According to the team, the website was developed “in response to the lack of family, business, and government plans addressing emergency preparedness for animals.”

Tobi the sick puppy. Photo by Amihan Beltejar

Art courtesy of Julianna Jones
Deep in the heart of campus, something revolutionary is happening. Between strewn bits of wires, Arduino circuit-boards, and malformed strings of plastic, there lies an incredible machine. A machine capable of building itself: a machine we call “Frank.”

MakerBots are considered to be domestic 3D printers, small-scale versions of technology only previously available to large companies willing to pay tens of thousands of dollars per robot. Currently selling for about $700 each, MakerBots are expected to displace the need for many of the cheap goods we purchase from overseas, because consumers will be able to print them themselves. Ordered online through the growing company MakerBot Industries, Frank arrived as a box filled with the raw ingredients of creativity: wires, circuit boards, nuts and bolts and wooden sheets, and no instructions. Our team, now dubbed Learn.Make.Cupcake (LMC), barely knew what we were doing, but that I suppose was the point. We were challenged by Professor Beth Kolko to learn how individuals acquire technical skills and that we were to study ourselves in this process. So it made perfect sense that we were working with something few of us were even familiar with, a fact that I personally found quite comforting.

While constructing Frank, there were many unanticipated problems, such as missing or broken parts and new tools were required. As it turns out, working with collaboratively written instructions (such as a wiki) can also increase frustration. These inevitable obstacles did however prove their worth. They encouraged us to network and find solutions from the highly imaginative MakerBot community here in Seattle and to learn a taste for what the ideology of building your own products really is. Metrix: Space Create, a cafe of sorts but in actually is an electronics tinkerer’s heaven, has become an invaluable source of information and connectivity. I’ve been there several times, and it’s truly amazing what people are doing down there with silicon and plastic. On one particular evening, we even had the unexpected pleasure of meeting Bre Pettis, the owner of MakerBot Industries.

Now, looking ahead to the future, we will be building upon the expertise gained by building and programming Frank, our MakerBot, in addition to finding ways others can benefit from our research into how we acquired technical skills. You can follow our progress at learnmakecupcake.blogspot.com.

The Husky Union Building (HUB), the venerable student center on the UW campus, will be closing for renovations on July 1, 2010. The HUB will reopen autumn 2012, after extensive interior and exterior remodeling. According to Paul Zuchowski, Associate Director of Student Activities and Union Facilities, the remodel will create a naturally lit atrium in the center of the building, a green roof on part of the third floor, improved accessibility, expanded conference rooms, and consolidated student activity spaces.

Zuchowski quoted the construction budget for the remodel at $82.7 million, with a total cost of $128.3 million. In autumn 2012, $77 per quarter will be added to student services and activities fees to fund the renovation. Over the next 30 years, all but $20 million of the HUB remodel will be funded through this student life project fee. UW will contribute the remaining amount in debt services costs.

Most offices and services that are located in the HUB will be moved to Condon Hall, while the HUB’s Bookstore will be relocated to Odegaard Undergraduate Library. All HUB services listed in the transition plan will be returning to the Union Building after the remodel with the exception of the HUB newsstand, the TV lounge, and the Ride Board. During the remodeling period, food services will be expanded in locations near the HUB. Husky Den Dining will return to the HUB with expanded composting and recycling services.

The HUB remodel was planned by Perkins+Will, an international architecture firm grounded on a sustainable building philosophy. According to Zuchowski, the building plan is currently projected to be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified in the Gold category. Washington State requires all major construction projects built with public funds to be at minimum LEED Silver certified.
Professor Beth Kolko took an innovative and experimental approach in teaching HCDE 419: Concepts in Human-Computer Interaction in winter 2010; she taught in conjunction with Professor Ruth Anderson from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE). Kolko was inspired to try collaborative instruction after working with a student group from Professor Gaetano Borriello’s CSE capstone class that focused on technology for developing countries. When Borriello went on sabbatical, Kolko and Anderson, who also worked with Borriello and his students, decided to collaborate.

CSE 490 D in 2009-2010 was a three quarter long course. In fall, students took a reading seminar that introduced them to issues related to technology design for resource-constrained environments. A new cohort joined the year-long project in winter when Kolko and Anderson combined CSE 490D with HCDE 419. HCDE students signed up for five credits, and CSE students signed up for two credits. The goal of the course was to encourage students from both disciplines to work together on a design project based on user research. After winter, students continued in Spring with HCDE students enrolling in 2 credits of HCDE 496 Research Group, and CSE students enrolling in a 5-credit capstone course. The focus of the spring quarter projects was actual implementation of the projects that were designed in winter.

Kolko explains, “One of the things that I learned from my teachings in the past is that often for really robust projects, we want to bring in expertise from different areas.” After teaching the course, she reflects, “it was challenging from an instructional standpoint, and challenging for the students as well because there were a lot of cultural differences among the different departments that students come from… a lot of differences in terms of expertise and background, so a big challenge for the groups was learning to communicate effectively and how to work in teams. I think it was probably one of the best experiences that a student could get in terms of preparing for how the work place is really going to function.”

At the end of winter quarter, students had a poster session in the Paul Allen CSE Atrium to show their work to the general public and to get more students involved in the class during spring quarter. Projects included a low-cost, portable ultrasound machine for midwives in Uganda (see Awards, pg. 23), software for local foodbanks to track donations, and a ride-sharing application.

Jeff Soo, an HCDE student who took the course said, “It was good to collaborate with students outside of HCDE and get varying perspectives on certain features from a CSE [student’s]… mindset on HCI concepts.”

Collaborative Classroom

HCDE and CSE: Interaction in Action

By Daren Chaisy

“It was probably one of the best experiences that a student could get in terms of preparing for how the work place is really going to function.”

HCDE & College of Engineering: Building Educational Bridges

By Nick Koveshnikov

Designed to transition first-year engineering students into university life, College of Engineering Bridge Program engages incoming freshmen with four weeks of intense workshops during summer quarter. These engineering workshops include an HCDE project that challenges participants to create prototypes and conduct a mini-usability study.

Freshman Natasha Noltimier took on the Engineering Bridge Program by enrolling last summer. She described the experience as time-consuming and intense; it rewarded her with exposure to engineering resources and contacts.

During the HCDE workshop, Noltimier met HCDE Professor Julie Kientz and joined her Baby Steps project that focuses on designing technology used to help detect, record, and track childhood development.
PhD Research Updates

Compiled by Nick Koveshnikov

Re:Design asked HCDE PhD students to describe their research, future goals, and their favorite café on campus.

Sandy Bartell

My doctoral research will examine whether a combination of user attributes and message structures influence the credibility of online medical information. In particular, the study will be investigating whether linguistic formality or explicitness combined with the language proficiency of ESL readers affects the credibility of the perceptions of information on medical web sites. The findings will be used to suggest message structures that enhance credibility for multi-cultural readers with varying language skills. Since I am a full-time employee with Boeing, I would like to continue in Boeing’s international area.

I don’t have a favorite coffee place on campus, but I do adore the goat-cheese and roasted garlic pizza they serve at the Hub.

Steve Lappenbush

This summer I plan on defending my dissertation on systemic misalignments in high-autonomy user environments. I created and tested a new theoretical framework to see how the technologies users choose do or do not line up, and provide a way for users to begin reducing those misalignments. I used a global humanitarian NGO systems redesign effort as my subject organization. Professionally, I consistently find ways to apply my expertise in my work with government agencies. Personally, I am very anxious to just be finished. When your two-year-old son, who didn’t exist when you achieved candidacy, asks when you’re going to be done with your “dither station,” it’s time to be done.

Kate Mobrand

I am finishing up my second year as the Director of the Engineering Communication Program, focusing on developing and refining instructional materials and teaching strategies. I am particularly excited to work with Dr. Jennifer Turns and to be developing a dissertation project that involves helping engineering undergraduates think about and describe their preparedness for communicating in the engineering workplace. This project allows me to leverage my previous educational and professional experiences and focus on my ongoing interest in how people learn. I’m looking forward to more fabulous coffee at the Burke Museum.

Jonathan Morgan

I study online communities and computer-mediated communication. Drawing on concepts from genre theory, network theory, and rhetorical theory, I explore conversational dynamics and strategies in collaborative online environments (like Wikipedia), as well as other online communication forums such as comment threads, newsgroups, and IRC. The overall goal of my research is to understand what “works”—both socially and technologically—in CMC and how to design for more satisfying online communication and more productive collaboration.

My favorite place to get coffee on campus is Molly’s Café at The Henry Art Gallery (only place on campus that serves Stumptown Coffee).

Cynthia Putnam

I completed my PhD this spring. It included adaption and use of HCD methods in designing diverse communities. I investigated children with autism and their families/support structures; technology use and diffusion in Central Asia; and attitudes and behaviors regarding water usage in the Andhra Pradesh region of India. The central theme of my dissertation is bridging the design/research dialogue gap that entails improving how designers access, utilize and integrate user research in their work.

My favorite coffee shop around school is Café on the Ave—not for the coffee; they have amazing genmachia tea. However, as anyone who knows me will agree, I could probably create a more detailed list of my favorite beer places.

Emma Rose

My research interests focus on two primary concerns: how can in-situ research methods, like ethnography, inform the design of information and communication technologies, and how can underserved populations be included in design, furthering a more democratic ideal of design participation.
This summer I am leading the Design for Digital Inclusion research group in design ethnography to understand how individuals overcome challenges associated with transportation. This work, alongside data collected in the past several years in Kyrgyzstan, will be the basis for my dissertation.

Alex Thayer

I am working on two research projects: investigating academic reading practice with e-reading devices, such as the Amazon Kindle DX, and creating a rich conceptual model of practices and motivations that will inform the future design of online calendar systems such as Google Calendar. The model will help us understand how the practices that comprise relationship work can be better supported by users of online calendar systems.

My main goals are to keep publishing, keep presenting at conferences, and keep leading research projects. I love being in school and I look forward to building a strong career in academia.

Kejun Xu

I am currently on leave working as a full time User Experience Designer at lynda.com in Santa Barbara, CA, getting my head around the UX design of iPhone app, iPad app, and mobile sites. I especially like the fact that there is so much I learned at HCDE that I can apply to work: usability testing, user interviews, user-centered design, personas, design thinking, etc. My PhD research focus is on information architecture, and website localization and internationalization.

PhD students discuss their research, future goals, and favorite café on campus.

I Wish I Knew Then What I Know Now
Advice from HCDE Graduating Seniors to Underclassmen

Compiled by Jessica Cropley

Re:Design asked ten students who graduated in June 2010 from HCDE, and asked what they thought about their walk through college.

What was your biggest fear as an incoming freshman?

“Finishing school too early and not getting enough out of college.” – Claire Carlson

“That the major I choose might not be what I thought it was or it wasn’t what I wanted to do.” – Lindsay Haggman

“If you could give incoming freshman any advice, what would it be?”

“If you have the time and money, try to minor in something and explore other majors!” – Claire Carlson

“Make friends with your classmates, because you’re going to be taking a lot of classes with them.” – Lindsay Haggman

“Be prepared to work in groups a lot!” – Anonymous

“If you could go back and change one thing about your time at UW, what would it be?”

“I would take more classes I’m interested in, not just required classes.” – Claire Carlson

“I wouldn’t slack off as much, and study harder to get better grades.” – Phun Aut

“I would have chosen a major earlier so I could finish the prerequisites quicker.” – Alex Pham

“If I were to go back and change one thing about my time at UW, what would it be?”

“I wish I studied abroad during my first two years, perhaps somewhere exotic.” – Hannah Getachew
Charlotte Lee Studies Kindle DX Use

By Nathan Bilbao

Amazon.com is collaborating with seven major universities to study its larger e-reader, the Kindle DX. Last fall, 40 graduate students from the Department of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE) agreed to participate in the study. The study was organized by Ed Lazowska, a faculty member of the CSE department and is led by Charlotte Lee, an assistant professor from HCDE. “Our research is focused on how e-readers support reading activities and new reading practices. Our intent is to inform the design of future reading platforms,” said Lee. “Our data collection is underway and we are very excited about our early findings.”

“We are interested to see how people make decisions about what to read and where. Depending on how in depth people need to engage with some text influences whether they print it out or read it on a screen,” states Lee. “There is a dichotomy between paper and a computer. We are interested to see if the e-reader fits into a middle ground. Does it support paper like activities? Does it also have computer like activities? We want to see what new things people can do and do people who have had the Kindle DX for a while now have a separate category in their minds, there is a laptop, there is paper, and then there is the e-reader.”

The study is broken up into two phases: each consisting of a diary study and interviews. Last fall, the graduate students were asked to keep a diary of every interaction they had with their Kindle DX. They were asked to record the duration, location, and how they used their e-reader. They also participated in interviews. During spring quarter, the interview phase serves to better understand new behaviors as the graduates integrate the Kindle DX into their existing academic work and leisure activities.

Currently the graduate students have been using the Kindle DX in a wide variety of places, notably on public transit. It provides them with ergonomic relief from the weight of textbooks and computers. Although the study is still underway, hacks or innovations to the Kindles have not occurred yet but Lee expects this to change after the release of Amazon’s software development kit.

So where does the Kindle DX exist in the student’s academic life? When asked whether the e-reader will replace textbooks in the future Lee replied, “Not in the near future. There is still much work to be done to support what people actually do with their textbooks. Using a textbook is very different from doing leisure reading.”

Matt Eliot Takes a Job in Australia

By Alena Benson

In 2009, Matt Eliot was the third student to complete HCDE’s growing PhD program. He recently made the move “down-under” and is now a senior research officer at Central Queensland University in Australia.

Eliot completed his doctorate in July of 2009. “My dissertation was about exploring new technologies that would help people increase their own well-being,” said Eliot. “I learned wonderful things about how people use technology to better themselves and so I loved my dissertation project.”

Now a professional researcher, Eliot is exploring project-based learning in engineering education. “The question underlying the research is ‘how can we assess an individual student’s learning in ways that support true collaboration when they’re on a team?’” Eliot explained.

During graduate school Eliot worked as a research assistant with his dissertation adviser, Professor Jennifer Turns. “There was this kind of collaboration that was very real,” Turns recalled. “I was getting a lot of help, I was getting a lot of ideas; he was getting a lot of support. It was very synergistic.”

“The passion that my faculty mentors in HCDE had for doing good rigorous research instilled in me both a love of research and a drive to do the best research possible,” Eliot said. “That’s what stands out for me the most.”

Eliot enjoys visiting the tropical parks around Rockhampton, as well as the beach, which is approximately 12 miles away. “I love living in the tropics,” Eliot proclaimed. “I used to envision myself when I was in my PhD program, at a university surrounded by palm trees, and I’m actually here, so that’s really fun.”

To new PhD students and those considering graduate school, Eliot had three pieces of advice. “Number one: focus on getting your dissertation done. Number two: reach for the stars. Go for the highest thing that you can possibly get. And...embrace the unknown, that’s number three. Let yourself take a big risk; it’s a good thing.”

“I used to envision myself, when I was in my PhD program, at a university surrounded by palm trees, and I’m actually here.”
Books by HCDE Alumni

By Nick Koveshnikov

The HCDE name change may reflect the department’s shift toward HCI fields, yet it remains rooted in technical writing. These traditions best show through the work of HCDE alumni. This year at least four books, written or edited by HCDE graduates, explore the topics of visualization, personas, Microsoft Project, and knowledge work applications.

Beautiful Visualization

Noah Iliinsky, a 2005 UWTC graduate, edited and contributed to the O’Reilly Media book Beautiful Visualization: Looking at Data through the Eyes of Experts. The book contains contributions from various visualization experts who wrote about how visuals can convey and reveal complex information and relationships between objects and ideas.

Iliinsky wrote the book’s first chapter and edited technical content of submissions from two dozen experts on visualization. The result is a collection of writings by artists, designers, commentators, scientists, analysts, statisticians, and other professionals about how successful visuals must combine effective design with thought-provoking detailed content that advances the viewer’s understanding of the topic.

Having completed a thesis on visualization, Iliinsky told re:Design that his work as a UWTC graduate shaped his understanding of the field and helped him in becoming an O’Reilly book editor.

“My schooling directly prepared me for that,” he said. “And teaching technical writing helped me be a better writer, editor, and communicator.”

The Persona Lifecycle

This year Tamara Adlin released a second edition of her book, The Essential Persona Lifecycle, coauthored with John Pruitt.

“In 1999 Alan Cooper’s book Inmates Running the Asylum came out,” Adlin said. “The book had a section on personas. It got our interest and everyone started using it. Yet everyone started to fail, so we tried to find out why; we started doing workshops and developed the lifecycle ideas.”

The book explains how to create effective personas by offering detailed techniques and tools related to planning, creating, communicating, and using personas to create great product designs.

After finishing her master’s degree in two years and graduating in 1996, Aldin occasionally checks in with the people from the department that prepared her to write a book: “I argued with Jan [Spyridakis] whether I really needed to take the style class and she was right and I was wrong.”

Step by Step - Microsoft Office Project 2007

The book list includes Carl Chatfield’s Microsoft Office Project Step by Step 2007, written with a coauthor, Timothy Johnson. The book is a guide to Microsoft Project, an established project management tool. The 2007 version is a fourth edition in a series that started more than a decade ago. Since then over 500,000 copies have been sold and it has been translated to several languages.

Chatfield, Principal Content Project Manager at Microsoft, began working on Step by Step for a 2000 release and worked on each Project update: 2002 and 2003. He is now working on the 2010 edition, which has the same goal as the original: help professionals become better project managers.

Unlike a lot of other software guides that focus on the application features, Step by Step focuses on the learning process instead, Chatfield said.

“We did not write a book on features of the product; we wrote a book about proper use of the product,” he said.

Chatfield received a UWTC master’s degree in 1995. Chatfield credits the TC 501 course for preparing him for writing a book: “the tone, the instructional layout of the book, everything was laid out in my very first graduate course.”

Working through Screens


The book explores 100 ideas for design using “fictional examples from clinical research, financial trading, and architecture.”

Working through Screens is available in electronic format from Burghardt’s company website, Flashbulb Interaction, Inc. Recently, he also released a print on demand softcover version.

Burghardt enrolled at the University of Washington as a psychology undergrad. Nearing graduation, he took a Human Factors course from Beth Kerr.

“That class started me down the road toward user experience work,” he wrote. “From there I discovered Judy Ramey’s usability course, and I decided to pursue a TC degree as well. The program provided a great foundation in the types of topics that I ended up writing about.”

“Apart from that, I started researching and designing applications for different types of specialized work, and I simply couldn’t find any books that pulled together the range of topics that I found valuable in practice.”
One of the open issues with persuasive technologies is the difficulty of evaluation. Julie Kientz and her group set out to develop and validate a new set of heuristics for heuristic evaluation of persuasive technologies. Their ten heuristics were based on the literature, modifications of Nielsen’s original 10 heuristics and their own ideas. They conducted a validation study of 12 usability experts evaluating two different persuasive technologies (MindBloom and MyFoodPyramid Blast Off Game) using either their new heuristics or Nielsen’s original 10. They are analyzing the data to identify the type, frequency, and severity of problems associated with each set of heuristics.

The Communicative Practices in Virtual Workspaces (CPVW) research group, working with Professor Mark Zachry, investigates emergent uses of digital technologies to coordinate work activities. The group’s work focuses on developing knowledge about novel applications and integration of such technologies in the work of organizations—whether they are formal or ad hoc social networks. This year, the group has focused on four projects. The group has conducted its third annual national survey to understand uses of shared web services for the conduct of distributed work. A second project focuses on the development of visualizations to support sense-making work activities in online contributor systems. A third project involves the development of a Web-based tool, Qbox, for multi-rater annotation of participant behaviors in such systems. The final project employs user-centered design techniques to develop a Web-based visualizer for creating genre ecology models. For more information, see http://courses.washington.edu/commparc/.

The Computer Supported Collaboration (CSC) Laboratory conducts research to inform the design of information systems for collaboration. Students working with Professor Charlotte Lee investigate the development and use of information infrastructures in science and engineering, computer supported cooperative work (CSCW), and computer supported cooperative leisure. HCDE are studying how national supercomputing centers develop computing systems useful for multiple scientific domains. They are also leading the Kindle DX pilot study for UW, one of seven universities to explore the use of Amazon’s Kindle e-reader for electronic textbooks. They presented their research on managing relationships in online calendar systems at the CSCW 2010 conference, Microsoft Research, and Google. If that wasn’t enough, the group is also studying the nature of onboarding in distributed scientific collaborations that are collecting and analyzing astronomical data using remote telescopes. The sky is the limit with the CSC Lab!

Professor Spyridakis’ Internet-based research group is redesigning WebLabUX, a software package that helps website designers and researchers test the effectiveness of a website’s design. WebLabUX administers unmoderated studies of users’ navigational behavior, perceptions, and comprehension of a website, allowing comparison of the effectiveness of multiple website design variations. This year, HCDE PhD student Elisabeth Cuddihy has led the software redesign effort. HCDE MS student Tyler Scott has led specification of WebLabUX’s new user interface, HCDE BS students William Ho and Sandra Bilbrey are managing technical implementation and software development, and HCDE MS student Jamie Ourada has served as our technical consultant. For more information, see depts.washington.edu/intres.

How are perceptions of robots influenced by fictional media? How do fictional accounts of robots differ from fact? A research group working with Professor Sarah Kriz analyzed fictional and factual accounts of robots in order to educate the general public about the differences between robot fact and fiction. Topics explored included robots taking jobs away from people, robot consciousness, fictional influences...
on robot design, robot biomimicry, robots and robot related media marketed to children, and cybernetic organisms. Findings were presented at the Mountlake Terrace Public Library on the 5th of June, 2010. The group used various methods and media formats to communicate their research to the general public including skits, murals, posters, videos, and games.

**Design for Digital Inclusion**

The Design for Digital Inclusion Lab, led by Professor Beth Kolko, has branched into two separate parallel groups this year. Work continues on the Central Asia Information and Communication Technologies project with several PhD and MS students working on a series of journal articles and conference papers to wrap up this multi-year project. The group is also working on a research project in Brazil that investigates how people learn computer skills through activities such as gaming and using social network sites.

The second group, LearnMakeCupcake, studies how diverse communities acquire technical skills in informal settings. The team studies science and engineering learning through a hands-on, participant-observation format. By researching and building technological projects, the group seeks to understand how people who self-identify as non-technical approach technical tasks. During winter quarter 2010, the group assembled an open-source 3-dimensional printer and learned to run modeling software in order to print objects.

**Creating Digital Video Examples of Usability**

Students working with Professor Judy Ramey focused on discovering and sharing best practices for the whole Usability Testing process. With input and guidance from industry and academic experts, the group is working on creating instructive online videos that illustrate good usability techniques and contrast them with bad ones. The group’s first set of videos will focus on best practices for asking probing questions while moderating a usability test. The videos, resources, and interviews will be shared on our interactive website (currently in development) so that they can be easily accessed by practitioners and the student community.

**SwitchBack**

In an age when people resist extended reading, we need new kinds of documents optimized for selective reading. To complement the QuikScan document format (www.QuikScan.org), a research group working with Professor Dave Farkas designed a simple web-based application for displaying specially authored SwitchBack documents. If a reader switches from the abbreviated version of Section 1 to the complete version of Section 2, SwitchBack interposes essential information the reader missed by not reading the complete version of Section 1. Students investigated the rhetorical issues underlying SwitchBack and designed a user interface. Group member Chris Raleigh scripted a working prototype in PHP, and students wrote test SwitchBack documents. Try out a SwitchBack document online at http://faculty.washington.edu/farkas/SwitchBack.

**Mobile User Experience**

The Mobile User Experience Research Group, led by Professor Judy Ramey, conducts research on various aspects of the user experience surrounding mobile phone use. Some of these aspects include the behaviors and motivations of using the Internet on mobile phones, the role of mobile phones in learning, and lifestyle shifts caused by the rapid proliferation and adoption of mobile phones (specifically the role of “apps”). Past projects have included studies on how the behaviors and motivations of mobile Internet users can be characterized, literature reviews on the role of mobile phone technology in creating a constructivist learning environment, and posters on how mobile apps differ from their desktop counterparts. Students are currently working on a literature review of the use of mobile phones in language learning, changes in childhood development as a result of early exposure to mobile phones, as well as continued research into the lifestyle aspects of the mobile user experience.

For more information about research at HCDE, visit www.hcde.washington.edu/navresearch.

*Photos provided by the individual research groups*
Congratulations to HCDE Associate Professors Charlotte Lee and Julie Kientz, for each winning distinguished National Science Foundation (NSF) Career Awards! The four- to five-year grants provide funding to assist junior faculty members with their research activities.

“The NSF Career Award is a desirable prize for up and coming academics,” said Lee. “We’d like to think that our research speaks for itself, but sometimes it can speak a little more loudly if you have an award like this.”

With only three opportunities to apply, Lee and Kientz were delighted to learn that they received the award on their first attempt.

“I had been an assistant professor for only about seven months at that time,” said Lee. “So I thought it was a bit ambitious to apply for it so early in my career. But I got a lot of encouragement from colleagues and people in the department.”

Kientz agreed, “The College of Engineering was really great. They ran a workshop with past applications and winners…. They gave us a sample application of people who had won it in the past…. I read through at least 10 different successful proposals and got advice from at least four or five different people.”

Lee received the award for her work on cyber infrastructures as sociotechnical systems. She hopes to learn more about the circumstances that prompt organizations to adopt existing technology or build new ones.

Kientz received the award for several tools that she developed to help parents track the developmental progress of their children.

“[The tools] help detect autism, hearing impairments, and behavioral problems early,” said Kientz. “The idea is that if you detect these as early as possible, usually an intervention will be more effective than if they had been detected later on.”

For faculty members interested in applying for the award, Kientz had this bit of advice to offer, “Just apply…. It never hurts to apply for the first time. Get advice from lots of people and do it early enough so that you can get advice on your application.”

Lee agreed, “Just go for it! I think the most wonderful things that have happened to me, even this early in my career, have happened because I felt like I was reaching above where I should be or could be.”

Earlier this year, the National Science Foundation (NSF) awarded PhD candidate, Brook Sattler, $150,000 in supplemental grant money to work on HCDE Professor Jennifer Turns’s portfolio development research project. “It was really exciting,” said Sattler. The grant is dedicated funding under the NSF’s goal to support minority students in engineering.

“Brook was selected to join the team because of her interests in engineering education, her research ability particularly in the area of qualitative research, and her ability to be self-directed,” said Turns. Currently, “Brook is helping with all aspects of the research. This includes data collection, data analysis, preparing publications, and more generally, monitoring and strategizing the research.”

As far as the research is concerned, Sattler feels like it is going quite well. She said, “I’m learning about portfolios in general and how they can be used…. At the end of four or five years of engineering school, we have these students who have to make a preparedness argument to industry…. Portfolios help students learn new things, learn maybe where their interests lie, and help them see the bigger picture.”
HCDE Awards and Accolades

Compiled by Daren Chaisy

Scholarships

Sakson Diversity Scholarship
HCDE undergraduate Alexis Hope Gottlieb received this award by demonstrating an active interest and understanding of diverse and cultural issues in HCDE.

Engineering Capstone Design Award
Undergraduate students Alexis Hope Gottlieb (HCDE), John Porter (HCDE), Alex Pham (HCDE), Wayne Gerard (CSE), Matthew Hicks (INFO), Mitch Ishimitsu (CSE), Pratik Prasad (CSE), & Sanjana Prasain (CSE) in HCDE Professor Beth Kolko’s Concepts in HCI class received this award for their Midwives’ Ultrasound Project. The group worked together to design, build, and test a portable ultrasound machine for use in Uganda.

Boeing Diversity Scholarship
HCDE undergraduates Kiran Beg and Alex Pham each received this award as runners-ups for the Sakson Diversity Scholarship.

College of Engineering/HCDE Graduate Scholarship
MS student Pausali Sen received this scholarship by demonstrating academic excellence at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, where she received an MA in English.

Booz Allen Hamilton Systems Engineering Scholarship 2009-2010, Society of Women Engineers
MS student Irini Spyridakis received this scholarship for her outstanding GPA as an graduate student in an accredited engineering or computer science degree program.

Awards

National Science Foundation (NSF) Career Awards
HCDE Associate Professors Charlotte Lee and Julie Kientz were each awarded four-to-five year grants to support their research interests. See Junior Faculty Shine, page 22.

ACM Conference on Computer-Human Interaction 2010 Best Paper Award
HCDE PhD candidate Zhiwei Guan received this award for the paper “How does Search Behavior Change as Search Becomes More Difficult?” by Anne Aula, Rehan M. Khan, and Zhiwei Guan.

Ken Rainey Award for Excellence in Research from the Society for Technical Communication (STC)
HCDE Professor Judy Ramey received this award, which is given out to one person per year by STC. Ramey was nominated for this award based on her numerous contributions to HCDE, particularly for her work on usability research.

NSF Graduate Research Supplement
HCDE PhD candidate Brook Sattler received this award to fund her research in HCDE Professor Jennifer Turns’ research project, which is unofficially titled: “Promoting Life-Long Learning, Integrated Knowledge, and Professional Identity in Undergraduate Engineering Students through a Portfolio Development Process.” See PhD Student Brook Sattler Receives Dedicated NSF Grant, page 22.

Annual HCDE Graduation Ceremony Awards

Academic Excellence Award (2009) Eric Nordlund (MS) and Loraine Rohrbach (MS)
(2010) Jerrod Larson (PhD), Cynthia Putnam (PhD), and Tiffany Rooney (BS)

Leadership & Engagement Award (2009) Amanda Ahn (BS) and Kyle Hurt (MS)
(2010) Alexis Hope Gottlieb (BS) and Brook Sattler (awarded MS, current PhD)

Innovation Award (2009) Robert Watson (MS)
(2010) Pallavi Damara (MS) and Steven Hudson (MS)

Myron L. White Award (the Mikey) (2009) Kent Sullivan, Sr. User Experience Knowledge Engineer, Microsoft, and Affiliate Faculty member received the award for being a dedicated friend to HCDE and an international leader in technical communication.

(2010) HCDE Professor Judy Ramey was awarded the Mikey for her extraordinary contributions to the department as faculty member, former chair, and friend to the department. Judy’s years of service took work on usability research.

Alumnus Matt Shobe Establishes the Shobe Prize for Entrepreneurship

By Judy Ramey

HCDE alumnus Matt Shobe recently established the Shobe Prize, a five-year, $10,000-per-year gift to encourage student entrepreneurship. The gift will fund an annual competition, beginning in the 2010-11 academic year, for student teams who have created class projects with market potential. Winning teams will receive funding to develop their idea over the summer and will receive feedback on their final prototype from a panel of experts. UW students participating in dub, an interdepartmental alliance of those interested in human-computer interaction and design, are eligible for the award.

The Shobe Prize encourages student teams in dub to pursue entrepreneurial development of a promising technology idea. According to Shobe, the real goal for the Prize is, however, to encourage UW students to learn how to build great teams with their peers.

"I hope the Prize encourages students to execute beyond the napkin sketch stage on a promising technology idea they’ve identified," said Shobe. "You rarely know when or where a great startup team will gel, but the Prize should help make those conditions even more favorable at UW."

Shobe himself has a record of entrepreneurial success. He was a co-founder of FeedBurner and led user experience design efforts with this popular service for blog publishers, podcasters, and commercial producers of syndicated content. Prior to the feeds, Shobe worked with the same three other co-founders on two startups (Spyonit and DKA).

For more information about DUB, visit dub.washington.edu.
Congratulations, Graduates of 2010!

Compiled by Kate Long

Adonis Acuario, MS
Karina Sankovic Allen, MS
Holly Ambler, MS
Jake R Ashcraft, MS
Shalina Bajracharya, MS
Faria Hamid Bhatti, MS
Kiran Beg, BS
Scott L Boggan, MS
Nathan Thaddeus Bogusz, BS
James Robert Cailotto, BS
Daren Lee Chaisy, BS
Colgan Chenghing Chan, BS
Jessica Marie Copley, BS
Ninad Dalal, MS
Pallavi Damera, MS
Christin Hou Delacruz, BS
Katie Derthick, MS
Abraham DeWeese, MS
Chad Driesbach, MS
Toni Ferro, MS
Seth Foley, MS
Sophia Ursala Fong, BS
Hannah Getachew, BS
Alexis Hope Gottlieb, BS
Kathleen Gygi, PhD
Lindsay Allison Haggman, BS
Sora Hong, MS
Carly Howard, BS
Steven Michael Hudson, BS
Brian Knudson, MS
Stacy Hue La, MS
Taylor Langford, BS
Arsenio Hilario Jose Zs Locsin, MS
Jerrod Larson, PhD
Anya Luke-Killam, MS
Robert John Cummings MacDonald, MS
Justin McDavid, MS
Melinda McRae, MS
Shane Ryan McDowell, MS
Jonathan Morgan, MS
Erin E Olmon, MS
Cynthia Putnam, PhD
Christopher A Raleigh, MS
Priya Guruprakash Rao, MS
Molly Rollitt, MS
Tiffany Rooney, BS
Devron Rombouts, BS
Joan Yvonne Ross, MS
Brook Andrea Sattler, MS
Tyler Scott, MS
Jeff Edward Soo, BS
Mykel Lynn Stivers, BS
Irini Spyridakis, MS
Mark Stewart, MS

Jacob Ryan Warren, BS
Phillip Caruthers Wilson, BS
Jennifer M Wolfe, MS
Judith Yaqoubi, MS
Chengyang Yao, BS

HCDE recognizes the generous corporations and individuals who have supported our department this year. To support HCDE, visit www.hcde.washington.edu/give.

Make a gift

Individual Supporters
Ms. So Yo Ahn
Ms. Beth Altman
Dr. and Mrs. Paul V. Anderson
Ms. Kirsten L. Atik
Mr. Jay C. Barker
Ms. Barbara A. Beach
Ms. Annalise M. Beck
Ms. Christina S. Bottomley
Suzanne G. Brainard, Ph.D.
Ms. Dale P. Callison
Ms. Denise C. Carlevato
Ms. Monica Carstens
John Alvin A Castro
Mr. and Mrs. Carl S. Chatfield
Dr. Deborah Woo-Chinn & Mr. Darryl Chinn
Dr. Mary B. Coney
Ms. Feiya Cook
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth J. Cook
Mr. and Mrs. Monty L. Correll
Mr. and Mrs. Stanton L. Cox
Mr. Malik N. Davis
Mr. Peter G. Dunn
Prof. and Mrs. David K. Farkas
Mr. Eli B. Goldberg
Ms. Marita A. Graube
Dr. and Mrs. Charles E. Hansing
Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hayward
Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan P. Hoerlein
Mr. Noah Liinsky
Prof. Julie A. Kientz
Mr. Cory R. King
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Klein
Mr. Jerrod A. Larson
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Lashley
Ms. Lora E. LaVerdiere
Mr. John E. Maki
Ms. Ann E. Miller
Dr. Carol Leppa & Ms. Constance Miller
Mr. Bruno Modolo and Mrs. Nanci Modolo
Mr. and Mrs. Keith Nations
Mr. Daniel Ahlstrom & Ms. Roxanne Neal
Mr. Sean T. Norsworthy
Anette E. and Patrick R. Olney
Mr. and Ms. Robert W. Pendle
Mr. R. F. Staron and Ms. D. D. Pieratti
Ms. Amy C. Pletcher
Mr. and Mrs. Glenn J. Pruiksma
Prof. Judith A. Ramey
Mr. Michael D. Rathjen
Mr. Jonathan Mark and Ms. Donna Sakson
Ms. Brook Andrea Sattler
Dr. and Mrs. Matthew J. Shobe
Drs. Jan H. and Dimitri E. Spyridakis
Mr. Kent Sullivan and Ms. Julie Solon
Mr. and Mrs. Tanner J. Taylor
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald M. Tenney
Mr. Matthew P. Tevenan
Prof. and Mrs. Michio Tsutsui
Ms. Ariel D. Van Spronsen
Ms. Maliah A. Washington
Mr. and Mrs. Robert B. Watson
Ms. Carolyn Wei
Ms. Diana Widjaja
Mr. Wilkinson & Ms. Abdullah-Wilkinson
Mr. George A. Zeno

Corporate Supporters
The Boeing Company
The Borman Family Foundation
Google Inc.
Microsoft Corporation
Nintendo of America, Inc.
Nokia, Inc.
The Schwab Fund for Charitable Giving
Sorenson Communications
SymTrend, Inc.
In The Real World

UWTC and HCDE Alumni report how they are doing, and provide “in the real world” wisdom (“ITRW Tips”) relevant to their experience.

Compiled by Laura Barboza and Nathan Bilbao

1989-1994

Maria E. Schneider
Writer
BSTC ‘89

I just published my third book, “Executive Lunch,” the first in the Sedona O’Hala Series. I’m hard at work on the second in the series—there’s nothing like putting the finishing touches on a manuscript! The degree I gained in technical writing opened doors for me. Some of the most valuable classes were the computer science and language classes—they made my skills stand out. Good editing and communication skills are absolutely necessary as they provide for a variety of jobs—resume services, freelance editing jobs, tutoring, technical writing and even teaching English! Your communication skills will help land a job—and keep it!

ITRW Tip: “You can’t say “thank you” enough to your co-workers, your mentors, and especially those that help you along the way. This important aspect of networking will help you continue to move forward. Thank people often, in writing and in person. Acknowledge the strengths of those around you.”

Doug Wieringa
Director of Learning Development
MSTC ‘91

I’ve been working on online training for a variety of corporate clients: GroupM, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, 401k Exchange, Siemens Medical Diagnostics, and others. I really enjoy the variety in my career, as I get to work in a lot of different subject areas. A new event in my life is that we got a new dog, a Labrador/standard poodle mix named Archie.

ITRW Tip: “Don’t forget the fundamentals such as to contributing to a team, managing your workload, meeting deadlines, writing to scope, and taking and giving feedback effectively.”

David Oberstadt
Database Administrator
davido@bellevueclub.com
BSTC ‘94

I recently changed careers to database administration after 15 years as an Information Developer with IBM. After so many years of writing about using database servers, I am now using them. Not surprisingly, database administrators with writing and editing skills bring a great advantage to IT departments. Great people are the most important part of my work. I love being able to work on projects with a small team and see those projects through to completion. I really appreciate the writing and project management skills I gained. They are required for nearly every job. Only now can I appreciate how helpful these skills are whatever my occupation is. Project management and prioritizing multiple demands are valuable skills I recommend students learn.

ITRW Tip: “Don’t bring work home too often. Time at home or out with family or friends is a vacation from work. Also, know your field well. Be able to talk intelligently with executives, engineers, or technicians about all aspects of their work. Last, make sure you can tell your mother what you do without making her head spin.”

1995-1996

Norman Ely
Website Maintenance
MSTC ‘95

About 30% of my work now is managing and optimizing Pay-Per-Click advertising for small businesses. I am also getting a lot of calls for Search Engine Ranking help. I really enjoy working at home, setting my own hours and pay rate, and having low overhead. I also just bought a Honda 919 to go with my Ducati 1000.

ITRW Tip: “Read the Masters: Horton, Tufte, D. Norman. Start noticing and deconstructing each difficult interface you encounter, from the ATM, to the library book drop, to your car radio.”

Carl Chatfield
Principal Content Project Manager
MSTC ‘95
carlchat@comcast.net

I recently started publishing a weekly blog, projhugger.com, to explore Microsoft Project and project management subjects introduced in my Project Step by Step books. I also just finished initial release work for the new Microsoft product, Windows MultiPoint Server. I taught in the certificate program from 1997 through 2005, and I returned to the classroom to teach Intro to Computer Software User Assistance in Spring of 2010. Through the MS program, I gained an appreciation and working knowledge of the content development process as well as end result. I think of process expertise as a big part of our unique domain expertise; it’s our value-add. I’ve found low-fidelity “quick and dirty” usability testing to be valuable as well. Often all we need is a rough (and timely!) indication of which design path to pursue. This approach also prevents me from overinvesting time and effort in early prototypes.

ITRW Tip: “I started blogging in part because I was at a point where I was doing very little technical writing at my day job. Do whatever you need to do to keep your core skills sharp.”

Jill DeMarco
Systems Engineering Support Analyst
rjdemarco@comcast.net
MSTC ‘96

I’ve had an interesting career working first for the government, and then for the industry that the government regulates. Being involved with rulemaking from both sides of the fence has provided me with a unique perspective and set of skills. I enjoy trying to see both sides of an issue from the viewpoint of the different audiences. Getting older has been a significant event. Believe me, they were right when they said your whole perspective of life changes as you get on in years! While retirement is a few years off, I have reached a point where I’m still very serious about my work, but enjoy the place I’ve come to and don’t feel like I’m “struggling” to reach something. I’m enjoying...
work as well as playtime! I could say that what I enjoy most is a steady income and health benefits, but I’d also say that the older I get in the workaday world, the more I appreciate the differences and diverse outlooks, talents, and challenges that people bring to the workplace. Time and again I find myself harkening back to many of the things (both great and small) that I learned while in the UWTC program. Most importantly, I learned ways of looking at challenges from a “meta-position,” which is getting above the specific to see the whole. Coney’s and Ramey’s classes were instrumental in helping me to develop this type of perspective. It’s helped tremendously throughout my career. No matter what it takes or how long it takes, finish up and get that degree! **ITRW Tip:** “Learn a foreign language and learn how to negotiate creatively.”

---

**Tamara Adlin**  
Consultant  
**MSTC ‘96**  
I’ve just finished an updated version of the Persona Lifecycle book. This one is called *The Essential Persona Lifecycle: Your Guide to Building and Using Personas.* What I love about my job is working with a variety of clients. I particularly like working with executive teams and seeing the big ‘ah-HA!’ moment when they realize that there are better ways to think about, and focus on, their users and customers. I recommend students learn to be able to speak to groups and large audiences. So much of our work comes down to translating between two (or more) groups of people who don’t realize they aren’t understanding each other.  
**ITRW Tip:** “Be willing to be (or at least pretend to be!) the dumbest person in the room. Let people think you don’t understand something, so they are forced to describe it in more basic terms than they are used to. Also, understand that the people you work with are YOUR users. Stop and think about what they need and how they think, and be ‘usable and useful’ to them. Take the time to ask them what they think they need (and then, of course, figure out what they really need) and help them get it. It’s our job to help them figure out what the goals should be.”

---

**May St. George**  
Owner/Senior Consultant of Synergy Technical Services  
**BSTC ‘95, MSTC ‘97**  
I’ve been providing training services to corporate and academic clients. I primarily provide curriculum consulting and instructional design for web-based, classroom and blended learning. I am currently contracting with UW developing online training for professional staff. It is interesting being back at UW as a consultant! What I enjoy about my work is the challenging projects that require use of advanced and changing technologies and that offer unique opportunities for creative and innovative solutions. I am an avid traveler, having been to 49 states and over 50 countries. A special treat is when I get to take off and explore somewhere new! Being an independent contractor allows me flexibility to travel at various times of the year. One of the most important things I learned in the UWTC program is to be the reader’s or end user’s advocate. Whether it is technical writing or instructional design, audience acceptance and understanding is the primary measure of success.  
**ITRW Tip:** “Try several different job roles when beginning your career to find one that you are happiest doing on a daily basis.”

---

**Anita Salem**  
Human Systems Researcher  
**MSTC ‘97**  
Recently, I’ve been working on several research projects that look at stakeholder values and needs. “Strategic Communication Considerations for Energy Conservation in the Department of the Navy” and “Private Sector Needs for Information Sharing in Port Security.” I’ve also facilitated several workshops this year on strategic communication, outcomes-based system design, innovation, and leadership. I’m really lucky to be able to work on a
wide range of projects...everything from port security, to relations with Israel, to change management for Walter Reed Hospital. The human-centered design approach has given me a core set of UCD methods and a rhetorical approach for helping to design new systems.

ITRW Tip: “Focus on desired outcomes and allow them to guide your actions. Don’t get stuck in the weeds.”

Michael Stivers
Information Architect
MSTC ’97
I have worked on new help systems and content delivery tools. I really enjoy working on the edge, trying to solve new and unexpected problems.

ITRW Tip: “Sooner or later you will need to learn more about financial topics, accounting, and the like!”

Jennifer Pike
Instructional Designer
jenn@pikesporch.com
BSTC & BA in English ’98
I have been working on online help for the Electronic Medical Record (EMR) used throughout HealthPartners Clinics and Hospitals. I have been creating Computer-Based training programs, teaching classes to providers, nurses, and PCAs and dealing with corporate-wide communication notes during upgrades. Creating CBTs is my favorite part of work. I love bringing a new feature to life and giving users the opportunity to see and try it before it goes into production. My degrees give me credibility in the eyes of my employer. If there is a disagreement over terminology, the solution I advocate for is the one that is implemented. The UWTC program helped me gain the ability to write well for various audiences. A recent significant event in my life is that I was nominated for the President’s Award at HealthPartners in 2009. I also won a Humorous Speech competition through Toastmasters in 2009.

1999-2000

Tina Loucks-Jaret
Freelance Technical Editing and Writing
MSTC ’99
I am currently freelancing full-time! Since graduation, I have worked for an environmental consulting firm and for the Center for Engineering Learning and Teaching at UW. I love being able to work on a wide variety of projects that cover interesting topics. A recent significant event in my life is that my husband and I finalized the adoption of our daughter just over a year ago. What I enjoy the most about being “In The Real World” is having the chance to meet new people, learn new things, and explore different ideas. What I have come to appreciate is the ability to learn and apply what I’ve learned to new situations. The opportunity to teach was invaluable and helped me develop confidence in personal interactions. I have found that understanding how to organize a project and then execute the project efficiently is key. For writers and editors, knowing the basics of style and grammar and understanding how to find accurate answers to what you don’t know are particularly important.

ITRW Tip: “Keep up with what is going on in your field and establish and maintain contacts with others in your field. Professional contacts are a vital part of growing your career and finding new ways to branch out and explore other ways of applying your experience and knowledge.”

Denise D. Pieratti
Engagement Manager
pieratti@rochester.rr.com
MSTC ’99
I have worked on e-learning related to software engineering certification programs, account development strategies for pharmaceutical sales reps, and customer service and leadership development skills. I do a lot of work with colleagues in India, which is interesting. I am also doing a lot of localization, which can be tricky if you don’t know French, Spanish, German, Italian, Turkish, French Canadian, etc. I probably dip back into what I learned in Mary’s rhetoric class and Jan’s research class on a daily basis.

ITRW Tip: “It’s sometimes hard to accept, but everyone brings something to the party. Be sure to listen to others and don’t always assume that you are right. And as my husband tells me, ‘Just because you have an idea doesn’t always mean it’s a good idea.’ Teams and collaboration can produce amazing results.”

Beth Chapple
Editor
MSTC ’99
Lately I’ve been doing more Spanish projects and art books. My clientele for journal articles continues to grow. Last year, my mother and I brought out the updated third edition of her comprehensive guidebook, Yellowtone Treasures. I love it when I can come up with a more apt way to express what someone is struggling to say. I have also joined the Cascade Flyers, a pilots club with two Cessnas based at Everett airport. I use my eagle eyes as a scanner in air search and rescue. Also, I play trumpet in the Sound Brass Quintet, which has been performing several times recently. Studying at the University of Washington was the perfect first thing to do upon moving to the Pacific Northwest. I also want to say that I’m proud of my two teenage sons!

ITRW Tip: “Master HTML code and learn to think for yourself.”

Mark Alway
CEO of youtracker.net
BSTC ’99
Recently, I have been interfacing our site with biometric scanners (e.g., fingerprint scanners). It’s interesting because there’s a market “desire” for these products yet the real advantages of them once implemented are almost nothing. I find it interesting how the market drives people to use technology that is really not advantageous for their effectiveness, efficiency, or time management. I love hearing customer feedback and then using that to influence new features and ideas for our product. I think HCDE is the best knowledge to have in today’s world. We are bombarded with technology mostly from a marketing perspective. HCDE experts are needed in every aspect of life to help “translate” marketing and technology into real life “to do or not to do” sorts of things. We are the bridge between people and technology and there needs to be a lot more of us.

ITRW Tip: “Learn a basic programming language so you can do quick mock-ups and gain more respect when dealing with engineers.”

Ted Boren
Senior Interaction Designer
MSTC ’99
I have been working on a mapping site for the LDS Church: maps.lds.org and beta-maps.lds.org and a redesign of the Church’s online catalog. I enjoy meeting with customers and getting their needs met. I received the Truman O. Angell Award for design excellence from the LDS Church’s design group recently. This award is
given annually to two of the Church’s interaction designers that exemplify the values and dedication of Truman Angell, the architect of the iconic Salt Lake Temple. I was one of two recipients from a team of over 41 designers. It was a great honor.

ITRW Tip: “Getting a broad perspective on user experience has been the most important thing to my career development — know something about usability, something about information architecture, something about HTML and CSS. But the most important thing on any given project is to know something about the business you are trying to support and a great deal about prospective users. Without that, all the technical skill in the world doesn’t amount to much.”

Jay Pederson
Project Manager
jayped@gmail.com
BSTC ’99
I have been working on IBM DB2 Database product documentation, best practices, and sales support information. I really enjoy the diversity of projects and challenges that I have to work on. Everything from leading technical experts through a publication process, sorting out a cross product version information problem, or getting the right message for a product out to the people who are trying to sell it—it’s all in a day’s work. It’s amazing to think I’ve been out of school over 10 years. My work and experience at UWTC/HCDE directly led to my first opportunity at IBM. Everyday I use skills I learned there to work in a multidisciplinary, matrix-managed environment that requires me to deliver more in less time with every new product. The concrete project, planning, and communication skills I learned keep me ahead of the curve. Focusing on skills and methods is valuable in this profession. Know how to take a survey, conduct a usability study, perform document analysis, understand and profile a user, and compile a good report with useful measures and statistics. Be able to communicate your skills and summarize for any audience. Along with these skills, have a basic understanding of all the tools available.

ITRW Tip: “There are many paths to choose from. You can work hard heads-down and become an expert or go-to person for specific skills. You can market yourself and participate in our industry through social, trade, and industry specific groups. Or you can focus on projects and people and become a manager or leader of projects. Find what fits your style and personality and then pursue it relentlessly. Just make sure its fun.”

Jamie Myxter
Owner of PrecisionCommunications.Org
MSTC ’00
I’ve been teaching reading, writing, and communication courses at a small junior college.

2001-2002

Judy Redmond
Editor, Garden Notes
judyredmond@verizon.net
TWE Cert ’01
I am the managing editor for Garden Notes, the quarterly newsletter published by the Northwest Horticultural Society. I enjoy writing, editing, and reading about gardens and gardening. I am a WSU Snohomish County Master Gardener. I enjoy being semi-retired and “doing my own thing.”

ITRW Tip: “Join STC) and try to attend their conferences as much as possible.”

ITRW Tip: “Spend 30 minutes a week to review what went well, what needs work, and most importantly, what you need to delegate and/or stop doing is critical in self-development.”

Mary Deraitus
Self-employed
mderaitus@gmail.com
MSTC ’01
After graduating from the Master’s program, I worked as a Usability Engineer in Boeing’s Usability Group, then as a User Experience Designer at a small software company. In 2004, I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. I keep busy by writing (one full-length novel so far), painting, and volunteering for two groups that take people with disabilities sailing and skiing. I have also taken up snowboarding again. I also freelance part-time from my home on the eastside and I would love to hear from people!

Tristan Robinson
User Experience Engineer
tristan_robinson@yahoo.com
MSTC ’01
I’m currently working on the user interface for an electronic medical record (EMR). We’re making a huge effort to tailor the workflows of the product to better conform to physicians’ real tasks. I love working directly with clinicians to find out their needs, irritations, and time-wasters. I do a lot of rapid prototyping and storyboards to test product concepts. The clinicians I work with are vibrant, fun, and full of great ideas. HCDE at UW allowed me a lot of flexibility to define the course of study that best suited my interests.

ITRW Tip: “The more quickly and adeptly you can produce stuff in graphics tools, the better. Illustrator, Visio, and now Expression (Blend and Design) are critical to the success of anyone in UX design.”

Christopher W. Kuperstein
Payment & Technology Wrangler
chris@kuperstein.org
BSTC ’01
As acting CFO and CTO of a quickly growing organization, I make careful informed decisions about which technology and finance moves are the best in the long run for the company. We are in the process of bringing a lot of services from “the cloud” back in-house so we can have more control and speedier 24/7 access to the tools we all need to do our jobs more efficiently. The most frustrating thing is to have a customer on the phone and we can’t access the information we need, because the server “out there” isn’t up! The amount of time it takes to process a phone order or an RMA has been quartered (75% reduction) just from a few simple changes in procedures and software tools. There are always new technological challenges. Finding the right tool for the right job is a long hunt. Sometimes the best tools are simple and cheap. The world runs on information. I write SQL database queries on a daily basis. Finding unique ways to pull just the data you want out out of a system is the most useful tool that I have found for allowing companies to make very informed decisions. Currently, I’m back in school at Eastern Washington University, pursuing a CPA program because this company is going to need one by the time I graduate. Laura and I purchased our first home and are in the process of looking at adoption of some kids to fill it.

ITRW Tip: “Spend 30 minutes a week to review what went well, what needs work, and most importantly, what you need to delegate and/or stop doing is critical in self-development.”

Laura and I purchased our first home on the eastside and...
Joel Hamill  
**Team Lead and Writer**  
**BSTC '02**  
I am a team lead and writer working with the IBM IMS Tools products. I enjoy working on projects with coworkers from all around the world. While in school, I enjoyed the hands on activities and appreciated opportunities to rub shoulders with industry/employers.

Sally Abolrous  
**User Experience Consultant**  
**BS in General Studies '01, MSTC '02**  
After working at T-Mobile for five years and managing a UX team that worked on research and design of mobile applications, I decided to take some time off and explore UX consulting and teaching. For the past year, I have been consulting at local design agencies as well at a start-up named Qworky. I also taught an Information Architecture for the Web class at Bellevue College, which I’m teaching again this spring. I enjoy being involved in every step of the design process, from conception and gathering requirements to implementation and beyond. I especially enjoy the early exploratory phases. I also enjoy launching products that impact millions of people. At T-Mobile, I was able to listen directly to what customers are saying (through online forums as well as in-house research), make the changes they’re requesting, and improve their experiences. UWTC is a well-rounded program, that gave me the skills to listen to users by asking the right questions, building good research, collecting and analyzing data, and building materials that exceed their needs. These skills are relevant in many careers, including technical writing/editing, interaction design, visual design, and user research. These skills are helpful within organizations when communicating with stakeholders, colleagues, and partners. Also, having a 3.5 and a 2 year-old is keeping me busy.

Taryn Gerhardt  
**Communications Director**  
**MSTC ’03**  
I write, edit, and produce Insight, Local 17’s bi-monthly magazine. One of the best parts of my job is shooting and editing photographs for print and online publications. I enjoy having a steady job doing the work that I like to do, including writing, editing, and information design. Looking back, I appreciated the high standards that were demanded in the program and the quality of education I received. Being able to listen to the people you work with and really hearing their concerns and responding to them in a way that shows you understand what they are saying has been very valuable time and time again. It can be a delicate dance of making sure the other person is heard, while making your case and holding your ground.  

**ITRW Tip:** “I highly recommend cross training in related disciplines. For example, if you are writer, you should know how to use web design programs and or get experience in video editing or writing. Also, be humble and avoid the “entitlement” mentality.”

Michael Lasserre  
**Owner of Adrenaline Laser Sports**  
**BSTC '02**  
I started my own mobile laser tag business in addition to contract technical writing. I wanted to break into the video game market, but I have one big problem. I hate writing software. Now I can play Halo outside! I also write various technical manuals for military products. I really enjoy the exposure to really cool and expensive technology. I love being in between all aspects of an organization. I like understanding the different perspectives (engineering, management, production, ownership, etc.) without being stuck in their particular methods.  

**ITRW Tip:** “Don’t forget to enjoy what you do. Don’t get complacent with one thing. Always explore new stuff because you never know who you might meet on the other end.”

Nathan W. Moore, PhD  
**Postdoctoral Researcher**  
**BSTC ’02**  
My TC skills were recently put to the test in writing an article for the journal, NanoLetters, about my surprising discovery that table salt could be stretched like taffy in the weird environs of the nanoworld. I also enjoyed the rare opportunity to explain my research to journalists at the New York Times, NPR, and other media organizations. I view each opportunity to write a research paper, report, or proposal as an opportunity to improve my ability to use language that is accurate, concise, meaningful, and engaging to my audience. The best aspects of the “Real World” are the opportunities to learn from others with expertise outside one’s own field of study and to develop new skills.  

**ITRW Tip:** “Life-long learning is necessary to combat today’s most complex technological, political, and social challenges, and can also help you stay employed.”

2003-2004

Taryn Gerhardt  
**Communications Director**  
**taryn@ifpte17.org**  
**MSTC ’03**  
I write, edit, and produce Insight, Local 17’s bi-monthly magazine. One of the best parts of my job is shooting and editing photographs for print and online publications. I enjoy having a steady job doing the work that I like to do, including writing, editing, and information design. Looking back, I appreciated the high standards that were demanded in the program and the quality of education I received. Being able to listen to the people you work with and really hearing their concerns and responding to them in a way that shows you understand what they are saying has been very valuable time and time again. It can be a delicate dance of making sure the other person is heard, while making your case and holding your ground.  

**ITRW Tip:** “I highly recommend cross training in related disciplines. For example, if you are writer, you should know how to use web design programs and or get experience in video editing or writing. Also, be humble and avoid the “entitlement” mentality.”
Brandon Hurtado  
Systems Engineer  
twincamgts@gmail.com  
BSTC ’03

I thoroughly enjoy the challenges that come along with building and maintaining a complex server infrastructure. We maintain an extremely high availability in our production environment as a result. Graduating from UWTC/HCDE has been especially valuable to me since it seems as though most technically oriented folks I work with have difficulty explaining complex systems in a way that someone from the business side can understand easily.

ITRW Tip: “Don’t be afraid to learn from “neighbor disciplines” like Industrial, Software, or Mechanical design. There is so much back and forth creativity that can occur and result in a sum greater than the parts.”

Tim Dowd  
Design Office Lead  
tim.dowd@intermec.com  
MSTC ’03

I really enjoy redesigning a product or process whereby the user produces a better product faster and is more fulfilled in the end. While not only collaborating on product interaction and icon design for mobile and web applications, I also use my user-centered design experience to redesign business processes for internal users using Lean and Six Sigma techniques. I love using the degree and training with my work experiences to continue learning and make a difference in people’s work and lives. There is a confidence that comes from knowing the history and research on which I stand. As I add to the body of user experience work, I am grateful for those who came before, those who teach, and those who continue to share their discoveries.

ITRW Tip: “I would highly recommend that you are confident in knowing how to put together a presentation in PowerPoint, because you will be doing a lot of them!”

Jamie Miller  
Senior User Experience Researcher  
BSTC ’03

Last May, I obtained my Master of Science degree in Human Factors and Ergonomics from San Jose State University. And, in July, I was hired on full time at Trend Micro. I currently work on the User Experience Team. We support our consumer, small business, and service products. The team is responsible for all aspects of usability including usability testing, heuristics, competitor reviews, surveys, site visits, and other research activities. I really enjoy testing the usability of a product. This gives me the opportunity to talk to users and improve our products based on their feedback. Our customers really like giving feedback because they feel like they are part of the process. After encountering people from many different backgrounds in graduate school, I can say with confidence that the program at UW is very rigorous. I appreciated that because I felt like graduate school was that much easier.

ITRW Tip: “Learn how to get things done over e-mail as much as possible, and never tell your boss that you think your future career path includes management.”

Alex Thayer  
Information Design Specialist  
BSTC ’00, MSTC ’04, UCD Cert ‘04

I am working on creating new Windows Mobile marketing materials, Windows International projects, and other miscellaneous projects. I am proud of the rigorous research methods I learned as a grad student. I have put these methods to good use over and over professionally. My wife is having our first baby in June 2010! Very exciting. I guess I need to learn how to change diapers. I love the fact that I have come back to HCDE for my PhD.

ITRW Tip: “If you want to get a chance to do something (like you want to learn a new approach or advance your career development), tell decision-makers that that way is the way to go. It helps if you’ve done it already, so if you haven’t, get on projects that go that way, do it on a made-up project of your own, do it on a class project, or ask a friend if you can do it for them (as an intern, contractor, or a friend). The important thing is to choose what work you do rather than waiting for someone to ask you to do it.”

Alyssa McFarland  
Stay At Home Mom  
MSTC ’04, UCD Cert ’04

Gardening and writing fiction and blog posts.

2005-2006

Kevin Wick  
Director, Experience Group  
wickkevin@yahoo.com  
MSTC ’05

Recently I have been redesigning major sections of T-Mobile.com and My.T-Mobile.com, and designing an internal application for 30,000+ T-Mobile employees. What I enjoy the most is the camaraderie that comes with working with talented colleagues on fast-paced, challenging projects. For any web-site or application design work (including user experience, taxonomy, visual design, and writing), I strongly recommend adopting a mindset to frequently test designs with people. There are lots of tools and techniques to use, and having an attitude that you will figure out some way to test every design makes the testing happen.

ITRW Tip: “If you want to learn how to get things done over e-mail as much as possible, and never tell your boss that you think your future career path includes management.”

Roxane Neal  
User Researcher  
roxane.neal@mindspring.com  
MSTC ’05

I have been working for the past year within the System Center group at Microsoft on an IT management application. I always love my time talking to users, whether it’s learning about their goals and processes or hearing their pain with our products. I have worked on three contracts at Microsoft for various groups and I enjoy the collaboration and the design challenges plus time off between projects. One of the most satisfying things about my job is when my user research and my recommendations can improve the design of the product. I really enjoy being a part of product development. I appreciate that most important experience I gained during grad school included conducting qualitative research.

Shirin McConaghy  
Yahoo Integration Program Manager  
shirint@microsoft.com  
BSTC ’05

Considering that my actual job changes often, the main constant in the past year has been the people. I am very fortunate to work
with a very smart and socialable group. I recently took on the
callenge of people management. I have always wanted to have
a team and drive results through others. It was a great experience
with lots of lessons learned.

ITRW Tip: “Be sure to do at least one internship while in school.
It will help build your network and prep you for being in the real
world.”

Nuri Banister
Manufacturing Purification Associate
nuri.banister@gmail.com
BSTC ‘05, BA in Philosophy

I’m re-writing a few of our standard operating procedures for clarity and
to better reflect our current practices. What I enjoy most is the camaraderie
engendered by a work environment that is both blue-collar in its physical, task-based nature and technical in its structure and
design. I greatly appreciate the critical thinking skills I have now as a result of my time in UWTC. The ability to write efficiently and eloquently has been invaluable in my work and home life. Whenever possible, try to voice your ideas and concerns to your bosses with confidence, and be sure to do so in the most straight-forward manner possible. Supervisors and managers, in my experience, appreciate hearing about problems or concerns with equipment, systems, procedures, etc. from those who are most familiar with them (i.e., those who deal with them daily). They appreciate informed speculation as to possible causes and ideas for solutions. Be upfront, be confident, but be measured in your analysis and don’t jump to conclusions. Take them through your thought process in an straightforward manner as possible. Initiative is highly valued where I work and I have a feeling that this is the case elsewhere as well.

ITRW Tip: “Intern, temp, volunteer—do whatever it takes to try out a profession before you commit to it. Money is one thing; I know a lot of you have debt to pay off, but it is very easy to become comfortable having a steady income, and easy to put off searching for a satisfying career if your first job isn’t it. Focus on the career first. Try out different jobs. Really enjoy what you do—it’s important for your health and sense of well-being. If you have to be poor a little longer, so be it—just make sure (as much as you can) that you will find satisfaction from your job.”

Scott Main
Technical Writer
BSTC ‘06, UCD Cert ‘06

For about two years, I’ve been working on Android. I write documentation for application developers and develop web pages for the developer web site. What I enjoy most is experimenting with the developer APIs. I have a lot of fun creating small applications that focus on specific features of the developer framework. This also makes it easy to turn around and write documentation about how to perform specific tasks using the APIs. I enjoy being challenged in new ways I couldn’t have imagined. My job places me in an environment where I experience things that are new and exciting but also challenging, which forces me to strengthen my skills and abilities. If you want to be involved with software engineering, you should absolutely be familiar with web development. Beyond anything else, web development skills are valuable in just about every aspect. Not only will you be capable of publishing online, but skills in JavaScript are skills in programming. The more programming you’re familiar with, the better.

ITRW Tip: “Be proactive in developing your skills. If you develop a hobby learning things that will apply to your job, you will excel.”

Ona Anicello
Senior User Researcher
anicello@gmail.com
UCD Cert ’06

At Apollo, I’ve been working on researching the next generation of online education. Also, I just completed building a User Research Lab. I am also working as the President of the UPA Puget Sound. I like meeting people from all walks of life and learning how they interact with software, everyone has a different perspective; I always learn something new. It’s very fascinating how people look at the same thing and see something completely different. The UC program was definitely a spring board and opened a lot of doors for usability jobs. I also made a lot of friends in the program and was able to network. I also like that there were opportunities to get involved like the diversity board and also taking part in a research group to publish a CHI paper.

ITRW Tip: “Stay active, get involved in UPA and CHI, go to conferences when you can, try to get researched published, start your own blog.”

Josh LaMar
User Experience Researcher
joshlamar@me.com
MSTC ’06

I’ve been really lucky to have worked in a couple different groups at Microsoft over the past year. I was at MSN Entertainment for a while and then the Entertainment team mostly working on the Zune website. I get to work with entertainment related content, which always brings out really cool people to work with. I also love how I’m always surprised by how users respond to things in the lab. We always have biases and hypotheses about how users will respond, but it’s not until you get some real users in front of you that things make more sense. I also realize how much geekier I am than most people. In my current role, I get to read a lot of research articles, so I feel like a student, but everything goes from theoretical to applied very quickly when you’re designing studies to test really interesting research questions. I recently joined a band, The Endeavors (www.theendeavors.com), and it’s been really fun to play shows. I play synth/keys and sing backup.

ITRW Tip: “The System Usability Scale (SUS) by John Brooke (available from usability.gov) is a pretty standard usability tool that is great to track changes over time.”

2007-2008

Sean Norsworthy
Technical Assistant
BSTC ‘07

Up until December 2009, I was a Systems Engineer supporting mostly Windows environments. I also managed the knowledge base of system operating procedures, DR plans, and SOX documentation. Since then I’ve been working on various business activities with friends and family as I seek full time work. Right now I am getting to learn lots of new things including C#, ASP.net, and PHP. I’ve been working part time since January 2010 and I am currently looking for full-time work in the Technical Communication, Systems Engineering, or Business Intelligence areas. I also went to Australia recently. I like to get out of the U.S. whenever I can.

ITRW Tip: “Grammar and writing skills.”
In The Real World

Carolyne Wei
User Experience Researcher
weicar@gmail.com
PhD ‘07
I work on Google’s social products. Lately I have been leading research on Calendar. Also, I have been serving on HCDE’s Diversity Board. I enjoy the incredibly smart, talented people I get to work with everyday. I appreciated that we tackled a variety of projects at UWTC/HCDE. If we didn’t have all the required skills, we were encouraged to stretch ourselves and learn them. This willingness to grow and be flexible has been invaluable in my career in the tech sector where it seems like we have a new trend every quarter. Every user experience researcher should be familiar with quantitative and objective usability metrics. One doesn’t need to be expert, but it is incredibly useful to understand how one could use statistics, server log data, or eye-tracking to improve a product. I’ve been traveling internationally quite a bit for work and pleasure. In the last three months I have traveled to Italy, Switzerland, and Bali!

ITRW Tip: “Get out and talk with as many people as you can about their jobs. New career options are popping up every year.”

Ariel van Spronsen
Content Strategist
MSTC ‘07, UCD Cert ‘07
After several years as a User Experience Architect at ZAAZ, I’m now working independently focusing on content strategy, which “plans for the creation, publication, and governance of useful, usable, content” (Kristina Halvorson’s definition). While working on interface designs, I always found myself seeking to organize the content and pay close attention to how messages develop over the course of a user’s task path, so content strategy is a natural area of focus for me. I use so much of what I learned in my Master’s program every day: information design, visual communication design, and usability are the key areas. But I also refer back to the basics of technical writing over and over again. Simple concepts like chunking, writing for scannability, etc. are not always well known by copywriters and I often educate them about writing for the web.

Shannon McKee
Technical Writer
technical-writer@hotmail.com
TWE Cert ‘07
I am creating print pieces for tradeshows and chiropractic magazines, social media marketing, and creating online pieces in the form of newsletters, manuals, training videos, new service documents, and more. The nine months I spent in the certificate program set me up for a lifetime of gainful and enjoyable employment. Single-sourcing and organization have helped me immensely. Being able to look back and reinvent an earlier piece saves an amazing amount of time and ensures that your message remains consistent, yet fresh. The technical writing and editing program at UW was the best thing I could have done for myself, hands down. It doubled my salary, allowed me to work in positions I love, and manage my own time and tasks however I see fit. This program is by far the best time and money I have ever spent.

ITRW Tip: “Find a job that does not pigeon-hole you. Seek a company that allows you to use all of your skills and build new ones along the way. If you can do this, then your schooling is just a stepping-stool to a wide range of possibilities that can boost your career and help you add to your skill set.”

Ario Jafarzadeh
User Experience Designer
ario@mail.com
MSTC ‘07
I have been working on Gmail, Google Toolbar, and Google Sidewiki. I enjoy working on tough interaction design problems and creating solutions to help deal with the problem of information overload. I have recently moved to Zürich to work on Gmail and give Europe life a try! The HCDE program gave me a lot of insight that I use daily in my work. Its one thing to learn the tools of design, its another to grasp the theory and interconnectedness of the underlying concepts.

ITRW Tip: “Start thinking of your portfolio from day one. Take the products you use daily and think about ways to improve them, turn your ideas into mockups, share them with friends, iterate, blog about your ideas, and engage with the larger design community.”

Steve Lappenbusch
Consultant
MSTC ‘07
I am leading an effort at Lexis to analyze and document best practices in various kinds of investigative government work such as Medicaid fraud, child support enforcement, or tax evasion. I love helping child support case workers find deadbeat dads. If you are a deadbeat dad and you’re reading this, know that we will find you. Looking back at college I appreciate the ability to look at technologies systemically from a person’s point of view, not from a technology-centric point of view.

ITRW Tip: “Politics and budgets count. They aren’t sexy, but they run the show. Learn how to use both or you will have to rely on others to get what you want. Also focus on the ability to ask probing questions and stay tactful while doing it. Nothing will engage a customer, employer, or research subject as much as a thoughtful question.”

Ron Williams
User Experience Specialist
UCD Cert ‘08
The primary focus of my work is designing the user experience for a search tool for MyBoeingFleet.com, a web site that provides information that airlines use to operate and maintain their fleets. I enjoy working with users, business people, graphic designers, and software developers to take designs from conception to completion. Its most interesting to observe how designs evolve during this process. I enjoy the challenge of achieving positive change amid continuous chaos. The two most useful benefits I gained from the program were an understanding of user-centered design techniques and an ability to work in teams to apply these techniques to a common goal.

ITRW Tip: “Flexibility is vital. While you may fervently believe that good design is necessarily grounded in user research, you may find yourself working in an environment where you have no access to users and must apply what I refer to as “heuristic design.” Such concessions are the rule in the business world. While you may learn a particular design approach in the classroom, such as user-centered design, you rarely have the opportunity to apply it in a rigorous manner. More typically, you need to adapt what you’ve learned, picking and choosing techniques that can be applied to given situations.”

re:Design 2010
Lorie Whitaker
Usability Analyst
MSTC '08

I have worked with diverse clients such as Discover, Samsung, Autodesk, Sony, Texas Instruments, and Disney. I really enjoy working with different technologies such as websites, mobile phones, and hardware. I traveled to Munich in May to attend the 2010 UPA conference as my proposal for an Idea Market was accepted to the conference. While I was in the program, I found my User Centered Design class, taught by Annie Lund, incredibly insightful. What I learned in that class has helped me to interact with my clients when we scope projects as well as when the deliverables are determined.

2009-2010

Carol A Taylor
User Experience Director
BSTC '03, MSTC '08, UCD Cert '08

I work on Mobile Web and M-Commerce experience research and product design. I am investigating and designing for specific contexts of use. I enjoy interacting with a range of smart people across multiple disciplines working together to solve complex problems.

ITRW Tip: “Be passionate. Walk in user’s shoes. Empathize and advocate.”

Kyle Hurt
Editing Consultant
kylehurt@gmail.com
MSTC '09

At Advaiya, I am part of a user experience team that oversees the information and graphic design of content ranging from technical guidelines for developers to marketing collateral for business executives. One of the things I enjoy most about my job is the opportunity to work across multinational teams of expert problem solvers on a daily basis. I find few things more rewarding than conversations that result in the direct transfer of knowledge. Landing a job in December 2009 has been the most significant recent event in my life. Second would be purchasing a drum kit. The best part of being in The Real World is getting paid to do group work. I know I don’t speak for everyone when I say that group work is the best part of graduate school, but I believe it is impossible to communicate effectively if you are not at least willing to understand those with whom you interact. Regardless of your career path, if you want to learn how to have fun with your job and challenge yourself intellectually, learn to love group work and make it work for you. It pays off. In UWTC, I learned as much from my peers as I did from my professors, and I continue to value the friendships and professional relationships I’ve gained from that experience. The lessons these individuals have taught me continue to challenge me in all that I do professionally, intellectually, and socially. I could not be more appreciative of that.

ITRW Tip: “For anyone who wants a career in human centered design and is not Steve Jobs, my advice is quite simple: Learn to love people — I mean group work.”

Niklas Patrick Nordlof
Community Specialist
mrsthethooth@burningsea.com
BSTC '09

I work on the Community Team for the MMO Pirates of the Burning Sea. I’ve worked on a number of projects. A little while ago I worked on the print production side of making various promotional materials for our volunteer promoter materials such as stickers, business cards, fliers, and wood boxes. I’m very grateful to Kelly Page who hooked me up with some great printers and also taught me all the lingo! I have also been writing and editing several game guides for our site burningsea.com. It was a chance to see how the Microsoft MSTP applied to an MMO. I’ve been writing, categorizing, and then distributing monthly feedback surveys. Recently, I appeared in our monthly podcast and I will be helping produce future podcasts. I am also involved on our community forums, which I moderate. I use the forums as a way to interact with the community and glean their reactions to changes in our game. The varied education I received in UWTC/HCDE was perfect for a position on the Community Team of an MMO. It’s a pretty new career path, but people in our field are educated in all the right areas. Print production as taught by Kelly Page has helped a lot.

ITRW Tip: “Familiarize yourself with a few style guides (Microsoft MSTP and something else), so you can make quick and confident writing and editing choices. A decent knowledge of web programming has helped a lot. If you work with anything internet related, you will at some point have to write and read code. Do all you can while in school to get involved in the industry you are interested in. I had an internship here at Flying Lab Software, volunteered at a game developers conference, and wrote my ChID thesis on Online Communities. When it was time to get apply for the job, the industry wasn’t a mystery to me.”

Renae Culala
Information Technology Business Intelligence Analyst
renaeculala@gmail.com
BSTC '09

I love working in technical environments, being exposed to different programs in the IT field, and at the same time being able to work with people and analyze usability of both products and workflows. I enjoy being able to move around using my skillset in the real world. I never thought I’d work in the Information Technology or Business Intelligence field, but I really enjoy it! I had an internship in technical writing at Talyst, Inc., when I was a student at UW, then my first position post graduation was an IT application/system analyst for F5 Networks. I fell in love with this industry! I continued to work at F5 for a few months and found a position here at Washington Dental Service geared towards my goals of business analysis. I’ve found an area where I can see myself grow and continue learning, but it is also a field where a technical communication and a human centered design foundation is necessary. The ability to communicate effectively with both program developers as well as end users is what I appreciate most from the UWTC/HCDE program. That skillfully of understanding technical aspects and being able to communicate
that to non-technical people has helped significantly.

ITRW Tip: “Network, network, network! www.linkedin.com is a great resource to network/job hunt. I can’t stress enough how valuable it is to keep constant relationships with coworkers, managers, and supervisors.”

Bob Watson
Senior Programmer & Writer
rbwatson@u.washington.edu
MSTC ’09, UCD Cert ’09

I just finished writing a chapter titled “Incorporating Usability into the API Design Process” that will be published Dec. 2010 in: “Usability of Complex Information Systems: Evaluation of User Interaction.” My job offers a lot of opportunity for me to apply and expand my HCDE education. Its truly a win-win situation. I was accepted to come back to UW in the HCDE’s PhD program where I hope to conduct more research in technical communication and keep finding ways to apply HCDE research to the “real world.” What I enjoy most about the real world is being able to evangelize to others what I learned through my HCDE degree. But, to be honest, I have to say I enjoy having spare time to pursue new hobbies. I got an amateur radio license (K7RBW) and, without using the internet or a cellphone, I’ve talked with people around the world. I’m also learning to fly radio-control helicopters. I enjoy being able to apply the things I learned in the HCDE department directly to my work. Best of all, I found that what I learned in the theory classes really could be applied in the real world. So much so that I published a paper on it!

ITRW Tip: “Listen and, more importantly, hear.”

Karina S. Allen
Web developer & Technical Writer & Editor
BSTC ’05, MSTC ‘09

I enjoy the challenge of learning something new and mastering it. Building a website gives me that challenge when I use a language I don’t really know to create interactive interfaces. One of the things I appreciate the most is acquiring research skills to help me do what I need to get done. Something I wish would have been taught when I was a student in the program is Content Management and SDK documentation. Those two skills are invaluable in the real world. I just had a baby boy in August 2009!

Adonis Duro Acuario
User Experience Lead
adonis.acuario@gmail.com
MSTC ’10

I have been working on improving the Chase online experience. I enjoy the positive feeling when you discuss, craft, and conduct user research that ends up having a positive direct impact on the design and implementation of a product or service. From starting in the program to finishing my Masters degree, I got engaged and married my college sweetheart. We started and continue to run a successful photography business in Issaquah. What I enjoy most about being in the real world is that it is no longer about simply discussing theories and imagining scenarios; it’s about developing your own theories and turning them into realities. I certainly gained a sense of refinement in practical methods for developing and conducting user research, and a thorough understanding of issues related to the field of human-computer interaction and the potential for innovation. By innovation, I do not simply mean innovative products. I also mean innovative ways of addressing problems from different angles, given the program’s curriculum that helps us gain perspective.

ITRW Tip: “If you’re interested in user research as a profession, recognize that while you are one voice out of several key stakeholders, your perspective makes you an equally important stakeholder. Consider this in everything you do, and you’ll be a better researcher, collaborator and contributor. Learn to love PowerPoint. It is the industries tool of choice for pretty much everything. If you are interested in usability, certainly familiarize yourself with a variety of research methods and processes. Conducting focus groups, remote testing, field studies, card sorting, cognitive walkthroughs, etc. Knowings the pros and cons of each and being able to clearly articulate them goes a long way towards providing value to a product team.”

Photos courtesy of alumni
Mini Sieg Hall
Take Sieg Wherever You Go!