sicsa* The Scottish Informatics & Computer Science Alliance

Newsletter - Winter 2012

Editorial

SICSA activities have been carrying on as normal over the past few months with theme meetings going well, lots of bids for summer schools and distinguished visitors and preparations for the SICSA postgraduate conference in Glasgow next June well in hand.

Knowledge exchange (what used to be called technology transfer) is an increasingly important part of SICSA's remit and we reported in the last newsletter on the new AspeKT and CGES initiatives to support small businesses and entrepreneurship.

Many people in universities are suspicious of knowledge exchange activities – they see them as an overhead, which diverts them from their core activities of teaching and research. This is an understandable position as the reward and recognition mechanisms in most universities favour research and then teaching. However in computer science and informatics, I think that we need to change this perspective and see knowledge exchange as an opportunity to support new research rather than something that is best avoided.

I think this is really important because, in almost all areas of the discipline, the key problems that are emerging are the problems of scale. How do we handle and analyse gigabytes of data, manage tens of thousands of servers or design user interfaces for millions of users? In universities, we simply cannot replicate these problems using research platforms – we need to work with industry who are facing these problems and use their data and systems in our research.

Those of us with experience in this area know that working with industry on research is challenging and it takes time to build trust – and this is where knowledge exchange is important. If we can build long-term relationships through our knowledge exchange activities then trust can be established and other kinds of collaboration are possible. SICSA can help here by facilitating introductions to relevant companies and by helping maintain trusted relationships with them.

Knowledge exchange is a long-term process and so we need to now be thinking about SICSA 2 – the successor to SICSA from 2014. SICSA 2 will continue the collaborations and inclusiveness that have been established in the first round of SICSA funding but, realistically, probably won't have as much funding. We have various thoughts on this but if you have ideas please get in touch.

Ian Sommerville, SICSA Director

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Cover Image: Map of scientific collaboration between researchers
Image Credit: Olivier H. Beauchesne

News from across SICSA

Forthcoming visits from SICSA Distinguished Visiting Fellows

Thea de Joode

The SICSA Distinguished Visitor Fellowship offers support to eminent researchers who wish to visit Scotland and lead workshops and seminars at SICSA institutions. In the most recent round we were delighted to receive a large number of strong applications and are pleased to confirm the following distinguished visitors will be joining us during 2012:

•15 – 27 January 2012 - Samuel Kaski, Director of the Helsinki Institute for Information Technology and Professor of Computer Science at Aalto University, Finland. Hosted by Simon Rodgers, University of Glasgow. Work is of particular relevance to the M&A and MMI themes.

•January 2012 for 3 months – Ursula Martin, Professor of Computer Science and lately Vice-Principal (Science and Engineering), Queen Mary, University of London. Prof. Martin was recently awarded a CBE in the 2012 New Year Honours list. Hosted by Dave Robertson, University of Edinburgh. Work is of particular relevance to the CSE and M&A themes.

•19 – 23 March 2012 (dates TBC) – Richard Schulz, Professor at the Quality of Life Technology Center (QoLT), Carnegie Mellon / University of Pittsburgh. Hosted by Vicki Hanson, University of Dundee. Work is of particular relevance to the MMI theme.

•2 week visit during early 2012 (dates TBC) - Eric Monteiro, adjunct professor at University of Oslo, Department of Informatics, and member of the Group on Global Infrastructures. Hosted by Stuart Anderson, University of Edinburgh. Work is of particular relevance to the CSE theme.

•1 week visit in late June/early July 2012 (dates TBC) – Martin Campbell-Kelly, Professor at Warwick University. Hosted by Jeremy Singer, University of Glasgow. Work is of relevance to all four SICSA themes, but in particular the NGI and CSE themes.

Should you wish to engage with any of our visitors or find out more about their activities, further details of talks or seminars they are giving can be found on the SICSA events calendar on the website. Regular updates will also be made available in the 'News' section and on the SICSA Facebook group.

SICSA has three call deadlines for applications for Distinguished Visitor funding per year. The current deadline for applications is 28 February 2012. If you are an academic working within a SICSA institution and wish to propose a distinguished visitor please see sicsa.ac.uk or contact admin@sicsa.ac.uk for further details.

SICSA PhD Conference 2012

As we reported last issue, the next SICSA PhD Conference takes place on 20-22 June 2012 at Glasgow Caledonian University. The student organising committee have now decided upon the key themes and structure of the conference and are in the process of confirming a number of exciting keynote speakers. As in previous years the conference will be open to all Computer Science PhD Students studying in Scotland and the registration fee for all delegates will be funded by SICSA. There will a limited number of en-suite rooms available on-campus, which are also funded by SICSA for delegates travelling from outside Glasgow.

Registration for the conference is set to open soon and the conference web site will go live during February.

Saltire Centre, GCU: Image Credit - Ewan McIntosh

Please keep an eye on http://www.sicsa.ac.uk/sicsa-news or the SICSA Facebook group for updates.

SICSA Research Theme Update - Modelling and Abstraction

Prof. Jane Hillston

On 21st October the Second SICSA Workshop on Biological Networks: Theory and Applications was held in Edinburgh at the Informatics Forum. The workshop was organised by Matthias Hennig of the University of Edinburgh and Pierluigi Frisco of Heriot-Watt University with sponsorship from the Modelling and Abstraction Theme of SICSA, Nexxus and local company Brainwave-Discovery. The workshop had 65 registered participants who came from a range of disciplines and institutions, from both within SICSA and outside.

Derek Gatherer

The programme for the workshop was richly varied and consisted of eight 20 minute technical presentations, three 10 minute tool presentations and four posters. One of the presentations, by Derek Gatherer from the University of Glasgow, gave account of joint work with Vashti Galpin, from the University of Edinburgh, considering dynamic models of Rosen's M,R System which had been asserted to be incomputable. This work arose from a collaboration started as a result of the First SICSA Workshop on Biological Networks: Theory and Applications in October 2010. Other presentations in the morning ranged from gene networks in the virus MRSA, through host-pathogen interaction networks to investigation of neural avalanches in neural networks. The talks in the afternoon included work from the University of Abertay Dundee, applying techniques from computer games to the visualisation of biological networks. Such visualisations provide a valuable form of communication between experimental biologists and computational modellers.

The invited speaker at the workshop was Professor Vito Latora, who had been a SICSA Distinguished Visiting Fellow earlier in the year. This offered a welcome opportunity for those who missed Professor Latora's lectures over the summer another chance to hear about some of his work. His talk, Complex Networks in Biology, briefly outlined several areas where his work on complex networks has had biological applications, but the majority of the talk focussed on applications related to the brain. Professor Latora explained how, building on previous work by others showing that cortical networks exhibit small world characteristics, he and co-authors defined a measure of efficiency which could be considered both locally and globally within networks, and showed that cortical networks exhibited both forms of efficiency. At a different level of abstraction, Professor Latora and his colleagues have also worked on a comparison of the brain connectivity found in healthy and epileptic patients. This comparison highlighted a marked contrast between the structures found in the two groups of patients. In a final application, to high resolution EEG images of brain activities while subjects carried out a physical task, Professor Latora and his collaborators demonstrated the need to establish dynamic characterisations of graphs, taking into consideration temporal aspects as well as static connectivity, clustering etc.

Vito Latora

Matthias and Pierluigi were very pleased with how well the workshop went, with lots of discussions over lunch and in the coffee breaks. They are keen to organise the workshop again this year, although perhaps with a more focussed area of biological application. It will be great to see if there are any new collaborations formed!

Smart Tourism Launches New Innovation Projects and Issues Navigation Challenge

Thea de Joode

SICSA's Smart Tourism programme brings together university informatics and computing science research from across SICSA, tourism organisations, and industry, with the aim of providing innovative approaches and technology to enhance the Scottish tourism sector's technology base. This is achieved through collaborative Innovation Projects and Challenge Fellowships which are designed to produce solutions to problems identified by the tourism sector.

Image Credit – Calsidyrose

Navigation Challengefest

Once upon a time, navigation was a task carried out in the physical world: exploiting information sources to help fix our physical location, to explore new places, and plot a course. Over the years, we've developed a host of systems to support navigation, from street signs and OS maps to GPS-equipped mobiles. Nowadays, we also have to navigate in libraries, through databases, and on the web. We need to orient ourselves, explore, and plan routes through these resources. Tourism, in the cultural and heritage sectors, benefits hugely from existing systems for physical and informational navigation. Yet there are still big obstacles for tourists finding the sites, objects, events and itineraries that will satisfy them.

In October last year we held our first Smart Tourism 'Challenge workshop' to investigate these navigation areas. Held at the University of Edinburgh's Informatics Forum, this event was attended by a wide range of individuals from academia, tourism organisations and industry. Various presentations gave valuable insight into both the research currently happening on the theme of navigation, and the problems organisations such as Historic Scotland have in monitoring access to their many unstaffed sites. The event findings have shaped our first ever Challenge with an open invitation to the smart tourism community to bid to carry out some innovative research along the themes of group navigation and narrative navigation.

Full details of the event and the call for Challenge Fellowships can be at http://www.smarttourism.org/events

New Innovation Projects

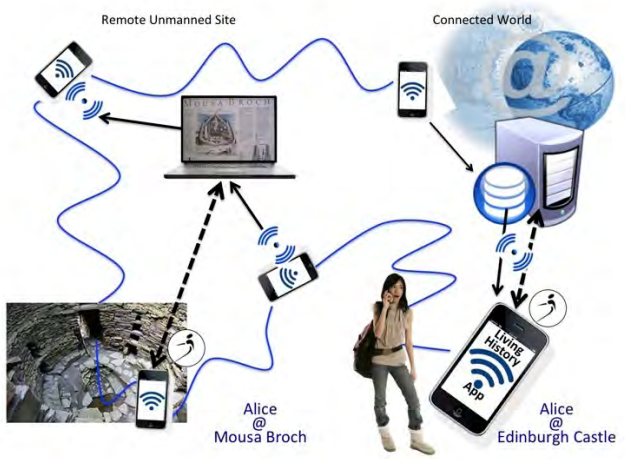


Image credit: Susan Craw

Following a second meeting of the project Selection Panel at the end of November, two further projects have now been funded and added to the smart tourism portfolio:

'Living History' (pictured) led by Susan Craw and Stewart Massie at Robert Gordon University, AmbieSense Ltd and Historic Scotland proposed a mobile app solution for visitors to Historic Scotland sites, to increase the service delivery capacity and outreach of Historic Scotland across its sites.

'Historical Echoes', led by David Benyon of Napier University in conjunction with Veemee Ltd and Historic Scotland aims to address the generic problems of serendipity and user experience in mobile digital tourism by building on our previous experience with mobile apps developed at the 2011 St Andrew's Multimodal Digital Tourism summer school to provide unobtrusive alerts to tourists that there is interesting tourism content nearby.

Previously approved Smart Tourism projects currently underway include “The Shape of the Festivals” project at the University of Glasgow, led by Matthew Chalmers and Donald McMillan, “The LADDIE project led by Aaron Quigley and Miguel Nacenta at the University of St Andrews, and “SMART”, led by Aaron Quigley, University of St Andrews.

And finally….
Our next event will be rural in focus and getting down and dirty with the bones and stones of Aberdeenshire. Supported by the dot.rural Digital Economy Hub, those interested are asked to save the date of16/17 March, to be held in and around the University of Aberdeen.
For more information on the Smart Tourism programme please see www.smarttourism.org. or to join the Smart Tourism mailing list please email admin@ sicsa.ac.uk.

SICSA Education: Update on recent actvities

Prof. Greg Michaelson
In the last issue of the SICSA Newsletter we reported that SICSA has expanded its remit to include Computing Science education. SICSA Director of Education, Prof. Greg Michaelson, provides an update of recent activities in this area below:

SICSA Education got off to a strong start with the Education launch meeting held at the University of Dundee on 5th December 2011, attended by representatives from all the SICSA institutions. Outcomes of the meeting were:

•We will run an employer facing, poster based SICSA EducationFest in Glasgow, tentatively in May 2012.
•We will run a one day SICSA Computing Teaching event both as induction for new colleagues and as a refresher for extant staff in Dundee, tentatively in autumn 2012.
•Quintin Cutts of the University of Glasgow will chair a working group on CPD which Polly Purvis (Scotland IS) and Kate Farrell (CAS Scotland) have kindly offered to join, as well as volunteers from the meeting.
•Stuart Anderson of the University of Edinburgh will prepare a position paper on a Scottish Open/Distance Learning MSc scheme.
•Bruce Scharlau of the University of Aberdeen & Stuart Anderson of the University of Edinburgh will prepare a position paper on a SICSA Hack/Appathon.

Please see future issues of this newsletter and the SICSA web site for further updates on our work in this area.

SICSA Prize PhD Studentships


Studentship Induction 2011

Prize Studentships 2012
The SICSA Prize Studentship is an annual studentship competition for those who excel in informatics and computing research. We offer a number of prize studentships each year to the very best students from across the world and our aim is to attract the research leaders of the future, whatever their nationality or place of residence, to come and work with us in Scotland.

Each SICSA student will spend 3 to 4 years as part of a programme coordinated across the partners. These students will catalyse new collaborations across the research community, and lead the next generation of computing researchers.

We will be looking for outstanding applicants in any area of computer science and informatics and we are particularly interested in applications from students who want to work in one of the SICSA research themes.

The deadline for applications will be 31st March 2012. For full details about how to make an application, please visit http://www.sicsa.ac.uk/graduate-academy.

Prize Studentships 2011
We are pleased to announce that SICSA provided funding for a total of 24 Prize Studentships across Scotland in 2011. Our new students joined us at the University of Glasgow on 28th November 2011 for the annual induction session.

SICSA SEABIS Workshop

Prof. John McCall

The SICSA SEABIS workshop was held at Napier University on 11-12 January 2012. The workshop was organized by Emma Hart with sponsorship from the Complex Systems Engineering theme of SICSA. There were 22 registered participants from a variety of institutions within and external to SICSA (4 PhD students, 4 researchers, and 14 academic staff).

The workshop offered a varied and interesting programme, consisting of: presentations on SEABIS-related research activity across several groups in SICSA; a keynote talk; discussions on collaboration and funding; a social dinner; and presentations from research students.

SEABIS stands for Self-Organising, Emergent, Adaptive, Bio-Inspired Systems. Several speakers described SEABIS-related activity around SICSA. Strong common themes included hyperheuristics, probabilistic modelling and graph-based representations. These themes were also reflected in research student projects relating to hyperheuristics, vehicle routing and Bayesian network learning.

Discussions on collaboration and joint funding applications were lively and raised some interesting possibilities, including a digital democracy theme which arose spontaneously from more than one discussion group.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Gabriella Ochoa from the University of Nottingham. Her talk, **Hyper-heuristics and the Cross-domain Optimisation Challenge**, gave a state-of-the-art account of developments in the field of hyperheuristics and important current directions in the area. Research in hyper-heuristics explores the space between isolated problem-specific application of heuristics and the theoretical limits to full generality imposed by the No Free Lunch theorem. Hyperheuristics aim to attain a level of generality in optimizing the selection and combination of low-level heuristics for unseen problems during run time. The Cross-Domain Optimisation Challenge invited entrants to design a high level search strategy that controls a set of problem specific low level heuristics. The set of low level heuristics was different for each problem domain, but the high level strategy which controls the heuristics was constrained to remain the same. Some diversions on the visualization of competition entry statistics, tactics adopted by entrants, and the role of the hyperheuristics Wikipedia page in resolving academic attribution, added humour to a stimulating technical presentation.

One outcome of the meeting was the proposal of an ongoing SEABIS workshop series, hosted in turn by different SICSA institutions. These will take the form of afternoon sessions with a keynote speaker and a few shorter presentations.

SICSA Funded students secure Google internships

Two SICSA-funded students, Claire Maternaghan and Iain McGinniss, have secured Google Internships in San Francisco.

Claire will be heading to San Francisco in June for three and a half months, joining the Android@Home project which is related to her research into home automation.

Iain has just finished his three and a half month internship as part of the Security Research team, working on the belay web authorization framework porting the server-side components from Python to Java. Iain was a member of the team which won 1st place at the Dart Language Hackathon in December, by porting an NES emulator from Java to Dart to allow NES games to be played in the browser.

Iain commented “This has been by far the best working experience I have had in my life to date. Great people, interesting work, and it’s in California! What more could one ask for?”

SICSA lecturer assists with Guardian’s riot tweet analysis

Dr Alex Voss, a SICSA lecturer from St Andrews, used the St Andrews private cloud computing system (StACC) to help analyse a huge volume of tweets sent during the riots in England earlier this summer. Working with a multidisciplinary team from Manchester, Leicester, Wolverhampton and UCL, Alex set up 16 large servers in the St Andrews cloud and analysed 2.6 million tweets in 15 hours. A great example of how cloud computing makes large-scale one-off data analysis possible at a low cost. See: http://www.analysingsocialmedia.org/ and http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/series/reading-the-riots for more details.

SICSA DEMOfest 2011

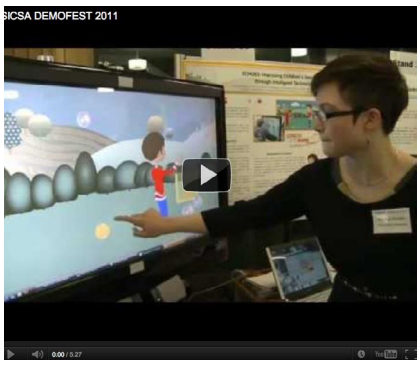
Alan Settery

Over 200 people attended the 4th annual SICSA DEMOfest event in November at the University of Edinburgh's Informatics Forum, which showcased the best of Scottish Informatics and Computing Science research. The event brought together researchers from the 13 SICSA Universities to meet, exchange ideas and promote current research to business and industry.

Over 50 poster stands and demonstrations were on display to encourage commercial collaboration between academia, business and industry.

The event was organised by SICSA with ScotlandIS. Our partner organisations; Scottish Enterprise, Knowledge Transfer Partnership and Interface were also present to promote the transfer of knowledge and technical skills to industry, particularly technology driven high growth businesses – over 50 companies attended.

Exhibitor's poster displays can be found on the sicsa web site: http://www.sicsa.ac.uk/events/demofest-2011



Visit SICSA YouTube for an overview of the event

SICSA team wins SVc2UK Appathon

SICSA team,"EyeSore", were the winners at the SVc2UK Appathon competition, competing against students from across the UK.

Appathon is organised by "Silicon Valley comes to the UK" (SVc2UK), a not-for profit series of industry supported events designed to bring together students and entrepreneurs to share expertise. Participants must be students and are asked to create apps from government data on healthcare, education and the environment. This includes thinking up a high impact concept, producing the app, marketing their idea and explaining its potential for expansion and commercialisation.

The Edinburgh Appathon event was sponsored by Informatics Ventures and Hay Systems Ltd, who provided iPads for the winning team.

EyeSore is a SICSA team compromising students from Abertay, St Andrews and Edinburgh. Their app allows the community to report "eyesores" to local authorities providing them with real time information about issues affecting their communities.

SILICON VALLEY COMES TO THE UK

Image Credit: SVC2UK

EyeSore Overview:

Team Members: Dagmara Szkurlat, Valentin Radu, Karim Mansour, David Butler

Type of Application: Web & Mobile
Application URL: http://www.eyesore-server.appspot.com/

Application Video: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uB6agoOeGOs

Host location: Edinburgh

What is it: EyeSore provides the community with a tool to crwodsourc the reporting of local "eyesores". This provides local authorities with real time information about issues which their community are concerned by – allowing them to allocate their resources appropriately.

SICSA Student Profiles

During 2011 SICSA granted funding for 24 SICSA Prize Studentships. In this issue we put the spotlight on two of our brand new students

Farida Chowdhury - University of Stirling

Please tell us about your academic career to date.
After completion of my BSc. Computer Science and Engineering at the Shah Jalal University of Science and Technology in Bangladesh, I joined as a Lecturer in the same university. After two years of my academic career, I joined in the Erasmus Mundus Master's Program in Network and e-Business Centred Computing (NeBCC) which is a joint Master's program between the University of Reading, UK, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Spain and Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. Upon completion of the course I joined back to the university in Bangladesh as an Assistant Professor in 2009. Recently I started my PhD in September last year at the University of Stirling on a SICSA Studentship.

What prompted you to embark upon a PhD and in particular why did you choose to apply for a SICSA studentship?
I was always very keen to pursue a career in the academia as well as engage in world class research. I strongly believe that a PhD would be the perfect stepping stone to achieve that goal. I have been looking for a PhD with a world-class research facility and a challenging and vibrant environment to engage in a topic that I am fascinated with. Being an International student from outside EU, I had very less studentship options in UK universities for PhD. Among those options SICSA attracted me as the most fascinating one. SICSA provides wonderful opportunities for the students worldwide in Scottish Universities. What I like most about SICSA is that, it does not only provide the studentship but also organizes different kinds of workshops, seminars, conferences, summer schools etc. which help to develop as a researcher and open up a window of opportunities to meet new peoples and create the chance of collaboration.

Tell us about your planned research.
My research is to investigate structured Peer-to-Peer (P2P) network algorithms and their suitability for use on mobile networks. However wired P2P has gained tremendous popularity in different applications such as Skype, Torrents etc., but due to technical issues in mobile phone networks and limited resources available on the handsets, designing such a system is a challenging issue and this research avenue is yet to be fully explored.
My research involves studying the particular issues in mobile phone networks, and the suitability of existing algorithms. The research focuses on identifying algorithms particularly suitable for mobile networks and developing new algorithms where gaps exist. The ultimate goal of this work is to develop a novel mobile P2P architecture and algorithm which is geared towards the conditions in mobile networks.

What do you hope to gain from your PhD? What are your career plans?
I want to gain something significant through my PhD that brings a meaning to my academic life. I want to increase my confidence and develop myself as a better communicator and gain required research skills.
After finishing my PhD I would like to go back to Bangladesh and want to join as a faculty in my home university and disseminate my knowledge to the students of the university. I also wish to continue my research as well.

Are you involved in any SICSA activities?
I am part of this year's SICSA PhD Conference 2012 and acting as the Poster Coordinator.

What do you like to do outside of work/academia?
I like travelling, reading books, listening to music and hanging around with friends.

Chris Schneider - University of St. Andrews

Please tell us about your academic career to date.
My academic career is a bit varied at this point, but in summary I've now attended 3 universities within the past 5 years--Indiana University, The Johns Hopkins University, and now The University of St. Andrews, respectively. I've received two degrees thus far, both in Security Informatics.

As an undergraduate I focused on topics in systems security, such as how to make validatable voting machines that preserve privacy, and self-healing systems under Prof. Larry Yaeger. As a post-graduate I was given the opportunity to focus on coursework in cryptography under the mentorship of Prof. Susan Hohenberger, and to further my studies in self-healing systems.

Tell us about your planned research.
Currently I am studying under Prof. Simon Dobson, and Dr. Adam Barker at the University of St Andrews. I am hoping that my interests in artificial intelligence & self-healing systems can potentially be applied to cloud computing platforms or sensor networks to increase the availability of these systems.

What prompted you to embark upon a PhD and in particular why did you choose to apply for a SICSA studentship?
I've wanted to participate in a Ph.D. program for a while, but in the past I've felt a bit unsure about how to approach it. Ultimately it was the encouragement of another that gave me the momentum to approach the Computer Science Faculty at St. Andrews, and by proxy, SICSA. Prof. Dobson & Prof. Gent helped me to apply for a studentship with SICSA after my initial acceptance of place to St. Andrews. When I heard the result of the application was a Prize Studentship, I was surprised. The support I have since received from SICSA has been instrumental in my academic opportunities thus far. I consider myself to be extraordinarily fortunate.

What do you hope to gain from your PhD? What are your career plans?
In a single word: Experience. During my interview with St. Andrews I was given the advice to follow the experience of my advisor(s), and to shadow them. I intend to follow this advice to the fullest, and have had fun doing so thus far.

As for career plans, I have none to speak of as of yet--but not for a lack of want. Staying within the United Kingdom after my studies as a post-doctoral researcher sounds ideal.

What do you like to do outside of work/academia?
I tend to engross myself in projects when I have them, so at the moment activities outside
of my studies are fairly minimal. In the past, I've put a considerable amount of time into
various photography and home-brewing endeavours**.**

News from across Scotland

Microsoft announce major joint initiative with SICSA University

A new initiative involving a number of SICSA academics based at the University of Edinburgh and researchers from Microsoft Research Cambridge has recently been launched.

Rick Rashid and Andy Gordon with the supervisors of the first group of PhD students in the joint initiative. From left to right: Stratis Viglas, Charles Sutton, Guido Sanguinetti, Rick Rashid, Amos Storkey, Jane Hillston, Andy Gordon

Microsoft Research Connections has confirmed that it will co-sponsor four studentships (PhD scholarships) to be awarded to students at the School of Informatics, University of Edinburgh. The recipients will receive a three-year bursary and invitations to the Microsoft Research annual PhD Summer School in Cambridge, where they learn about Microsoft Research Cambridge research projects, acquire key transferable skills, and share ideas with Microsoft researchers.

All students are supervised by a university faculty member and co-supervised by a Microsoft researcher. In addition, some of the University of Edinburgh studentship recipients may also be offered an internship at Microsoft Research.

For more information on this story, please visit:
http://blogs.msdn.com/b/msr_er/archive/2011/10/12/sound-the-bagpipes-joint-initiative-in-informatics-announced.aspx

University of Stirling students win prize at DevXS Developer MARATHON

Two students in Computing Sciences from the University of Stirling have successfully participated in DevXS, a developer marathon spread across three days, where students from across the UK and beyond are encouraged to team up and build cool things that contribute to university life.

Enrico Teterra and Kristopher Early, members of the Stirling University Computer Club (http://succ.cs.stir.ac.uk), formed Team Wallace and won the First Prize in one of the 6 challenges proposed. Overall, 26 teams, and more than 150 team members participated in the event.

DevXS (http://2011.devxs.org/) is organized by the University of Lincoln as an uninterrupted developer marathon over a weekend. Beyond the technical challenge, the event features a set of technology focused talks and workshops carried out by industry and university representatives. Overall this represents a valuable opportunity for students to test their skills, network and expose themselves to current tech trends.
A prototype of their application can be accessed at: http://ec2-79-125-64-128.eu-west-1.compute.amzonaws.com/coshh/

International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML)

We are very pleased to announce that the International Conference on Machine Learning (ICML) will be held at the University of Edinburgh from June 26 - July 1 2012. This is one of the largest and most prestigious machine learning conferences, attracting around 500 researchers every year. If you are interested in presenting, please see the call for papers at the conference Web site (http://icml.cc/); the submission deadline is 24 Feb.

In addition to the conference sessions, ICML will also include a day of tutorials and two days of workshops. This year the conference will be co-located with the 25th Annual Conference on Learning Theory (COLT 2012). For more information see the conference Web site http://icml.cc/

New Year's Honours 2012

Prof Alan Bundy of the University of Edinburgh and SICSA Distinguished visitor Prof Ursula Martin both receive a CBE in the New Year's Honours list for services to computer science. Congratulations from SICSA!

Making connections

Over 300 million people worldwide have home broadband connections to the internet. Many households use wired and wireless networking to allow multiple computers to share the broadband connection and to enable media sharing, gaming and other applications. However, current home networking technology remains largely user-unfriendly. Professor of Communications Systems at the University of Glasgow, Joe Sventek, and his team are working on a prototype to tackle the issue.

'We wanted to redesign the home network so that it just comes out of the box and works, and empowers homeowners to control their networks in a way they understand. We're building a wireless router that contains all of the intelligence in our system; it is essentially logging every bit of traffic that's going through the system, but makes it available in a way that's really easy to access.

'If a customer wants to see, for example, how much traffic there was on the web or on iPlayer, we can do that kind of aggregation over periods of time. We can also provide real-time views of the top end-users of the home network, allowing the customer to assert control. So, for instance, if Junior is doing BitTorrent downloads when he's not supposed to, Dad can see that.'

The system includes a touch-screen display with three panels, which the homeowner can use to allocate IP address leases to devices in the home network's range. The middle panel indicates very limited network access based on a renewable, 30-second lease. An icon of a newly connected device remains here until the homeowner decides to drag it either to the right-hand panel, allowing a longer lease for trusted devices, or to the left-hand panel, where it is blocked permanently from accessing the network.

Initial testing in several UK households has resulted in very positive feedback, and Professor Sventek is keen to involve PhD students in the next stages of the system's development. The team are already investigating options for one or more spinout companies to manufacture the product, third-party troubleshooting and support, and scaling the system for local networks in larger environments, such as schools and small and medium-sized enterprises.

Story courtesy of: http://www.gla.ac.uk/

iVenture Tuesdays at University of Edinburgh launched by Sir Tom Farmer

informatics ventures

Informatics Ventures recently launched their latest innovative and exciting series of seminars for entrepreneurs, called iVenture Tuesdays (http://www.informatics-ventures.com/educate/iventure-tuesday).

"The iVenture Tuesday series invites Scotland's leading entrepreneurs to take SMEs through a motivational journey inspiring the talent of tomorrow to drive forward their dreams and ambitions and who better to lead these sessions than those that have already achieved it", says Colin Adams, Programme Director at Informatics Ventures.

The series builds on the solid foundations Informatics Ventures has laid over the last few years, delivering 28,027 hours of executive entrepreneurship education to 985 participants from 617 different enterprises to achieve its aim of encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation from academic research into business. The seminars will take place of the last Tuesday of the month throughout Scotland, are free and open to anyone who registers in advance.
Sir Tom Farmer was the inaugural keynote speaker giving a talk entitled "People Make the Business" to an audience of over 200.

Sir Tom Farmer commented; "Now is an important time for the Scottish economy and it is crucial for its future growth and success that we help, support and inspire tomorrow's entrepreneurs to take the leap and start their own businesses. I aim to share some of my own thoughts and experiences and in particular reinforce the invaluable role that people play in any business. Staff that are recognised and valued will significantly contribute to the success of an organisation and this should not be underestimated".

Story courtesy of: http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/informatics/news-events

SICSA Events

To find out more about forthcoming SICSA events, please visit www.sicsa.ac.uk/events

February:
23rd February: Lecture on Smart Systems from Dumb Data, Susan Craw, IDEAS Research Institute, Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen

29th February: SICSA MMI Affective Computing Workshop, University of Abertay. See http://ces.abertay.ac.uk/sicsa/ for details.

April:
15th-18th April: Milner Symposium, University of Edinburgh. See http://events.inf.ed.ac.uk/Milner2012/ for details.

May:
10th May: Women in Computer Science and Technology, University of Edinburgh.

10th-12th May: Turing Centenary Celebrations, University of Edinburgh. Various events - see www.sicsa.ac.uk/events for details.

June:
7th-9th June: SICSA Summer School in Types and Programming Languages, University of St Andrews.

11th-15th June: SICSA Summer School in the Use of Inference and Dynamical Modelling in Human-Computer Interaction, University of Glasgow.

12th-14th June: Trends in Functional Programming 2012, University of St Andrews. Further details at http://www.tifp.org/TFP12.html.

15th June: 75 Years of λ-Calculus, University of St Andrews. Further details at http://msp.cis.strath.ac.uk/lambda2012/.

20th-22nd June: SICSA PhD Conference 2012, Glasgow Caledonian University. Registration and web site will go live in February 2012 - please see the SICSA web site for updates.

Please note that there will be a number of further events throughout the months February to June where exact dates and details are still to be confirmed. Please check **www.sicsa.ac.uk/events** *for regular updates.*

News Items
If you have any newsworthy items that you would like included in the Spring/Summer 2012 edition of the SICSA Newsletter, please contact admin@sicsa.ac.uk.

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