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### Department News

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*Jan Spyridakis*

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*by Alena Benson and Jan Spyridakis*

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State of the Department

This past year has been a year of growth for HCDE. HCDE faculty, staff, and students are continuing to do fantastic work as the stories in this issue of re:Design show. They are producing wonderful research and excellent projects, and they are growing in their numbers.

The department is facing another substantive cut in its state budget, but our fiscal, curriculum, and faculty teams continue to find creative ways to help our students meet their goals. Our programs are growing. This year we had 91 applications to the BS program, 186 to the MS program, and 61 to the PhD program, an increase of over 64%. Our entering classes next autumn will be the biggest ever.

Professors Zachry and Ramey were honored with Excellence in Teaching Awards; and PhD student Natasha Jones received a UW Excellence in Teaching Award (p. 13). Two students took first place at the Microsoft Startup Weekend and a team of students was awarded the Shobe Prize (p. 15). We merged our day and evening Master’s programs and doubled the cohort size (p. 5). We also created advisory boards for our UCD and GTCM certificates and an External Advisory Board (p. 6). In November, we spent a wonderful day and evening at Microsoft with many HCDE alumni who work at Microsoft (p. 9). In February, we held our first Corporate Affiliates Day and our second biennial Open House (p. 10). The economy is picking up and many students are landing incredible internships (p. 25). The HCDE Student Association started a tutoring program and also brought in Project Runway designer Andy South to speak (p. 11). This year brought new faculty and staff to the department (p. 8). Students are being awarded scholarships and fellowships in record numbers (p. 14). And they are also having a great time being mentored by our alumni (p. 24).

The HCDE staff and faculty are making difficult choices in these challenging budgetary times and I am proud that our community has thrived so well! Your donations to our funds make a huge difference in our ability to grow during tough times (see http://hcde.w.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.
Part-Time Faculty Offer Industry Insights in HCDE

HCDE faculty have a rich breadth and depth of academic expertise that speaks to our interdisciplinary field. In addition to HCDE faculty, part-time lecturers bring valuable insights and professional expertise from industry to the classroom. These lecturers help carry out the departmental and University mission of teaching excellence. Part-time lecturers are selected for their expertise in fields as diverse as visual communication, localization, usability, project management, software user assistance, technical writing, technical Japanese, and experimental research methods.

Apart from industry expertise, lecturers are hired based on their teaching acumen and desire to work with students. Many HCDE lecturers have affiliations with the department; in many cases, HCDE alumni return to the classroom as teachers. Several graduates from HCDE programs and certificates have taught courses in the department this year, including: Sally Abolrous (HCDE 517), Carl Chatfield (HCDE 426), Dr. Mary Beth Hasselquist (HCDE 511), Noah Illinsky (HCDE 510), Sean Mitchell (HCDE 333, HCDE 403), Doug Pyle (HCDE 518), Tyler Scott (HCDE 421), and Irini Spyridakis (HCDE 231).

Some lecturers have ties to the University of Washington community. Sean Bolan (HCDE 511) teaches in the School of Art; he has degrees in Visual Communication and Educational Psychology, and is currently pursuing a PhD in Learning Sciences—all from the UW. David Evans (HCDE 516) developed a Psychology of Digital Media course for the Master of Communication in Digital Media program. Dr. Mary Beth Hasselquist (HCDE 511) is an Obstetrician at Group Health and a Clinical Associate Professor in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology with the UW, and she has both UCD and TWE certificates in HCDE. In describing her experience with HCDE students, Mary Beth comments, “I enjoy interacting with students through various communication technologies. These interactions result in a richer learning experience for all of us.”

Some part-time lecturers also serve on HCDE advisory boards. Carl Chatfield, Pam Johnson, and James Kramer sit on the Technical Writing and Editing Certificate board. Sabina Alteras-Honig, Suzanne Boyd, Doug Pyle, and Skip Walter sit on the User Centered Design Certificate board. Ulrike Irmler sits on the Global Technology & Communication Management Certificate board. Skip Walter is the Chair of the External Advisory Board. Several of the HCDE lecturers—Suzanne Boyd, Dr. Mary Beth Hasselquist, Carl Chatfield, Ulrike Irmler, Doug Pyle, Karen

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HCDE’s PhD Program Grows

In 2002, the metaphorical red ribbon that strung across HCDE doors was cut honoring the brand new PhD program. Four years later, the first student of the young PhD program graduated, and today, 25 PhD students study in the growing department.

The rapid expansion of the PhD program occurred for a few reasons, HCDE Director of Student Services, Gian Bruno explains. A few years ago, the Washington State Legislature removed the cap on graduate students for the department, which allowed room for growth. Bruno is the PhD student administrative advisor and assists students with various administrative processes such as the general exam and dissertation defense. Furthermore, he explains, the merging of HCDE’s two Masters programs has provided more space in the PhD program.

HCDE Graduate Program Coordinator Mark Zachry points out, the program is also growing “to ramp up the research profile of the department and to support the research work that some of the new faculty are doing.” Zachry is the initial contact point for new PhD students and helps these students decide the faculty member with whom they will work.

Zachry relates that the program’s national recruitment has grown, seeing applications from Asia and South America, and from departments such as human computer interaction and informatics. He explains that the national recruitment effort has been a reciprocal relationship, meaning that University of Washington PhD graduates with promising skills are then being introduced to other departments across the country.

Zachry describes admission to the department as “very competitive,” but explains that aspiring PhD students can strengthen their application by participating in research groups, publically presenting their work locally, or better yet, presenting on a national stage. He also says that reading research papers and thinking early on about relevant research questions helps.

Highlighting the growth of the PhD program, Bruno estimates last year’s 16 students, now at 25, could grow to 34 students by next year.
External Advisory Board Formed

The External Advisory Board is a collection of industry, university, and community professionals. The primary purpose of this board is to advance HCDE’s research, teaching, and service goals by strengthening the department’s ties to industry and the community. The External Advisory Board holds meetings semi-annually and works on department issues, directions, advocacy, and the ability to impact industry.

Chair of the External Advisory Board, Skip Walter, explains that the primary function of the board is raising the national, local, and international visibility of the HCDE program in both the academic and business communities. By creating a board with well-recognized HCDE academics, highly visible corporations, and innovative practitioners, entrepreneurs, and investment professionals, we immediately create visibility. Then, with that visibility, we can raise funds to attract world-class faculty and create teaching and research environments that will attract the best students.

Walter hopes the board can involve corporations—both large and small—with HCDE as a way to better understand the value of design in innovating and improving business.

The last meeting included discussions of how departments and companies gain reputations, build visibility, and acquire funding. The board also discussed future-thinking topics such as curricular models in other programs, new research themes, and strategic steps necessary for fundraising. At the end of the meeting, the board touched on sponsoring a national or international conference.

The role of External Advisory Board members is to provide advice when asked and attract resources to allow HCDE to grow further and develop as a department.

HCDE Student Association Opens New Tutoring Center

The HCDE Student Association (HCDESA) proudly opened their doors to a new tutoring center in winter 2011. The tutoring center is available to all HCDE students enrolled in upper-division HCDE courses. It was established to “help students develop core HCDE skills needed to succeed” in and out of the classroom. The tutors assist students with writing, ideation, prototyping, coding, graphics, and more.

Tutors are student volunteers who provide guidance or a gentle boost. Drop-in tutoring sessions are located in the HCDE Computer Lab in Sieg Hall. Hours of operation change quarterly, but updated information can be found on the HCDESA website: http://students.washington.edu/hcdesa. Tutors are also available by appointment.
HCDE Offers Professional Master’s Degree

HCDE’s day and evening Master’s programs will merge into the Professional Master’s program beginning in fall 2011. The merged program will offer both full- and part-time students evening coursework along with daytime seminars and directed research opportunities. Professional Master’s students will be able to choose between two concentrations of User-Centered Design and Global Technology & Communication Management, or create their own specialization in human computer interaction, user interface and information design, or technical communication.

Innovative Format and Curriculum

The pioneering evening-class format reflects both industry feedback and student needs. Gian Bruno, HCDE Director of Student Services, explains that one motivation for combining the programs was “feedback from industry that our day students were very theoretical while our evening students were very application driven. We combined the programs to create a little balance with how our students approach issues and problems.”

The Professional Master’s program features other innovations that arose from student opinions and HCDE’s desire “to stay relevant,” according to Bruno. The new program’s final quarter includes a capstone project that will allow Master’s students to showcase their work. This project addresses the most common suggestion Master’s students made about the program.

Like its predecessor day and evening Master’s programs, the Professional Master’s Program is not necessarily a terminal program, and some students may seek a PhD. It will still be run through Professional and Continuing Education as a self-sustaining program, receiving no funding from Washington State.

Merger Does Not Affect Currently Enrolled Students

Among current students, the most common question has been: “How will this change my curriculum?” The program merger does not impact students who began their Master’s program before fall 2011. During the transition period, the department will have three Master’s programs: day, evening, and Professional Master’s. The day and evening Master’s (the current programs) will remain unchanged until current cohorts complete their studies. When current Master’s students have completed their programs, the Professional Master’s program will be renamed “Master’s in HCDE.”

Who is a typical Professional Master’s student?

The Professional Master’s Program has attracted diverse applicants. The interdisciplinary mix of applicants includes many with strong technical and design backgrounds, some with humanities backgrounds, and many interested in Human Computer Interaction (HCI). The 2011 cohort for the Professional Master’s Program will be about 50 students. Admissions were conducted in two cycles, with deadlines on February 1 and May 1, and a projected admission rate of about 33%. According to Bruno, this year and last year saw triple the number of applications from prior years and while the majority of applicants are from Washington State, the Pacific Northwest, and California, the Professional Master’s has also attracted applicants from Europe, Asia, and the southeastern U.S.
An HCDE Welcome to Anne, Allen, and Lisa

**Anne Hilton** has been HCDE’s new part-time Communications Manager since October 2010. Anne controls all print and electronic communication, as well as the department’s online presence. Anne has high ambitions for the department, hoping to revamp the HCDE website and improve the department’s visibility at the UW and the community.

Anne is also working part-time as the East Asia Resource Center’s Outreach Coordinator in the Jackson School of International Studies until June 15. There, she offers professional development opportunities about East Asia to K–12 teachers.

Anne studied graphic design at the School of Visual Concepts (SVC) and intends to continue taking classes in letterpress and typography. Anne is a self-proclaimed typography nerd who openly loves Helvetica. Before studying at SVC, she received her Bachelor’s in Chemistry and German from Trinity University and her Master’s in Korea Studies from the UW. Anne has also spent several years living in Korea, Germany, and Switzerland.

**Allen Lee**, HCDE’s new Fiscal Specialist, has been with the department since December 2010. Allen’s duties include employee payroll, timesheet keeping, travel reimbursements, and purchasing. One task that he finds we most need help with at HCDE is travel reimbursement, due to complex and confusing travel rules and regulations. If you need help with travel reimbursement or have other fiscal questions, Allen is here to help.

Allen is a UW alumnus and has lived in Seattle for 30 years. He enjoys working in the yard and convincing himself it’s his exercise. Boating is his passion, but Allen has yet to buy his dream boat since a down payment would cost more than his kids’ orthodontist bills.

**Lisa A. Yamasaki** joined HCDE as the new Administrative Assistant in August 2010. Lisa manages the front office, supports the Department Administrator in space management, assists advisors with student service projects, and manages student assistants. She is responsible for the growth of HCDE’s Corporate Affiliates Program, and the Corporate Affiliates Day would have been impossible without her.

Lisa received a Bachelor’s in Communications from Western Washington University and looks forward to completing a Master’s in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management at the UW. Lisa has been a community relations and donor family advocate for organ transplantation, fundraised and planned events for Woodland Park Zoo, and previously owned an event planning business.

Lisa is a Washington native who enjoys rainy days and believes there is no such thing as too many coffee shops. When she is not chasing her 1½ year-old son or walking her pug, Lisa can be found knitting or earning her green thumb in urban gardening. 

Photos: Lisa A. Yamasaki
World Usability Day Ends with “Alumni and Friends at Microsoft”

HCDE and the Microsoft User Experience Central team held a highly successful “HCDE/TC Alumni and Friends at Microsoft” event on November 11, 2010, after World Usability Day events at the Microsoft campus in Redmond. The event was a great success, attended by more than 85 people. Alumni from as far back as the 1980s, as well as HCDE Student Association officers, current students employed at Microsoft, faculty, and staff were in attendance. HCDE advisory board members, affiliate faculty, and some long-time department friends working at Microsoft were also present.

Three-time HCDE alumnus Mike Berg of the Microsoft User Experience Central team sponsored the event. Berg worked with Department Chair and Professor Jan Spyridakis to identify and invite over 170 HCDE or TC graduates recently working at Microsoft.

“She [Spyridakis] had seen the Computer Science department hold an annual event to connect with alums at Microsoft, and felt that HCDE alums would benefit from the same type of connection,” Berg explained. “I totally agreed, and think that our industry is particularly interested in what is happening in the academic space. It was a great idea from the start.”

The evening was officially launched with Spyridakis delivering a retrospective on the evolution of the department. Five HCDE faculty members gave presentations on their current projects to update the audience on the research directions of the department. For the remainder of the evening, attendees socialized and networked over hors d’oeuvres and wine.

“Planning and hosting the event with Mike was great fun,” Spyridakis noted. “Bringing World Usability Day to a close by connecting Microsoft friends, HCDE/TC alumni, and HCDE faculty and staff made for a very special event.”

Given the success of the alumni gathering, Berg and Spyridakis are planning on repeating the event. “I hope this becomes an annual event,” Berg said, “whether it is timed with World Usability Day again or not. I heard nothing but very appreciative comments on this end about the event.” Berg felt that connecting Microsoft-employed HCDE alumni with current department members could benefit students on various career paths. “People who are hired as recent department grads tend to work in directly relevant roles, such as Usability Engineer/User Experience Engineers, UX Designers, Technical Editor or Writer, or in Content Publishing.”

The audience at World Usability Day waits for the first presentation.
Events

HCDE’s First Corporate Affiliates Day a Big Success

With the threat of snow looming over Seattle, members of HCDE’s Corporate Affiliates Program gathered at the UW on Wednesday, February 23, for HCDE’s first Corporate Affiliates Day—a day with research presentations, a career fair, and an open house.

The Corporate Affiliates Program (CAP) is in its first year and currently has 14 Corporate Affiliates representing regional and national companies. CAP is designed to enhance interaction between industry partners and HCDE’s faculty, students, and alumni. Ideally, it will forge long-term relationships that result in collaboration and research. The benefits of being a Corporate Affiliate include access to summaries of research activities in the department, the online résumés of HCDE students and alumni, and the students and alumni attending the HCDE Career Fair, among many other things.

Professor and HCDE Department Chair Jan Spyridakis began the day by welcoming all Corporate Affiliates and HCDE staff to the first CAP Day and morning research session. Spyridakis gave a brief history of how HCDE evolved from the Department of Technical Communications, and announced that there had been a 50% increase in applicants between 2010 and 2011. After introductions of HCDE faculty and Corporate Affiliates, professors Mark Zachry, Charlotte Lee, Julie Kientz, and Beth Kolko presented their current research projects to those in attendance.

In his presentation, “Designing Insight: Technologies for Creating Meaningful Views of Others in Online Spaces,” Zachry discussed developing an understanding of people in an online environment. Lee discussed the use of e-readers in the academic setting, considering issues such as reading techniques and purposes, and a reader’s need to create cognitive maps in her presentation, “Digital Reading Technology and the Academic Potential of E-readers.” Kientz’s presentation, “Computing for Healthy Living and Learning,” provided an overview of designing computing technology to support education and healthy lifestyles. The research presentations concluded with Kolko’s talk, “Old Technologies, New Interfaces: Rethinking and Redesigning Ultrasound Technology for Midwives in Uganda,” which focused on the development of the Midwives’ Maternal Ultrasound project and its goal of developing and implementing medical technologies in low resource environments.

After the research presentations and a lunch break, the Corporate Affiliates set up tables for the HCDE Career Fair in the Walker Ames Room of Kane Hall. Students were able to speak to representatives of

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Project Runway Finalist Visits HCDE Students

On April 4, Season 8 Project Runway finalist Andy South talked to HCDE students about designing in the fashion industry. To begin, he invited students to sit in a circle with him and encouraged the audience to ask questions. While relating his experiences in high school and college, he commented on the importance of his involvement with student associations and clubs.

Although South is not part of an industry typical to HCDE, he had many tips about designing and working with others. He spoke on the value of design and the importance of having enough time to let ideas grow. He explained the importance of knowing your own strengths and weaknesses, and discussed working with colleagues.

South is currently teaching at Honolulu Community College, his alma mater. He is in the process of developing his two fashion lines, South by Andy South, and Andy South. His visit was arranged by the HCDE Student Association (HCDESA) after students watched a Project Runway clip that demonstrated group dynamic and communication in HCDE Professor Sarah Pérez-Kriz’s Visual Communication class. The HCDESA hopes to bring more industry professionals like South to speak with students.

“You have to be able to work in a group and let people take the reins regarding their strengths. You have to let people know you are confident in them. Then they will see their value and work harder.”

HCDE’s First Corporate Affiliates Day, continued from page 10

the companies about internships, jobs, and their industries. When commenting on the career fair, HCDE Director of Student Services Gian Bruno said, “I was really impressed…. The room was filled with students and employers who all seemed engaged in good conversation throughout the event.”

The first Corporate Affiliates Day ended with an Open House in Sieg Hall. As students, alumni, faculty, and Corporate Affiliates conversed, explored faculty labs, and looked over research posters, Spyridakis reflected on the day’s success: “I was pleased with the turnout and involvement of so many different people all day long. The Corporate Affiliates brought such great energy to our department and shared their viewpoints with faculty and students. Faculty and students were present throughout the day and were eager to get to know our new corporate friends.” Next year’s Corporate Affiliates Day is tentatively scheduled for February 15, 2012. For more information about the program visit: http://hcde.uw.edu/cap.
As HCDE students and alumni arrived at the Waterfront Activities Center, they moved beyond formal greetings and got comfortable with new acquaintances. After everyone settled in, the night progressed to a sociable group “speed dating” hour. Teams of students, undergraduates mixed with graduates, made their rounds to new tables, each with different alumni, beginning conversations about life after college. The crowd was engaged, connected, and authentic.

The event was designed to give students a chance to interact with industry professionals and get exposure to the field of usability studies beyond an academic setting. From the turnout, it is apparent that students are eager to meet industry professionals. Events like these ease the burden on students leaving the academic nest and entering professional waters because they help provide industry connections that are much needed in the technology world. Graduate student Silvia Amtmann said the most useful aspect of this event was “[discussing] how a variety of usability work is done in industry, as opposed to how usability work is approached in the academic setting.”

One of the strongest advantages to a mentor relationship with alumni is that students can learn to translate academic lessons into industry practice. Alumni represented a variety of fields related to HCDE, including varying technical communication, usability research, and UX design. Mentors spoke with students about the diverse career options available upon graduating from HCDE. Nathan Bilbao, an undergraduate student focusing on HCI, appreciated the “broad spectrum of advice the alumni were able to give. A large population of the mentors represented the previous incarnation of the department and although there were few HCI specialists present, the advice I received was very professional and incredibly valuable.”

The event successfully exposed students to the fields of technical communication, usability research, and UX design, and lay the foundation for future student-alumni connections.
Natasha Jones, PhD candidate in the HCDE Department, has been awarded the 2011 University of Washington Excellence in Teaching Award. The award will be formally presented to her in June.

Jones came to the UW after completing a Bachelor’s degree in Print Journalism from Georgia State University and a Master of Technical and Professional Communications (MPTC) degree from Auburn University. She has work experience in print journalism and editing, and she reflects on her admiration for language by saying, “I have always had a love of language, whether literary or technical.”

Department Chair Jan Spyridakis commented on Jones’ teaching abilities by saying, “We are so honored to have Natasha teaching in our department. The UW Excellence in Teaching Award does a wonderful job of acknowledging her hard work and recognizing her creativity, determination, and innovation in the classroom.” Kerrie Kephart, Director of the Engineering Communication Program, notes, “Natasha is a caring, committed, and talented pedagogue, extremely worthy of this recognition.” Students of Jones have commented on her ability to evoke stimulating classroom discussions and create comfortable classroom environments.

Jones began her HCDE PhD work in 2007 and expects to complete the degree in 2012. She is conducting research on how loosely networked activist organizations communicate and collaborate. After completing her PhD, Jones hopes to obtain a faculty position at a liberal arts college in order to focus on teaching and conducting directed research with small groups of undergraduate students.
Awards

HCDE Student Scholarships and Awards

John L. Shackleford Endowed Fund for Continuing Education in Engineering

Senior Darivanh Vlachos is the recipient of this scholarship, established by John Shackleford’s son. The fund assists students who have been employed for at least two years before returning to the College of Engineering, and is provided for academic excellence. Vlachos is on the Individualized Study track focusing on web design. She is interested in user experience and interaction design on the web.

Boeing Undergraduate Engineering Scholarships 2010–2011

Junior Rachel Reynard received this scholarship as a promising new student in HCDE. Reynard’s area of concentration is Human Computer Interaction.

Junior Katie Krupin received this scholarship for excellent academic standing upon entry to HCDE.

Graduate School Fund for Excellence and Innovation Travel Award

MS student Pausali Sen is the recipient of this scholarship for 2010. She will attend an esteemed international conference where she will present the results of her research on how Computer Supported Cooperative Work CSCW technologies support social activism.

National Science Foundation (NSF) East Asia and Pacific Summer Institute Fellowship

PhD student Katie Derthick received this scholarship for summer 2011. The fellowship provides international research experience to graduate students. Derthick will spend two months conducting research with Professor Mike Chen in the Department of Computer Science at National Taiwan University in Taipei, Taiwan. Derthick’s research interests are computer-mediated relationships, computer-supported memory, and user experience research and design. She is interested in the effects of the interface on the user’s (psychological and embodied) experience.

NSF 2011 Graduate Research Fellowships

Undergraduate Student

John Porter is a recipient of this three-year research award. Porter will be entering the HCDE PhD program in the fall.

Porter’s proposed research project is to build a context-aware natural language processing system for use in robotics, personal computing, or even assistive technology applications. Regarding his research, Porter explained, “The basic idea is that current speech recognition systems can do a decent job of figuring out the words that a user speaks, and

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Winner of the First Annual Shobe Prize Announced

Alexis Hope, Brian Le, Clint Tseng, and Megan Langley are the winners of the first annual Shobe Prize design competition for their design of an iPhone application called .calm.

The Shobe Prize was established by HCDE alumnus Matt Shobe. The competition encourages students to work together in small dynamic teams to create a technology product or service concept together.

The team pitched their design concept to a panel of judges consisting of professors and industry representatives, which included Matt Shobe, Andy Sack, James Fogarty, and Jennifer Turns.

The .calm team received $10,000, along with office space and a one-on-one mentorship for three months during the summer. During that time, they will be able to develop the iPhone application into a prototype and create a sales pitch. At the end of the summer, they will receive guidance and assistance for commercialization.

Additional information about the .calm application can be found at http://mydotcalm.com.

Student Scholarships, continued from page 14

that’s great if all you want to do is speech-to-text and not much else. If you want to use language as a truly natural UI avenue, though, the system has to be able to ‘fill in the blanks’ of casual, colloquial speech by understanding implicit meaning and context.”

Porter is planning to build a custom proof-of-concept robot that will use different types of sensor data (from cameras, RFID scanners, etc.) to develop a contextual knowledge of the world around it and use that information to better interpret natural language directions given to it by a user.

Graduate student Alexis Hope is also a recipient of this three-year scholarship. The scholarship was awarded for her proposed research process for designing in-context instructional software for diagnostic ultrasound in order to approximate the expertise and guidance of a skilled radiologist when one is unavailable—for example, in the developing world and remote village context.

Hope plans to use one year of funding for her final year as an MS student and the other two years of funding when entering a PhD program in the field.

Wikimedia Research Fellowship

PhD Student Jonathan Morgan is the recipient of a Summer Research Fellowship from the Wikimedia Foundation, the non-profit organization that runs the online encyclopedia Wikipedia and its sister projects. Jonathan will join an interdisciplinary team of social and computer scientists in San Francisco for a summer-long investigation of the sociotechnical phenomena at play in the Wikipedia editor community.
The Society for Technical Communication recognized HCDE Professor Mark Zachry this year for “outstanding achievements in promoting Technical Communication as a discipline; for innovative curriculum and program design; and for excellent teaching that has inspired the next generation of technical communicators.” When Zachry accepted the award during the Society for Technical Communication meeting in Sacramento this May, he joined a distinguished list of Gould award winners, including UW HCDE faculty members David Farkas (2007), HCDE Chair Jan Spyridakis (2004), and Judy Ramey (2000).

An innovative and inspiring teacher, Zachry integrates research and teaching while also reaching across disciplines and implementing curricular change at the program level. Spyridakis praises Zachry, stating: “His ability to engage students in learning… is unmatched in what I have witnessed in over 30 years at the university.” Zachry reports, modestly, “I have been fortunate to have many students since 1994 go on to have amazing careers.

Some students in my classes have published work they started in a classroom with me. Seeing that work appear in journals like Technical Communication or win a publication competition is thrilling.”

Zachry’s directed research groups have presented at numerous conferences and produced many notable papers. Zachry has also been instrumental in redefining and transforming the HCDE curriculum, “engaging students in highly meaningful ways,” according to Spyridakis.

Zachry will continue to inspire, innovate, and lead. He states, “This field is increasingly recognized as a place where the most interesting questions about technology and society are being explored. Bringing the exciting questions from this field to the classroom is one of the best things about my job.”

Mark Zachry, recipient of the 2011 Jay R. Gould Award.
Usability Testing Students Present Research to Amazon

During fall quarter, students of Mark Zachry’s HCDE 517 Usability Testing course conducted usability studies on a newly launched feature of the Amazon website and presented their findings to a team from Amazon.

The course explores usability issues of interface design and introduces a variety of evaluative methods for usability testing. Each quarter, students work in groups to design and implement a usability study for a local company or nonprofit organization. The projects were unique because they studied a newly launched website feature for a leading Seattle-area company, Amazon.

Zachry contacted Jenny Blackburn, a Usability and User Researcher at Amazon, to discuss the 517 student projects. Blackburn, who has instructed HCDE 517 in the past, agreed to investigate whether any Amazon projects were appropriate for the class.

For the student research, Amazon selected entity pages, their new interface experience for Amazon’s online shoppers. These pages feature authors, musicians, and automobiles, as well as fashion and design houses. Examples of entity pages include author pages, which show a complete publication history, and musician pages, which show a complete discography. These pages also support community discussion about an author, musician, or other entity. The pages were so new that when Amazon selected the entity pages for student research, there were very few experienced users of the pages.

Amazon provided five $25 gift cards for each research group to attract and compensate study participants. The class was broken down into seven groups, and each group studied one type of entity page and worked to develop usability tests. The tests explored potential usability issues in the entity pages to help Amazon understand the effectiveness of their interface.

In order to create a successful usability test, students had to understand the evaluative methods of usability testing, Amazon’s business goals, and users’ goals. After each group designed and conducted usability tests, they presented their findings to representatives from Amazon.

Each group submitted an individual report to Amazon, but all the groups that worked on a single type of entity page collaborated on a single presentation for Amazon. For example, all the groups working on author entity pages presented together. This allowed the students to present suggestions that were based on the findings of several rounds of usability tests.

The groups modeled their formal presentations on the format that usability researchers in industry use to present findings to their clients, and the presentations were also followed by a question and answer session.

Amazon was pleased with the usability tests and student findings, and can incorporate the findings into future development of their entity pages. Students in the course gained valuable experience in designing and conducting usability tests and presenting their findings to a large Seattle company. Alena Benson, a student in the course, said, “partnering with Amazon on the project was a great opportunity to work with a real client, get experience with usability testing online, and network.”

“Partnering with Amazon on the project was a great opportunity to work with a real client, get experience with usability testing online, and network.”
Computer Mediated Communication in Online Collaboration  
by Jonathan T. Morgan

Jonathan Morgan studies computer-mediated communication (CMC) in online collaboration. Drawing on concepts from rhetoric, linguistics, and Science and Technology Studies, Morgan explores the interplay between social factors, interface design, and the conversational dynamics and discursive strategies of participants at work on long-term creative projects in online spaces like Wikipedia, or the Living Voters Guide (http://livingvotersguide.org).

Morgan’s dissertation focuses on developing new UX methods based on Interactional Content Analysis (IxCA), a systematic interaction design method for generating design requirements and policy recommendations based on empirical analysis of the things people say to one another, and the way they say them, through an interface. The overall goal of his 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.

Helping Students Prepare for the Future  
by Kate Mobrand

Researchers, educators, and professionals in engineering and professional communication have described a future for engineers that involves wider-ranging, and more complex, collaborations; increased accountability and opportunity to exert influence; and the need to engage in lifelong learning. Kate Mobrand’s research goals are aimed at helping students prepare for this future.

Specifically, Mobrand’s dissertation looks at finding new ways to think about what it means to be prepared to communicate in the context of engineering, understanding how prepared students are, and implementing innovative methods to help them be more prepared. To address these goals, Mobrand conducted a study in which ten engineering undergraduates created communication e-portfolios that presented arguments about their preparedness to communicate as practicing engineers. Students engaged in this activity in a collaborative studio setting. Peer review, discussion, critical reflection, simple website implementation, and oral presentation are key components of the approach. It is especially intriguing to apply this approach to communication preparedness because the studio activities compel students to engage in some of the very competencies that they are making claims about in their e-portfolios.

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**PhD Research, continued from page 18**

**Intellectual Development in Engineering Education**

*by Brook Sattler*

Through her research in engineering education, Brook Sattler demonstrates ways in which the abstract practice of reflection can easily be accomplished by students preparing portfolios, and why such reflection is integral to students’ intellectual development.

Through an environment that supports looking back on past experiences to make meaning out of them, students are encouraged to articulate their engineering preparedness to work in the real world. Using Professor Jennifer Turns’ portfolio studios, Sattler examines how this reflective practice further supports students in self-authorship, which plays an important role in intellectual development. With an eye towards helping students experience a continuity of their experience, portfolio development is an activity that encourages and often requires students to engage in self-authoring. As she moves forward with this research and her dissertation, Sattler plans to understand better the potential impact of non-traditional activities, such as portfolios, on intellectual development.

**Information and Communication Technologies**

*by Rebecca Walton*

Since international development emerged at the end of World War II, people have had high expectations that technology and information would improve the lives of people in resource-constrained environments. However, we still do not understand how best to design these technologies to inform, connect, empower, and support people in resource-constrained environments. To address this gap in understanding, Rebecca Walton researches how human and contextual factors, such as stakeholder tasks, individual and organizational goals, and physical environments affect the design and use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in resource-constrained environments.

Walton’s dissertation research explores the transition of seven information and communication technology development (ICTD) projects from initial research to on-the-ground implementation. With funding from Microsoft Research, Walton spent four months collecting data in India. Through ethnographic methods, she explored the transition of these projects. Exploring the transition of multiple projects revealed patterns, such as strategies for building trust and credibility among stakeholders and the importance of partnerships.
Research Group Updates

Design for Digital Inclusion Lab

Professor Beth Kolko’s Design for Digital Inclusion (DDI) lab has several active projects involving undergraduate and graduate students. The group focuses on technology development for resource-constrained environments. DDI had a paper at CHI 2011 on adapting usability methods for low resource environments based on field-testing in Uganda. The paper was written with a local NGO, Talking Book. The Mobile Midwives’ Ultrasound group just returned from a first field trial in Uganda and is gearing up for another trip in June. The team of HCDE, CSE, and Public Health students will conduct community interviews, usability work, and a clinical deployment, working with midwives, radiologists, and other colleagues in Uganda.

The Games in Brazil project is busy analyzing interview data that traces people’s first experience with technology and their engagement with non-instrumental activities such as gaming and social networking. The Makerbot group has dived into wearable computing, developing an RFID-based bracelet to store and exchange information through physical handshaking. Business cards may soon be a thing of the past!

Communicative Practices in Virtual Workspaces

Recently, Professor Mark Zachry’s Communicative Practices in Virtual Workspaces Research Group implemented a novel system for visualizing participant reputations in open contributor systems such as Wikipedia. The group also launched an investigation of collaboration and conflict among volunteer project groups, called Wikiprojects, that edit scientific topics on Wikipedia. This year the group is conducting its fourth annual national survey to track how knowledge workers use publicly available online services for work.

Listening to Design

A lot goes into helping engineering students develop the knowledge and skills to design effective solutions to today’s complex engineering problems. At the Center for Engineering Learning and Teaching (CELT), led by Professor Cynthia Atman, researchers study the design learning process to better understand and evaluate current approaches to design learning and teaching. Recent work has focused on representations of the design process as tools for enhancing students’ own design practice. CELT represents the design processes in two important ways: as visual timelines that demonstrate the iterative and dynamic design process of students and expert engineers, and as audio recordings that offer a new perspective on design problem solving. These design soundtracks allow the viewer/listener to see and hear the patterns and rhythm of the design processes in new ways. Examples of these soundtracks and timelines can be found at: http://depts.washington.edu/celtweb/research/soundtracks.
Research Group Updates, continued from page 20

UW Campus Map User Testing Research Group
Professor Sarah Pérez-Kriz and her colleague in the School of Art, Professor Karen Cheng, led a directed research group in spring 2011 to perform user testing on a map redesign of the UW Medical Center and Health Sciences building. The undergraduate students in the research group, Joy Palludan, Brennen Birch, Calder Thami, and Caryn Carlson Rothe, conducted experiments with volunteers to determine whether the redesigned map was more successful than the map that is currently given to patients. Video, survey, and interview data are currently being analyzed, and Pérez-Kriz and Cheng will be publishing an article about the study over the summer.

Scientific Collaboration and Creativity Lab
The Scientific Collaboration and Creativity (SCC) Lab, directed by Professor Cecilia Aragon, conducts research on human-computer interaction in scientific collaborations, collaborative creativity, cyberinfrastructure, eScience, information visualization, and how social media and computer-mediated communication are changing scientific practice. The group published a full paper at CHI 2011, entitled “Collaborative Creativity: A Complex Systems Model with Distributed Affect,” written by Cecilia Aragon and Alison Williams. Incoming PhD student Daniel Perry recently won the James R. Chen Award for his research on developing biofeedback games that help children improve focus within the classroom.

Self Service Research Group
In Spring 2011, Professor Judy Ramey’s Self Service research group has been working with the UW Office of Information Management (the Kuali Student Project), which is the group’s sponsor client. The research group has been collecting data in order to improve the functionality of online class registration and career exploration. Once the data is collected and analyzed, it will be given to the Kuali Student Project for use in their design of a new registration and career exploration system for many colleges, including UW.

Computer Supported Collaboration Lab
In the past year, Professor Charlotte Lee’s Computer Supported Collaboration Laboratory has conducted a ground-breaking study of academic e-reader usage by University of Washington computer science students; the study was recently featured at CHI 2011 conference in Vancouver, British Columbia, as well as in multiple international news media reports. The group has continued to conduct three studies of scientific collaborations with the support of the National Science Foundation, including launching a five-year longitudinal study of research practice at the UW. Finally, with the support of a Google research award, lab members have continued their examination of the practices people develop when sharing calendars with family, friends, and colleagues.

In the past year, Professor Charlotte Lee’s Computer Supported Collaboration (CSC) Laboratory has conducted a ground-breaking study of academic e-reader usage by UW computer science students.
Senior Nathan Bilbao Wins at Startup Weekend

It was a last minute decision by Nathan Bilbao, an HCDE senior, to participate in the Startup Weekend program hosted at Microsoft in December 2010. Startup Weekends are described as “54-hour events where developers, designers, marketers, product managers, and startup enthusiasts come together to share ideas, form teams, build products, and launch startups!”

Shortly before Finals Week, Nathan saw an email from HCDE asking students to participate in the Startup Weekend at Microsoft headquarters in Redmond. Nathan saw this as an opportunity and devoted his weekend to the program to find out how things worked in the “real world.” Startup Weekend officially started on a Thursday evening and went through Sunday evening.

On Friday evening, Nathan went to the Microsoft campus not knowing what to expect. Upon arrival, he was pleasantly greeted with pizza and beer while waiting for everyone to show up.

The first hour consisted of icebreakers and the division of 250 attendees into 37 teams. The teams then brainstormed words describing a fun product. Every team threw in adjectives, nouns, phrases, and buzzwords. Each team then chose two words and added “.com” to it to create the website name of their startup project.

With those two words, teams determined what their entire project would be about, including what their pitch and main idea was—all in 15 minutes. Teams then walked around and gave a one-minute pitch to all of the other groups. Nathan got to meet a lot of people through this fun and challenging icebreaker. Later, teams made their actual pitches about their idea for a new company. In total, there were 37 pitches. One of the pitches was by Maya Bisineer from Microsoft. The idea was to create an iPad application called Draw With Me. This application would teach children how to draw by having them trace over premade drawings as a way for them to become more comfortable drawing. The idea was simple and seemed to have good market potential.

People voted via Facebook to select the best ideas and narrowed it down to 12 teams. After the voting, Draw with Me was one of the twelve selected ideas. Maya sought out Nathan for her team because he identified himself as a “UX Designer.”

Friday through Sunday of Startup Weekend, Nathan worked alongside his team from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Nathan’s team consisted of 7 people: 3 programmers, 2 program managers, a graphic artist, and Nathan as the user experience designer. On Friday, his team worked on ideation. On Saturday, Nathan made wireframe sketches of the prototype and worked on a website for his team’s product. Nathan worked with Kyle Kesterson, a graphic artist and one of the founders of Giant Thinkwell, to create the graphic assets. On Sunday, Nathan designed and created the website for the application, which had been renamed Doodle-A-Doodle.

At the end of the Startup Weekend, the Doodle-A-Doodle team presented their product to a panel of judges.
HCDE Well Represented at World Usability Day

On November 11, 2010, Microsoft hosted World Usability Day (WUD) at their Redmond campus. During the all day event, attendees listened to enlightening and informational talks on this year’s theme, “communication,” conversed in the halls, and ended the event by playing with the (then) newly-released Kinect for Xbox. Four of the eleven presentations were delivered by HCDE PhD students: Toni Ferro, Emma Rose, Alex Thayer, and Rebecca Walton. They highlighted the importance of HCDE research by showcasing their own work.

Ferro’s presentation, “The Online Life of the Rat City Roller Girls (RCRG),” examined RCRG’s robust online community activity and their use of the online community for business and planning purposes. Rose’s talk, “Communicating with Users: Methods That Give Participants More Voice,” showed how using different research techniques empowers participants to be more active in a research setting. Thayer’s presentation, “Supporting Students’ Reading Practice Through E-reader Interfaces,” revealed how cognitive mapping aids a reader’s retention of textual information. Finally, Walton’s talk, “Factors Affecting Online Communication: Perspectives from Central Asia,” discussed how Internet users in Central Asia are influenced by context, usage, and perception in an online setting.

WUD was created in 2005 by the Usability Professionals’ Association in an effort to bring attention to issues of usability, address the interactions between humans and technology, and help usability professionals acquire the best skills to make technology more accessible to everyone.

Nathan Bilbao Wins at Startup Weekend, continued from page 22

four judges and all of the Startup Weekend attendees. Nathan’s team handed the judges three iPads with their team’s functional prototype so that the judges could experience Doodle-A-Doodle, while a YouTube video demonstrated the functionality of the application for the Startup Weekend attendees. At the end of the presentations and rounds of voting, Doodle-A-Doodle won the judges’ vote, team vote, as well as the individual vote by all the people present at Startup Weekend. Team Doodle-A-Doodle was ecstatic.

“I got to use a lot of the skills I have learned in HCDE like rapid prototyping, wireframing, and creating user-work flows,” says Nathan about Startup Weekend. “I went out of my comfort bubble and I benefited a lot. It was really impressive to see these people work and see their diverse skill sets. It changed my perspective on how things can get accomplished. We spend a lot of time paddling around in college but it took just 54 hours to start and finish a product. I can not wait to attend future Startup Weekends.”

Doodle-A-Doodle was launched on the iTunes App Store on April 12 and is now available for $2.99. Nathan thanks his Doodle-A-Doodle teammates Kyle Kesterson, Maya Bisineer, Donald DeSantis, Dwayne Mercredi, Lisa Song, and Kathleen Carey for a wonderful learning experience.
Upon entering the program, all HCDE undergraduates are given a general course outline specific to their interests and concentration in the department: Human-Computer Interaction, Individualized, or Technical Communication. Even though every student is given a track outline, it is crucial to plan ahead, especially when wanting to add other department classes into schedules to fulfill university elective requirements. Some tips include: reference time schedules as soon as they are posted, get classes approved by your advisor before registration, research desired courses and make inquiries to other departments ahead of time, and regularly check your DARS.

It is also important to plan ahead for your required internship, sooner rather than later. Take accountability to research on your own; research where you want to go and what you want to do now. Undergraduates typically don’t start going to career fairs until their senior year; go to as many as you can now so you learn what companies are out there. Most companies don’t have internship programs, so for those companies, internship position availability depends on the demand for them. When internships are dependent on need, sometimes all it takes is an email for a company to find a position for you.

To conclude, Stephanie encourages everyone in the department to network, get involved, visit the Career Center (located in Mary Gates Hall), and utilize résumé workshops and mock interviews.
HCDE Student Internships Highlights

**Sandra Bilbrey**, Student Web Producer  
UW Office of Research Information Services—Seattle, WA

I heard about this position on the Grants and Funding Information Service (GFIS) blog. My internship responsibilities include production support for all research-related websites at UW. This means checking for broken links within the websites and responding to help requests. I am also working to redesign the UW Research front page (http://uw.edu/research) with usability in mind.

My favorite things about this internship are flexibility, great people, constant exposure to new concepts, opportunities to learn, expanding my skills, and most of all, Mighty-O Donut days. My least favorite things are the occasional bureaucracy and balancing a hectic schedule with work, school, and life. The biggest challenge this quarter is not overbooking myself.

**Michael Watt**, Quality Control Writer/Test Design Intern  
PATH—Seattle, WA

During summer quarter 2010, I worked as a graduate-level intern for PATH in Seattle, Washington. PATH is an international, nonprofit organization that specializes in creating sustainable and affordable medical technology solutions to improve global health. I discovered the PATH internship on the HCDE Blog.

At PATH, I reported to the PATH Post Partum Hemorrhage (PPH) Treatment Technology Team to assist with the development of a PPH device called the Non-Pneumatic Anti-Shock Garment (NASG). The vision of the NASG was to produce a low-cost device to help reduce maternal morbidity and mortality in countries with insufficient medical resources. My responsibilities on the NASG project included last-stage product development support that focused on material quality testing, experiment design, and development of a quality control dossier that would serve as a control for overseas manufacturing vendors.

The experience of designing complex technical documentation and medical technology testing experiments was rewarding. I was inspired by contributing to this work, knowing that someday this device would give a mother and child a better chance of living a healthy life.

**Chelsey Glason**, Qualitative Research Intern  
T-Mobile—Seattle, WA

Last summer I completed a qualitative research internship with T-Mobile. I heard about the internship through a friend who once interned for the company. I was called to interview after submitting an application online. The internship was located at T-Mobile’s Creation Center in downtown Seattle and lasted the entire summer.

I was fortunate to have the opportunity to work on several different research projects during my internship. For example, I worked on an ethnographic study, helped with a participatory design workshop, and ran a usability study. My co-workers at T-Mobile were wonderful and gave me the flexibility to choose projects that aligned with my interests. My At the end of my internship, I was offered a full-time position on the T-Mobile UX Research team.

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**Caryn Carlson Rothe**, Office of Policy and Analysis Intern
Smithsonian Institution—Washington, DC

I came about my internship by applying to every branch of the Smithsonian Institution that offered an internship remotely resembling work that I could do using either my anthropology experience or human centered design and engineering experience. The National Archives noticed the connection between my HCDE experience and the Office of Policy & Analysis (OP&A) and forwarded my application to their office. I was contacted a week later by the internship coordinator and offered a position.

The majority of my work with OP&A involved creating, conducting, and analyzing surveys at the various museums within the Smithsonian. I worked full-time for ten weeks during the summer. The Smithsonian is very involved in the summer education of their interns, so there were times when we would be sent across the Washington Mall to a lecture or special showing at one of the museums. While I was there I was introduced to card sorts, personal interviews, surveys, and statistical analysis of responses.

**Kelsey Hentges**, Technical Writer/Editor
F5 Networks, Inc.—Seattle, WA

I had never heard of F5 Networks before applying for this internship. I found my internship through a Craigslist ad that was seeking a full-time technical writer, not an intern. I took a chance and sent them my résumé explaining my aspirations. The internship lasted for approximately 12 weeks during summer 2010. My main project was to make an AskF5 style guide so the team could effectively publish consistent solutions online. One of my favorite things while working with F5 was being able to work with two departments: the AskF5 team (engineers who contribute to the F5 knowledge base) and the communications department. My least favorite thing was working in a cubicle 8 hours each day.

In the final weeks of my internship, my boss, who was the lead writer/editor, spoke with me about extending my internship to a contract position.

**Alena Benson**, User Experience Researcher
Microsoft—Seattle, WA

During summer 2010, I completed an internship as a User Experience Researcher at Microsoft, within the Windows client group. Over the course of the summer, I completed multiple UX lab studies, got to shadow an exploratory field study, worked directly with feature teams, and presented some of my findings to the larger Windows UX group at a brown bag lunch presentation. Microsoft wants to evaluate interns as potential employees, so I was able and expected to make contributions and influence real features instead of being sandboxed.

I got my internship by applying through Microsoft’s career website and asking friends and acquaintances who worked at Microsoft to circulate my résumé. Making personal connections with...
Microsoft employees and recruiters is very important in being considered and setting yourself apart as a candidate, so network, network, network. I would highly recommend a Microsoft UX internship as a learning experience and to see whether that type of company is appropriate for you. I received a job offer at the end of my internship, so it’s also a great career opportunity.

Joy Palludan, Junior Graphic Designer
DList Magazine—Seattle, WA

I found this position through Husky Jobs. I wasn’t sure what they’d be asking me to do, but I was interested in graphic design and learning more about print production, as well as expanding my Adobe Creative Suite skills.

I ended up working directly with the lead art director and graphic designer. My boss compiled a design team comprised of myself and three other interns. Together we worked to create a more modern, updated design for the magazine that was also unique to Seattle. Every month we are in charge of displaying the new content, updating page templates, and incorporating new themes, and we’re now beginning to translate all of this into a redesign of the website.

I have learned so much in my short time there. It’s been fun to see my work go into publication and have copies of it on the coffee table, with my name in the front cover and everything!

Aijia Yan, User Experience and Research Intern
Microsoft Corporation—Seattle, WA

I found my internship through Husky Jobs. My advice for students who are looking for an internship is to be active and open to any possible opportunity. There was no User Experience Design position available in the summer, and I explained my interest in the use of technology in public sectors to the recruiter. She forwarded me to the Worldwide Public Sector (WWPS) Government division, where a summer internship position was available. I think a real barrier in looking for a job is being afraid to speak up and talk to people.

WWPS Government helped me learn about information technologies to better serve citizens and provide solutions to issues of social and economic development. I worked with the General Manager, Matt Miszewski, to develop a portfolio of important partners who intend to open their data to serve citizens. I also collaborated with colleagues at Microsoft from multiple product groups to delve into and develop technical solutions to reuse and redistribute open data, making them accessible and usable to citizens. I had invaluable opportunities to work with a group of senior executives, work on fascinating projects from worldwide perspectives, and join intellectual discussions. This internship experience not only helped me learn more about communication skills and decision-making process, but also developed my vision and solidified my future mission in public service.
Jerrod Larson, PhD, Continues with Boeing

Jerrod Larson graduated with his PhD in December 2009. He worked full time at Boeing while earning his PhD, and he continued on with the company after graduation. Soon after graduating, he took on a new role at Boeing after being elected an Associate Technical Fellow for usability/user experience.

Until recently, Jerrod Larson has been leading research and design projects for Boeing internal productivity software and, on the external-facing side, aircraft maintenance software. He describes the Associate Technical Fellowship program as a technical leadership path for engineers and scientists at the company; the role of the people in the Fellowship is to help Boeing set technical direction as it creates new products or tries to improve existing products or processes.

Recently, he has been helping formulate Boeing’s general strategy regarding software usability and user experience. In a sense, he describes this as a more complex problem space than designing individual systems, because it deals not only with the discipline of usability and user experience, but also with aspects of organizational psychology and culture change.

In his job, Larson applies his PhD studies by looking at problems in the workspace, formulating research plans to investigate them, and designing interventions to remediate them. His PhD studies also helped him see the big picture of design and research more clearly, and this in turn helped him add rigor to his previously ad hoc process. As he sees it, that’s one essential thing a PhD program is meant to do: train people to investigate the world in a methodical, rigorous fashion.

Larson’s PhD advisor, Professor David Farkas, describes his experience in working with Larson: “Working with Jerrod was great. Jerrod had a broad range of pertinent design and research skills from the outset of the project, and everything moved smoothly.” Larson is also keeping busy with LabelPatterns.org, a pattern library for creators of point-of-purchase consumer decision labels. Leading the effort to build the website is Professor Farkas, while Larson is aiding him along with undergraduate student Steven Naranjo. They recently wrote a journal article about the project, and an early version of the site has been deployed, although the team is refining and expanding the site as it nears its official launch. The team’s hope is that LabelPatterns.org becomes an authoritative source of design guidance for those people creating or managing labelin programs—most especially environmental labels for consumer products.

Larson also runs an interesting and informative blog, “On User Experience: Random Thoughts.” Larson is also keeping busy with fatherhood, as he and his wife had a baby girl this past January, their first child. Both are hoping there’s room for Ella Wren Larson in the HCDE class of 2019.

Jerrod Larson’s blog can be found online at: http://www.jerrodlarson.com.

LabelPatterns.org can be found online at: http://www.labelpatterns.org.
Mike Berg is an alumnus with a Master’s degree and certificates in User-Centered Design (UCD) and Technical Writing and Editing (TWE) from HCDE. He has also been a great ambassador for the department by connecting HCDE with Microsoft where he works today as a Program Manager.

Department Chair Jan Spyridakis spoke about Berg’s generous contributions: “He hosted our faculty and Microsoft alumni for a Microsoft alumni night last fall. He invited an HCDE usability class to tour Microsoft usability labs. He sponsored Microsoft’s membership in the HCDE Corporate Affiliates Program and he donated software to the HCDE student association for door prizes.” Recently he donated an Xbox and Kinect to the student association.

Berg was in Spyridakis’ Style in Technical Writing class in 2005, and she remembers that “his quiet way of making himself stand above the crowd revealed itself back then,” and that “the department is honored to have Mike as one of its stellar alumni.”

Berg started working at Microsoft in 2002 in a contract position as a Play Test Moderator where he supported game research as part of the XBox hardware team. During this time, one of his coworkers spoke about a certificate program that he was completing, a “great new program that he loved,” as Berg remembers him saying. That was the UCD certificate program and Berg signed up for the first of his three HCDE programs.

In his current position, Berg works as part of the User Experience Central Team with a team of eight where he supports survey research. Berg uses internal software called proprietary software like the Usability Database (UDB). It’s the team’s central site—“our baby” he calls it—and he refers to his team as the “custodians” of the database. When Berg does usability studies, he works to improve proprietary tools like the UDB that are used to support the entire research community.

When researchers want to run a study, Berg uses the UDB to handle tasks like screening and scheduling test participants, finding folks with profiles that the researchers are looking for, booking and arranging research labs, making sure research won’t be divulged, and making sure participants are compensated for their feedback.

He also works in the Usability Partner Program, which is about one year old. In this role, he builds relationships with other companies. With these relationships built, Microsoft may come on site and conduct usability studies when a study fits a particular company’s profile.

Berg believes in staying well connected with academia and HCDE. He states enthusiastically, “It’s a real win-win for Microsoft… having the HCDE connection keeps us current, and gives a great source of future researchers here at Microsoft.”
Cynthia Putnam enjoys living in big cities. Upon earning her PhD, Putnam and her husband packed their bags and cat, and headed to Chicago, home of DePaul University. Prior to entering the UW for the PhD program, Putnam worked as a designer in industry for several years. Early in her PhD studies, Putnam saw herself re-entering private industry after graduation. However, the idea of staying in academia became more and more appealing to her, and she sent out applications to universities including DePaul.

As part of her PhD studies, she investigated designing for diverse user groups. Putnam worked as a research assistant for Professor Beth Kolko as part of the “Central Asian Information and Communication Technology” (CAICT) team. She helped investigate technology adoption and diffusion in Central Asia. The team used multiple data collection methods. Putnam distilled some of the data using personas and scenarios that represented mobile users in Kyrgyzstan.

Kolko reflected on Putnam’s talents: “Cynthia established herself early on in her graduate studies as an extraordinarily committed, energetic, and intelligent researcher. Cynthia’s passion for research and data analysis energized the whole Design for Digital Inclusion research lab; she was a mentor and a model for undergraduate and graduate students alike. I miss her intelligence, good humor, and collegiality, and I am certain she will make some terrific contributions to the field.”

Putnam also studied children impacted by autism during her PhD studies.

Additionally, Putnam applied her design experience when she worked with the committee to design artwork associated with the HCDE name change.

In her position at DePaul, Putnam is Assistant Professor in the College of Computer and Digital Media, where she teaches graduate level courses in human computer interaction (HCI). She has taught several courses, including Inquiry Methods and Use Analysis, a course that teaches students how to learn to collect data from (and about) users as well as ways to present findings including personas and high level scenarios. She also teaches a class focused on diverse users. The course focuses on how to consider users with physical and cognitive limitations, and those from a wide age group, i.e., children and the elderly. She is currently teaching an Interaction Design Course and a Capstone course.

Putnam volunteers once a week at the Anixter Center, working with people who are rehabilitating from brain injuries. She finds that, by volunteering there, she is able to better formulate more relevant research questions for understanding how technology might be leveraged to support rehabilitation.

To those interested in staying in academia after earning a PhD, Putnam recommends getting experience in both teaching and research, and of course, try to publish as much as you can.
2011 re:Design Team


Not pictured: Alena Benson, Sarah Bitter, Kelsey Hentges, Anne Hilton, Jan Spyridakis.

re:Design 2011
Advisors: Anne Hilton, Jan Spyridakis

Winter 2011 Project Managers: Kelsey Hentges, Khadija Qader
Spring 2011 Project Manager: Rachel Barnecut

Design Lead: Karen Holum
Design Team: Sara DeGruttola, Jacqueline Keh, Ty Le, Melinda Salazar, Kailee Pat Wheeler

Writing Team: Anna Anderson, Jaret Basden, Alena Benson, Sarah Bitter, Eldridge Harding, Allison Kilgore, Kailee Pat Wheeler