

ACS Foundation student wins WAITTA award

Relevant and practical work experience as an integrated part of an ICT university degree adds immeasurably to a student's ability to deliver real world outcomes as a budding professional and helps fast track their career.

For Jonathan Cream, a graduate of Curtin University of Technology, work experience arranged through the ACS Foundation has also contributed to him winning the 2009 Western Australian Information Technology and Telecommunications Award (WAITTA) for the best student project.

At the WAITTA presentation dinner in March this year, Cream and his teammates, Graeme Muller and Matthew Cole, were recognised for their SimSpy application, which they developed for Western Australia firm, Calytrix, during their final year of study.

SimSpy provides 3D visualisations to depict the location and status of a variety of land, air and naval entities in a running 'war game' simulation. The software offers an intuitive and immersive way to view the data on a virtual globe to understand the status and relationships between the various resources. Although developed for military use, SimSpy also has potential application for disaster relief, traffic management, logistics, search and rescue and more.

While still a student at Curtin, Cream completed an ACS Foundation Work Integrated Learning scholarship with Western Power in 2008/09, gaining full-time relevant industry experience over the summer holidays and then continuing two days a week during the semester.

The ACS Foundation scholarship was worth \$16,000 over 12 months, but more

importantly, Cream says the relevant industry experience gave him a real world understanding of how large companies organise their software development.

"I was part of the testing team at Western Power and that gave me a good idea of how developers and testers communicate and the kinds of issues that can occur," Jonathan says.

"My training at Western Power certainly contributed to my ability to assist my student team at Curtin to develop an award-winning product. It also helped to prepare me for my current work as a test analyst with ERG Group, since I'm already familiar with issue tracking and the software tools are very similar."

Cream recently joined ERG Group's graduate program and is working through 12 months of short term rotations in its software development operation. An initial three months in software testing will be followed by stints in design, development and integration before he moves into a more permanent role.

"I think winning the WAITTA award was certainly a factor in my being offered the ERG job," he says.

"I'm extremely proud of this achievement and included it in my resume when I applied for a role with ERG. This was something we really worked hard for and it was incredibly rewarding to find out we had won. I certainly believe it will set me apart when applying for jobs in the future."

One of his teammates, Matthew Cole, has fulfilled a lifelong dream by winning a full-time role with Microsoft in Redmond, Washington, leaving to take up the role shortly after the WAITTA presentation dinner.

Cole was offered the role after graduating with honours and serving an internship with Microsoft. He delayed his return to the US until after the WAITTA event because the team knew they were strong contenders for the award.

Congratulations to Jonathan, Matthew and Graeme on an outstanding achievement!



From left, **Associate Prof Tele Tan**, Curtin University of Technology Dept. of Computing; **Prof Lyn Beazley**, Chief Scientist of WA; **Graeme Muller**; **Helen Morton MLC**; **Matthew Cole** and **Jonathan Cream**.