Spotlight On... Postgraduate Research

This newsletter is a little late in publication in order to include all that has been going on in terms of postgraduate research over the last few months. August was officially postgraduate research month for the University. A number of events were organised for postgrad students across the University, including the Three Minute Thesis Competition that a number of our students participated in. Within the School of Business, a postgraduate colloquium was organised that also saw strong participation from our students (more details of these events below).

At the end of October the Department of Information Science held a postgraduate research day. This was an eventful day, with 28 Masters and PhD students presenting a 5 minute talk about their research. It was great to see the breadth of research being undertaken within the department, as well as the number of students involved in cross-discipline research. More details of the day, along with photos and proceedings are available here http://bit.ly/c9Maor.

To wrap up an exciting period of postgraduate research activity, a group of students participated in a writing retreat at Bannockburn at the start of November (see the article below). This was a chance for the students to get to know each other a bit better, have a focussed period of time to work on a particular research output, and to tap into the writing knowledge and experience of the staff and other students present. We look forward to reading the final versions of the papers, chapters, etc that the students were working on during the retreat.

Three Minute Thesis Competition

The School of Business Three Minute Thesis Competition was in August and the department was very well represented by six of our PhD students: Simon Hoermann, Angrosh Mandya, Surangika Ranathunga, Minjie Hu, Upal Nath, and Prajesh Chhanabhai.

Students were given three minutes to communicate their research to the audience and the judges in an engaging and easy to understand manner, using only one slide. There were a total of 12 very strong competitors from around the School of Business and they are all congratulated on the excellent work that they put into their presentations.

SOB Postgrad Colloquium: Best Paper Award

PhD student Angrosh Mandya (supervised by Dr Nigel Stanger and Associate Professor Stephen Cranefield) was awarded the Best Paper Award at this year’s School of Business Postgraduate Student Colloquium. His paper was entitled "Modelling Argumentation Structures in Scientific Discourse through Context Identification: Towards Intelligent Information Retrieval Systems".

Nice & Natural Writing Retreat 2010

This year’s writing retreat was held in cooperation with our esteemed colleagues from the School of Surveying from the 5th - 8th November. Eight of our postgraduate students and two Information Science staff participated in the retreat, and had the unique experience of almost un-distracted time and space to work on their piece of written output – producing journal paper drafts, writing a thesis chapter, or for instance finalising a book chapter.

The Bannockburn School Camp was an ideal place for the retreat: a tranquil setting without too many tourist attractions; electricity, but no Wi-Fi network; plenty of sleeping space, but not too cosy; a swimming pool, but cold and two feet deep; a Volleyball court, but with a rope instead of a net; and plenty of food jointly prepared under the supervision of the two managing drivers.

Thanks to a bountiful supply of Nice & Natural muesli bars there was enough energy to produce crunchy and perhaps also nutty results. Watch this space for outputs to come.

- Text supplied by Holger
50 Years of ICT Innovation

2010 is the 50th anniversary of the New Zealand Computer Society (NZCS). To celebrate this occasion, NZCS held a 50th Anniversary Conference in Rotorua (15-18 September). The theme of the conference was "50 Years of ICT Innovation", and it attracted about 250 delegates from across the industry, academic and government computing sectors. The conference was very well organised and had excellent keynote speakers, including Sam Morgan (Trade Me), Rod Drury (Xero), Ian Taylor (Taylormade Productions) and Nat Torkington (open source guru).

There were also several excellent panel sessions, and a series of individual presentations covering a diverse range of topics including privacy and ethics, intellectual property, professionalism in the ICT industry, computing history, digital preservation, robotics and computing education. Dr Nigel Stanger attended the conference and gave a presentation on the development of digital libraries and repositories in New Zealand.

The third day of the conference was dedicated to a "BarCamp" (also known as an "unConference"), which is a participant-organised conference; that is, session topics are determined on the day, not in advance. This was facilitated by Nat Torkington and was very interesting, and often hilarious! A book marking fifty years of computing in New Zealand was also launched during the conference.

Recent Publications (July–October)

Book Chapters:


SoB Summer Scholarships Awarded

The Department has been successful in gaining a number of School of Business Summer Scholarships for students again this year. The students will be undertaking research projects under the supervision of Department staff over the summer months. We look forward to reading about the outcomes of these projects.

- Max Allen (Dr. Jeremiah Deng) - A radiology teaching file
- Paul Crane (Dr. Mariusz Nowostawski) - Visual timelines and narrative
- Julian Munster (Prof. Martin Purvis, Dr. Mariusz Nowostawski) - Simple, low-threshold smart-phone based dietary habits tracking system
- Jamie Saunders (Dr. Grant Dick) - A survey of cloud computing usage in NZ organisations
- John Vincent (Assoc. Prof. Peter Whigham) - Visualising and characterising spatio-temporal patterns of rare alpine plant species
- Alan Woods (Dr. Mariusz Nowostawski) - Detection and analysis of various types of Parkinson tremors using smart mobile technologies
- Xie Jinhong (Tony Savarimuthu, Dr. Maryam Purvis) - Norm recommendation system in virtual environments
- Sam Paulin (Assoc. Prof. Holger Regenbrecht) - Dental Head: a demonstration system to attract funding

Otago Research Grant Awarded

Associate Professor Hank Wolfe has been awarded an Otago Research Grant (ORG) for 2011. The research will focus on analysing second hand hard drives to determine the existence of confidential or personal information.

Hank was also profiled in the October edition of the *Otago Magazine*, where he offers advice on how to be best protected in the unsafe world of electronic communications.

Build IT Travel Grant Received

PhD student, Vivian Yong, was awarded a Build IT travel grant to attend the IEEE International Conference on Multimedia and Expo (ICME). At the conference she presented a paper on "Modelling Semantic Context for Novelty Detection in Wildlife Scenes".

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**Journals:**


**Conference Papers:**


- **Dick, G. (2010).** Automatic Identification of the Niche Radius using Spatially-Structured Clearing Methods. In *proc. of the IEEE World Congress on Computational Intelligence (WCCI)*, (pp. 1264-1271). IEEE.

- **Dick, G. (2010).** The Utility of Scale Factor Adaptation in Differential Evolution. In *proc. of the IEEE World Congress on Computational Intelligence (WCCI)*, (pp. 4355-4362). IEEE.


- **Woodford, B.J. (2010).** Automatic optimization of pruning in evolving fuzzy neural networks using an entropy measure. In *proc. of the IEEE World Congress on Computational Intelligence (WCCI)*, (pp. 1053-1059). IEEE.


**Conference Posters:**


**Further Information**

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