

# NCSS DAILY

JANUARY 2011: EDITION 1.0 BROUGHT TO YOU BY  ATlassian!

## Program: start!

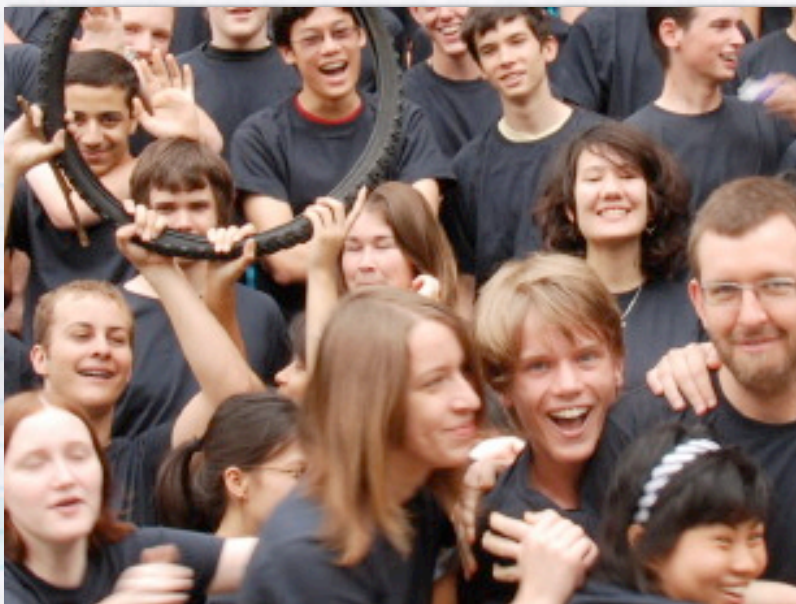
The National Computer Science School for 2011 has officially kicked off with a great start, and a few claps of thunder. Students arrived from all over the country over the past two days, moving into the Women's College on the University of Sydney campus for the next ten days which promise to be both exciting and intense. With around 75 students and nearly 30 tutors, the Menzies hall was filled with action over the course of the afternoon.

### INTRODUCTORY LECTURES

James Curran, head of the NCSS, started off the day's activities by giving an opening lecture to both the students and their parents, describing what the next ten days will entail. It sounds like there will be a lot of tired students and tutors at the end, but with lots of fun in store.

Next the students split into their two themed project groups - Python web design and embedded systems - to listen to an introductory outline lecture from Python tutor James and embedded tutor John. Both programs are packed with lots to learn and much to discover!

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## Once is not enough!

There must be something electro-magnetic about NCSS, because many participants can't seem to stay away.

Every year, a select number of students are invited to return to NCSS as "returning students", or senior students, who both take part in new challenges and advise new students. Many of these students later even become tutors at the school!

Similarly, the large majority of tutors have been involved with NCSS for a few years, or in the case of James and Tara, getting close to fifteen years. That's pretty amazing!

Students, tutors and sponsors, make sure you look out for updates on the NCSS front - new ideas and challenges are always being developed and sought for, and you can be part of this!



**BEFORE REGISTRATION** Students and their parents mingle in the courtyard outside Menzies, enjoying some afternoon tea and sunshine.



**WELCOME LECTURE** Everyone listens as James gives the opening speech, welcoming the students to the school and preparing them for the week ahead.



**ZOMBIE ATTACK** The only way to avoid being eaten by a zombie was to yell out another group member's name, transforming them into the hungry zombie!



## GROUP SPOTLIGHT

What did each group have to say about their team's newspaper tower assembly strategy?

**Group 1:** "... Still deciding!"

**Group 2:** "Cones - we have to make lots of cones."

**Group 3:** "Jenga! We'll roll paper and stack it high as possible."

**Group 4:** "A supporting base around a tower of rolled up newspaper, that should be fairly strong."

**Group 5:** "Triangular bundles stuffed with paper for rigidity and tied together - and then win!"

**Group 6:** "Ramshackled swordfish."

*Thanks Adam, Jarrad, Robert, Damon, Georgia, Tom, Xavier and everyone who offered insight!*

## Tower Results

How tall can a newspaper tower get?  
(pretty awesomely tall!)

Group 1	1.5 sin 45° m
Group 2	6'2" (and a bit)
Group 3	3 mm
Group 4	James + broom
Group 5	James + broom
Group 6	6'2"

## Group building exercises: getting to know your allies



AFTER DINNER THE GROUPS ASSEMBLED IN MENZIES TO GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER AND PUT THEIR ENGINEERING SKILLS TO THE TEST

The first half of the session involved each group taking over a corner of Women's College and playing some getting-to-know-you games. We visited each group and saw zombies circling each other, truths and falsities mixed in together, a fair number of entangled arms, something about hand turtles and a whole lot of Johnny Whoops! Looks like all the groups are on their way to learning each other's names

by Tuesday afternoon! There were also quite a few "murders" taking place in the evening - close to twenty in total. Beware, those students and tutors who live on...

After this, teams reassembled in Menzies with piles of newspaper and the goal of constructing the highest tower that could also support a plush mushroom/Yoshi/Companion Cube. After ten minutes of careful planning, groups spent forty-five minutes working together to building the biggest, strongest throne for their mascots. With some interesting designs from all groups, it was a close race to the finish for Groups 4 and 5. James and his trusty broom ruled the heights too close to differentiate and it was a well-earned tie - and a much-needed break for the night!

## NUMBERS

percentage of arriving email that is spam

# 60%

number of exabytes of unique information produced by the human race (so far)

# 24

percent of statistics that are made up on the spot

# 43%



# What's been happening at NCSS?



## Yesterday's events in a nutshell and what to expect for today

...

The opening day of NCSS saw students arrive, register and get ready for ten days of intense programming fun. We had the opportunity to interact with both tutors and students, learning lots of interesting facts about their backgrounds and what brought them to NCSS - and why they do what they do.

It is super impressive to see the amount of enthusiasm and dedication that goes into making the school work year after year. The tutors really get behind the NCSS and it shows. It's going to be a busy time over the next days but with supportive tutors and excited students it should make for a very memorable school!

## WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT?

Today begins the first set of lectures for both sets of students. The embedded group will head over to the IT building while the Python group will visit the very lovely Physics building, and the students will start learning the basics they'll need to achieve the goals of their project.

Then tonight is trivia night! Bring it on!

## Sunday's schedule (02.01)

*Afternoon*  
Registration  
Welcome/Outline lecture

*Evening*  
Dinner at Women's College  
Group building exercises

## Today's schedule (03.01)

*Morning*  
Lecture/tutorial

*Afternoon*  
Lunch at Women's College  
Lecture/tutorial

*Evening*  
Dinner at Women's College  
Trivia night at Women's Menzies

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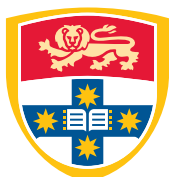
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