

SCHOOL UPDATE 2009

Welcome

The past few months have been very exciting at the School of Computing, Informatics and Media (SCIM). In this newsletter we've selected some of the highlights including the School's star-studded Skillset Media Academy launch event and the success of *Dan and the Magic Musician*. You can also find out what our students get up to on their placements and discover the exciting things some of our graduates are doing now.

We hope you enjoy reading about the School, and we look forward to welcoming you to the University of Bradford so you can be part of this thriving institution. For more School news check out our website www.scim.brad.ac.uk

If you would like to contact us for details of our courses, open days or admissions procedure, please telephone 01274 235963 or email ugadmissions@inf.brad.ac.uk



STOP PRESS

Two SCIM graduates have won two of five BBC Connect and Create Awards. 'The Fisherman' by Derek Beaumont won the Production Award, and 'Dan and the Magic Musician' by Karl Abson won the Innovation Award.

Go to www.scim.brad.ac.uk for details.

Image taken from *Death: Nell* by Matthew Clark, Runner-Up for Best Animation at the Royal Television Society Student Awards 2008

Media Academy Launched

The Yorkshire and Humber Skillsset Media Academy was launched at the National Media Museum in September. The event was hosted by actress Shobna Gulati, best known for starring in *Dinner Ladies* and *Coronation Street*.

The Yorkshire and Humber Skillset Media Academy is a partnership of SCIM at the University of Bradford, East Coast Media at the Grimsby Institute and the National Media Museum. The network is made up of 15 academies (or centres of excellence) of television and interactive media in England. The aim is to provide practise-based and industry-endorsed media education to meet the media industry's need for fresh talent and innovation.

Guests were given an opportunity to see our cutting-edge research, the enterprise of former graduates and to view the work of up-and-coming and award-winning talent. The event included a keynote speech from Tom Gutteridge, an award-winning producer/director. He is the founder of Mentorn which became the UK's largest independent production company before it was sold. He is a Fellow of the Royal Television Society and Chairman of the Skillset North Industry Panel.

Dean of Computing, Informatics and Media, Dr Ian Palmer, said "It recognises the partners' track record in innovative media education and the plans for the partnership to provide the next generation of talent for industry. We are delighted to be part of the network and look forward to working closely with Skillset and our industry partners on the opportunities it will provide."



Coronation Street Actress Shobna Gulati at the Yorkshire and Humber Skillset Media Academy launch

Royal Television Society Student Awards



The team behind Best Factual category winner, *Keith*. Left to right, Hayley Henderson, Brendan Docherty, Sacha Brooks of Galaxy FM (who presented the awards) and Baljeet Rattanpal

In November SCIM hosted the annual Royal TV Society regional student awards ceremony. The night was also a huge success for our students who received awards for their work.

BA (Hons) Computer Animation students Matthew Clark (*Death: Nell*) and Jill Turner

(*Coast of Sirens*) were runners-up in the Best Animation category. *Keith*, a poignant and sometimes humorous look at an ageing wrestler, won the Best Factual category. It was directed by Brendan Docherty (BA (Hons) Media Studies with Television). Students Sebastian Evans (BSc (Hons)

Media Technology and Production), Scott Evans (BA (Hons) Media with Television), Baljeet Rattanpal (BA (Hons) Media Technology and Production) and Hayley Henderson (BA (Hons) Media Studies with Television) were also part of the production crew.

Some 200 people from all over Yorkshire and Cleveland turned up for the event which is the biggest ever turnout for the student awards. Other awards celebrated the best documentaries and drama made by students studying in Yorkshire. Regional winners are put forward to the national awards. The RTS Student Television Awards recognise the best audiovisual work created by students as part of their course. The national awards ceremony is held every May in central London.

Dan and the Magic Musician project in use around the world

Karl Abson, Lecturer in the Department of Creative Technology, has animated a web-based educational story which is being used in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as across the UK, to introduce children to the pipe organ.

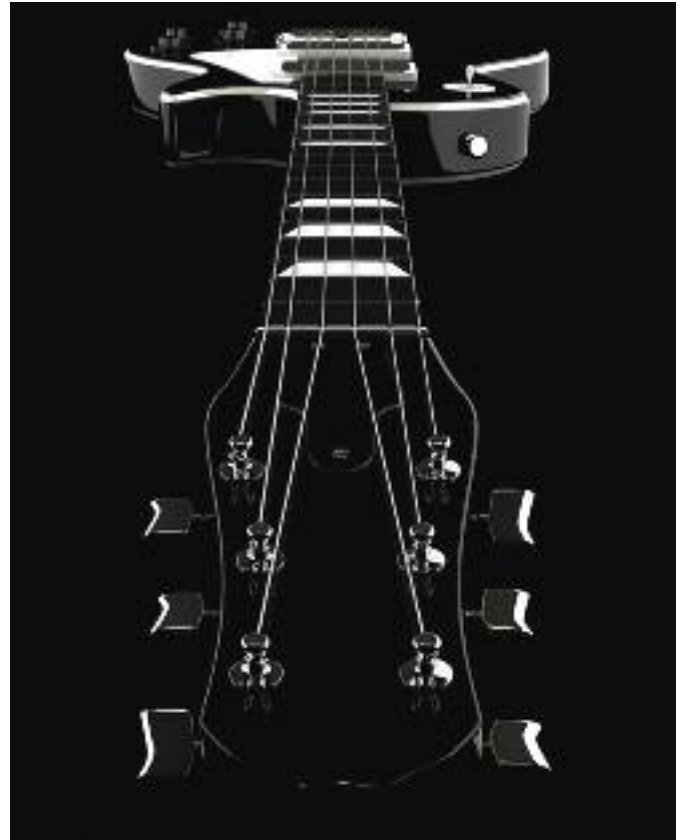
Commissioned by The Royal College of Organists (RCO), *Dan and the Magic Musician* is an initiative devised and created in SCIM as a way of getting the organ into classrooms in an attractive way. The story tells how Dan, in the company of a Magic Musician, meets all the different parts of "the greatest musical instrument of all" and ends up making music himself.

Karl decided that key-framing methods were what was needed for this project, and used the animation software packages Maya and ZBrush. Using a script written by academics Peter and Lucy Comerford, and with advice from Dr Hassan Ugail, Karl modelled the characters, then rigged them for articulation and movement and developed the environment in which they were to

operate. In this case, the setting involved recreating accurate details of organ pipes and a pipe organ console, as well as a theatre and stage, and some simple magical effects. Once all the basics were created, Karl animated the characters to match the story and the voices, and to fit in with the musical illustrations. Lighting effects were added with software After Effects.

The project was screened at the National Media Museum's National Schools Film Week, and again for the Bradford Animation Festival. The University's Audio Visual Manager, Mat Overton, will be producing the film *Creating Dan: The Making of Dan and the Magic Musician* using the School's new HD equipment to produce the film in a cinema screen quality format.

You can see *Dan and the Magic Musician* on YouTube, and *Creating Dan: The Making of Dan and the Magic Musician* too. The dedicated website, with free resources for music teachers, is at www.DanMagic.org



Michael's 3D image as featured in Computer Arts

Student recognised in Computer Arts Graduate Showcase

Michael Gangolf, originally from Germany, completed his Masters at the University of Bradford in September 2008. His 3D image (pictured) was recognised in Computer Arts 2008 Graduate Showcase 3D Design section and he has landed a fantastic job at full service media company Capture MM.

Although Michael will be based in Düsseldorf, Germany, Capture MM are a multinational organisation with bases in Miami and Berlin. Capture MM do everything from film production and post production to 3D animation/visualisation, web design and programming. Michael, whose role is '3D Operator', is serving the media needs of clients in industries such as automotive, electronics, IT and engineering as well as advertising agencies, film productions and public institutions.

Here's what Michael has to say about his Bradford experience: "I came from the Macromedia Akademie in Germany [partner institution to the University] to Bradford to complete my final year in BSc (Hons) Creative Media & Technologies (now BSc Digital Media and Technologies). After finishing my Bachelors degree I continued my studies in MSc Creative Media and Technologies with Computer Animation and Special Effects. 3D imaging was always an interest of mine and I wanted to specialise in that area with the help of the Masters course. The course gave me the freedom to show my personal strengths through an individual project and also to develop skills needed in the real world through team working. My time in Bradford was a great experience. As well as gaining a solid university education I made lots of friends from many different countries."

We want to give you a realistic insight into the student experience. For this reason we've roped in some of our current students to tell you what they get up to on their course and in their spare time, and to explain why they are pleased that they picked the University of Bradford for their degree.

Haaris Bhatti – BSc (Hons) in Information and Communication Technologies (second year)

I chose the University of Bradford due to the multicultural environment and great facilities that would allow me to reach my full potential. The great thing about being at Bradford is that the lecturers and support services are always here to help me when and if I need them!

The course I chose was ICT (Information and Communication Technologies) due to its diverse range of modules which give me a well-rounded understanding of Information Technologies - from database design to web

technologies and networking – I'm learning a whole lot!

My favourite modules are SQL Programming and Administration because of the challenging nature of having to grasp command line coding. SQL is a very powerful databasing tool which allows me to express a great deal of freedom when having to work on larger projects such as creating databases with mass data.

In my spare time I like to work out at the University's well-equipped gym, hang out with

my mates and eat a lot of food. There are lots of relaxing hangouts in Bradford. I especially like to chill in Jazzman's Café on campus. It is the perfect venue to de-stress after finishing an exam.

ICT resources and equipment on my course are of a high quality. You can always find a computer in the newly-refurbished computer suites. It is very comfortable in the Lab areas and the atmosphere allows you to get down and concentrate on assignments. We also have an Atrium which is very popular. There's a café,

restaurant and internet access points for those who want to browse the web in the light and airy environment.

My course is great. It challenges me to work to my full potential and invigorates me to raise my standards to a higher plateau. I would really recommend this course to anyone who wants to pursue a career in ICT. The course has knowledgeable professionals teaching who are here to help and support our learning, so that we can achieve success in the IT field after graduation.





Graphic design by Mateusz

Mateusz Sypien – BSc (Hons) Media Technology and Production (first year)

I started my course in September 2008. Before starting at the University of Bradford, I was studying American Studies in Poland but I wasn't really happy with this course so I decided to stop and look for something I am passionate about. This is when I came across Bradford Uni. I have a desire to work in the media industry which is why I picked my course, BSc (Hons) Media Technology and Production. Although the course focuses on the practice and technology of television production I have the option to tailor the course to my additional interests which are also in graphic design.

I heard of the University of Bradford from a friend in my home country of Poland. The University's reputation for housing high-

calibre, industry-recognised equipment such as post-production facilities like *Adobe Premiere* and *Avid Xpress Pro* appealed to me and reassured me that I was making the right decision. Also, the fact that the University has close links with the National Media Museum was really impressive.

I've been at the University for a good few months now and I am doing what I love. My favourite things about the University are the extremely friendly and helpful staff – whether they are lecturers, support staff or even the café staff, you always feel welcomed and supported.

My career goal is to become an Art Director but it may change as I explore different aspects of the media in my degree. I've

been working on my portfolio since March 2008 and I'm delighted to say that it has received very positive feedback from creative people in the media industry. I am excited to say that my work will soon be published in *Photoshop Creative* magazine in early 2009. My work is inspired mostly by life and everyday goings-on. I really like and appreciate the module Visual Literacy & Imaging which encourages you to be creative, inventive and unconventional with your ideas for photography and digital graphics. It's highly enjoyable and good for creative people like me.

Although I haven't completed a full year of my course I'm really pleased with my decision. I can't wait to see how the course develops.

INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENT STUDENTS

All of our degree courses can include a year of paid employment between the second and final years. With the help of the School's Placements Administrator you can discuss your options and decide what is best for you. The benefits of completing a placement are immense: as well as developing many skills including your self-motivation, report writing, presentation, interpersonal and professional skills, you are gaining practical training that gives you a fresh insight into your academic work. This often helps with career opportunities after graduation.

To give you an idea of where our placement students go and what they get up to when they're away, some of our students have written about their experiences.



Name: Kel Parke
Course: BSc (Hons) Interactive Systems and Video Games Design
Industry: Jagex (Java Gaming Experts)
Company business area: Independent video game publisher and developer
Company location: Cambridge
Company website: www.jagex.com, www.runescape.com or www.funorb.com
Your job title: Junior 3D Artist
Placement duration: 12 months

Outline of your responsibilities:
Creating and editing low poly game models, skinning, texturing, editing scripts, designing and lighting map squares and assisting in the process of graphical QA.

I worked on the RuneScape HD project from conception straight through to the public release as part of the very dedicated graphics team. My work was assigned by a

Project Manager and then I was left to my own creative devices with advice from senior artists along the way, and a review from an Art Director and Concept Artist at the end of each area or NPC set sign off.

The placement has allowed me to work with many new, developing and state-of-the-art technologies and multiple bespoke software packages. I've learnt from the experience of many inspiring artists, had public speaking and pitching tuition and benefited from in depth game design seminars, including the aspects that are often left to experience, such as selling your idea to a board (very daunting), designing to target audience, budgeting, timescale and even copyright law.

Highlights:

- Contributing to one of the most played games in the world and several upcoming titles
- Having some of my artwork featured in the RuneScape HD trailer for E3
- The game receiving a six page spread in Edge magazine and four pages of coverage in Total PC Gamer

Final thoughts:
I have definitely enjoyed my previous years of study greatly, but I have undeniably loved my time in industry, and no doubt the experience is invaluable in such a highly competitive field.



Nishma (first left) with the other intern students

Name: Nishma Patel
Course: BSc (Hons) Internet, Law & Society
Placement company name: Hewlett Packard (HP)
Industry: IT
Company location: Bristol
Company website: www.hp.com/uk
Position: TSG IT Business Operations Specialist
Placement duration: 14 months

Outline of your responsibilities:

- Project manager for various support transitions
- Project lead for support call reduction project
- Procurement specialist
- Support engineer

I worked in TSG (Technology Services Group) IT Global Support Service. We support internal customers (aka HP Business), who work with external customers. There are approximately 20 people in my department in Bristol, but many more across the globe.

I was assigned a mentor working at a different site, due to this I worked on my own accord and

initiative; I was able to do as much work, or as little, as I wanted! However I did have regular one on ones with my people manager; where I had to tell him what work I had been involved in and how I am coping.

Working for a global company has allowed me to communicate and interact with a wide range of people. As so many people work in HP, there is always something to learn from someone. The past 14 months have given me an incredible insight into working in a busy IT environment and helped to broaden my technical knowledge as well as challenging me mentally by providing me new problems to solve each day.

Highlights:
The highlights of my placement have been meeting new people and learning so many valuable skills from them and being able to work on so many high level projects that a TSG IT Director asked to have a meeting with me.

Final thoughts:
I would definitely encourage students to complete a placement. You get so much experience throughout the year, you make many good contacts and you get a taste of working life so you know what to expect when you graduate.

If you're looking for talented, skillful and enthusiastic students for your placement positions call our Placement Administrator now on 01274 233921. We will be happy to discuss your requirements and put you in touch with dedicated and knowledgeable students.

GRADUATE STORIES

We are very proud of our students' achievements after graduating. This year we will be launching our new graduate service with the objective of developing and maintaining stronger links with our graduates. Here is a selection of the many successful graduate stories.

Name: Faisal Akhtar
Course: BEng (Hons) Software Engineering and winner of the Phil Davies Award (Final Year Project)
Job title: QA Test Analyst
Company: Callcredit Information Group
Industry: Credit reference agency (top three in the UK)
Location: Leeds



My role at Callcredit consists of testing the online products before they are deployed live. These are tested via the Web and API (applications programming interface). Some technologies used to develop these applications are: .Net, SQL and XML. I am currently writing test scripts for various Callcredit products which are all written and executed within Mercury Quality Centre (MQC). I also use TestTrack Pro to raise defects, which I have found to be a very useful tool as it enables all defects to be tracked and dealt with quickly.

I studied at the University of Bradford for four years and it was a memorable experience. I enjoyed both the practical and theoretical parts of the course. The whole experience was complete when I was successful in securing an industrial placement within the NHS which then became the foundation for my final year project when I returned. I was able to transform all the knowledge and experience gained throughout the placement year, and put it into practice in my Final Year Project. I went on to achieve the Phil Davies Award for this.

I have now started my first job after graduating in July 2008. I am employed by Callcredit Information Group which is a credit reference agency based in Leeds. I am enjoying the fast-moving life at work and the staff here have been very welcoming, and help, if needed, is never too far away. The memories of my time at University are still fresh, however, and will remain with me.

I would recommend the University to anyone who is thinking of moving into higher education. The University has a great atmosphere with very supportive staff. The facilities, both around the University and within the Department, are excellent. It has been a fantastic experience!



Name: Raunak Maheshwari
Course: MSc Mobile Computing
Job title: Research Engineer
Company: Electronics and Telecom Research Institute (ETRI)
Industry: Research and Development in Telecommunications
Location: Daejeon, South Korea

I am doing research into mobile Wireless Broadband systems (WiBRO) which aim at high-speed internet connectivity even at high vehicular speeds. The aim is to reach a speed of 400Mbps for fixed terminals and 10-12 Mbps at vehicular speeds of 300Kmph. I am specifically researching the area of Automatic Retransmission Requests (ARQ) which deals with data retransmission in case of data loss at the receivers end.

Whilst studying my course, the modules I enjoyed the most were Advanced Simulation Modelling, Reliability Modelling and Analysis and Mobile Networks Performance Modelling. The course gave me an insight into wireless networks and various technologies and gave me a platform which I could build on in the future. The course modules and the thesis were the primary reasons for me landing this job at ETRI, which is at the forefront of WiBRO technology.

Some of the best times in my life were the ones I spent in the UK. I not only achieved a master's qualification but also some vital life experience which made me pragmatic and aware of my strengths.



Graduate Company: Fat Punk Studio

We are excited to tell you that in the Christmas 2008 edition of Computer Arts magazine, our graduate, Sam Brade, was called upon to share his expertise on producing fascinating and unique skateboard designs.

Sam is Founder/Creative Director of the thriving design agency Fat Punk Studio and, along with fellow graduate from the School, Anthony Melton (aka AJ), produces designs for sporting equipment and apparel manufacturers (Ride Snowboards, Osiris Shoes and Soup Graphix to name but a few!) Sam has taken time out of his hectic schedule to tell us how he got into creating exciting and eye-catching skate deck designs after completing a BSc (Hons) Computer Animation and Special Effects course.

The Fat Punk boys (Sam and AJ) originally met whilst both studying at the University of Bradford and like all new born students were excited to see what Uni life would throw at them! Sam commented: "Keen to rev up/fine tune my creativity the course helped me develop and build a lasting love and respect for the awesome power of the computer as a creative tool! The big BU [Bradford University] definitely paved the path and helped steer my career down the yellow brick road to the bright and colourful world of vector art!

"After both going our separate ways to fight the day-to-day wars of commercialism, me and AJ hadn't really had much contact until mid-2007. I had already started the studio back in England and it wasn't until I called AJ whilst he was escaping from responsibility in Canada that he decided to come on board the good ship FAT PUNK! The rest as they say is history!

"Ok, so what do we do?...Fat Punk Studio is a full service, full fat design team! Although we'd like to think we can turn our grubby mitts to anything our style definitely falls into the category urban/sub-urban! Like a good Hogwarts potion we mix clean with mean, and the rough with the smooth, trying to keep a consistent personal identity whilst having the adaptability to suit the creative demands of an ever more design savvy client base.

"Fat Punk Studio loves design, so we don't constrict our services too much within specific markets, although obviously our style's going to reach out to some more than others, however we try to keep the commissions varied. We've just wrapped on design gigs for Ride Snowboards and Osiris Shoes and have just launched our own range of high-end skateboard products! We love WOOD, and Skate decks are without question one of the coolest products around to design. Everything from their unique shape, size and tactile finish offers us as the designer a truly awesome and rewarding blank canvas to splash some colour over! As either a practical street art statement or simply hanging from your wall the power of Vector Art towers proudly above the urban sprawl of our asphalt jungles!



Fat Punk Studio
www.fatpunkstudio.com

"Art shows and exhibitions are another great way to get your work out there on a global scale and any opportunities to spread our work across people's walls like a good English butter we snaffle right up! We've just had some great feedback from two shows – one in Edinburgh, Scotland and the other in Florida, USA. Armed with French sticks and garlic bulbs we are currently prepping for our first exhibit over in Paris, France.

"There are lots of exciting developments in the pipeline. We are featured in a new book coming out in Singapore on 60s Pop Art along with features for various magazines in Mexico and France. In December 2008, Computer Arts magazine decided to Punk up their lives and commissioned us to write a tutorial on "Skate Deck Design". We are smug as bugs about this project and look forward to a beautiful relationship and future with Team Computer Arts!"