

Q&A With Andrew Hanson



Senior Andrew Bradley Hanson was awarded the 2008 C.S. Department DeWitt Undergraduate Scholarship, given annually to one or more juniors and seniors based on high academic achievement. In addition to a 3.9 overall GPA as a double-major in CS and CE, Andrew has participated for three years on the UW IEEE robotics team. He did an internship last summer at Avid (a multimedia company in Madison) and is doing one this summer at Microsoft. He has also recently co-founded a start-up company called PerBlue.

We introduce him through the following Q&A.

Q: How did you come to double-major in CS and CE?

A: Since before I was 10 years old, I've always enjoyed writing code to do different things. When I applied to college I knew that I wanted to major somewhere in the spectrum of CS - CE - EE. I chose Wisconsin because the CS and ECE departments allow flexibility in moving among these fields. I wanted to focus on technical courses, so I started out as a CE major. I found that I

really liked my CS courses and it was easy to add the double major.

Q: What courses have you enjoyed the most?

A: CS 540 with Jerry Zhu was a lot of fun. It was a brief survey of all types of things people do in AI [artificial intelligence]. I also really liked two courses with Gleicher, one in graphics and one in games. The 367 honors course with Susan Horwitz was also fun and interesting.

Q: How did you get interested in robotics?

A: When I was in high school I participated in Science Olympiad, and one of the events was to build a robot that would go around and pick stuff up. It was very simple, but it's really cool to see the code make something move. Thus, I joined the UW IEEE Robotics Team in my freshman year.

Q: Tell us more about your start-up.

A: Last year Justin Beck (another senior double-majoring in CS and CE) and I founded the start-up to create a cell phone adventure game. The idea is to build on recent GPS-aware mobile phone environments – such as the Google Android system and the new developer kit for iPhone. A key idea in the adventure game we are developing is that where you are in the real world is also where you are in the game.

Q: What are your plans after you graduate?

A: I'm planning to graduate in December 2009 because I want to take a couple of extra CS courses. That will also give me some time to decide between graduate school, working full-time on the start-up, or working at another company. I had a great experience at Avid and I'm enjoying my work at Microsoft. So these all seem like fun things to do. I hope to do some research with Prof. Gleicher this year, which will maybe help me decide whether I want to go to graduate school.



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