

NCSS DAILY

JANUARY 2011: EDITION 1.5 BROUGHT TO YOU BY **Altium**!

Day 7: the weekend begins!

It might be the weekend but there is no rest yet for the students and tutors of NCSS - the program continued instead with lectures and tutorials, as students all move on to their projects and get further into the respective coding they must do to achieve tasks.

Apparently there aren't quite as many attendees for morning games but in the labs the tiredness is not yet showing - everyone is still really enthusiastic and working hard!

PYTHON GROUP

Lectures were given on web design and databases in the morning. Students have been assigned different modules to work on for their social network, either front-end or back-end, from colour choice to tokenising to live status updating!

EMBEDDED GROUP

Lectures continue, and the challenge for the embedded students has been announced! We hung out in the labs and watched as students quickly programmed their robots to do what they need to do, as well as other cool features.



Cryptography challenge

In the competitive spirit of the previous night's programming competition, students once again assembled in IT for an evening of encrypting and decrypting - as fast as possible!

After a brief introduction into what cryptography is and some simple forms of ciphers, students were put into groups named after idols such as Ash Ketchum and Dr Horrible (look it up!). They then

began two hours of designing ciphers to encode text, figuring out the cipher to crack other teams' codes and writing chunks of decrypting code in Python.

Teams did excellently at both tasks and came up with some great ciphers! Congratulations to all teams especially Sauron (1st), Superman (2nd) and Voldemort (3rd) - and condolences to the tutor teams Aquaman and Bolt!



WALK THE LINE The embedded students are teaching their robots to use their sensors to their advantage, and follow lines of reflective tape.

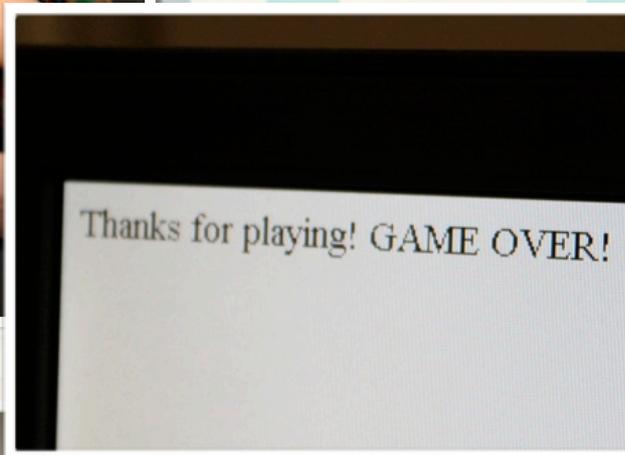
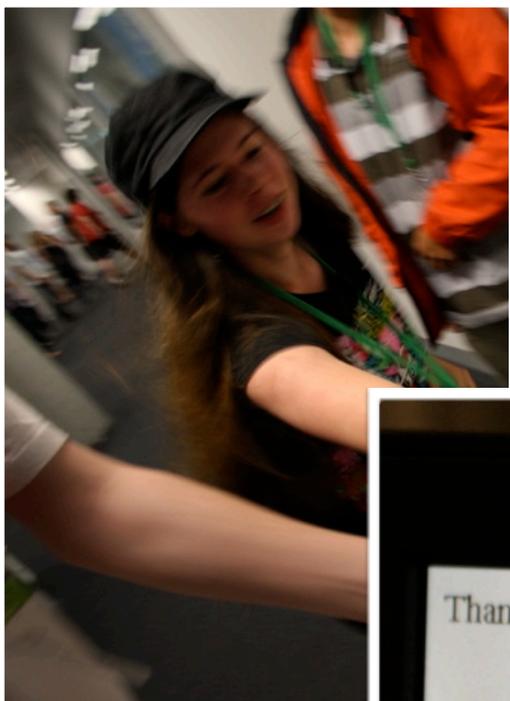


QUESTIONS OF DESIGN For the Python students, there are big questions about what constitutes a good colour scheme and James has lots of input to offer.



EVERYONE READY? After testing the system and some ciphers in the afternoon, tutors get ready for the cryptography challenge to start!

NCSS NIGHTLIFE



STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

Name: Katrina Tolentino
Age: 24
School: Chatham High (NSW)

What do you do?

I'm in my fourth year of teaching high school students computer science. I did a degree in IT and education, and can also teach math at a junior level.

Why NCSS?

I found out about the program in two ways, actually! I heard about it through a student that came to NCSS and was really positive about it. I also got a letter about NCSS in the mail and thought it sounded fun!

Future plans?

I'm really enjoying teaching at the moment, so I will continue this for a few years and see how it goes. I might also try working in the IT industry at some point.

Picking up teaching style?

Yeah, it's really enjoyable and I've picked up a lot of ideas for group activities, like the team-building exercises, knots and shaking hands at Macquarie - it's great for encouraging students to get to know each other.

Best bit of NCSS so far?

Meeting other students and hanging out with them has been really fun, I'm a bit of a secret spy at the moment!



#NCCS

nickyringland

Cryptography challenge begins!
Let me at the secret messages!
#nccs <http://twitpic.com/3o273e>

Chybuster

The cake is no longer a lie
#nccs <http://yfrog.com/h3ij9glj>

StumpyTheRoomba

Guys, robots != rowboats. Just sayin'. #nccs

AlfieTheRoomba

I'm following silver lines now!
They're sparkly ... my new bling! #nccs

George I024

"Here's a program I prepared earlier." #nccs

samthor

@AlfieTheRoomba And they're like, damn right it's bet<BUFFER OVERFLOW> #nccs

AlfieTheRoomba

My bitshifts bring all the boys to the yard... #nccs

jjgatenby

@flowblok BRUKKEN! #nccs

damonreece

When the lecturer pulls out a bag of chocolates, the class' attention levels go up by over 387%. #nccs

damonreece

The guys are playing "James Curran", a variant of Zabutsa. #nccs

enneff

The #nccs programming comp was awesome. Brought out my competitive streak though. ;-) My brilliant team came 2nd.

VISITING ATLISSIAN



* Stefan from Atlassian gives Group 2 a tour around the Atlassian building, and explains the company's values



Scott Farquhar gives students an insight into how Atlassian works and what it's like to be a software engineer



NCSS students visit Atlassian

It was warm and sunny in the Sydney CBD as students made their way to the Sydney HQ of Atlassian, a small-business success formed by Scott Farquhar and Mike Cannon-Brookes soon after they finished university.

Scott gave an introductory talk about how Atlassian was formed to the first-time NCSS students, describing the background and how their software has become high-demand by some of the biggest companies in the world.

Next, programmer Charles Miller gave a talk on how to make awesome software. He argued that the key factor distinguishing Atlassian was that they learnt to create software based on what they as a company felt was missing - and hence others find the software useful too!

Returning NCSS students were given a deeper insight into the company separate to the others. Many students identified with the honest, laidback approach championed by Atlassian. After this, the students enjoyed a tour of the building and an excellent barbeque lunch, before assembling outside the front for a photo in their kindly-donated Atlassian NCSS t-shirts!

What's been happening at NCSS?



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

The weekend started but the early mornings continued - students are now working mostly on their respective projects. It is cool to see that each Python group has approached the purpose of their social networks in a different way, from music to file-sharing. And teams are working really well

together to meet their deadlines - making decisions as a group!

It looks like the embedded students are also having a lot of fun, with a mix of both achieving their set tasks and programming their robots to do anything cool that they can think of. Tutors say they are being really creative!

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT?

The weekend will continue with more lectures and project work, and the deadlines for the projects are quickly approaching - presentations on Tuesday!

Students are definitely feeling the weight of such a busy schedule, so the evening's activities are relatively calm with human simulations and some free time to relax at Women's College.

Saturday's schedule (08.01)

Morning

Lectures/tutorials/project

Afternoon

Lunch at Women's College
Lectures/tutorials/project

Evening

Dinner at Women's College
Crypto Challenge

Today's schedule (09.01)

Morning

Lectures/tutorials/project

Afternoon

Lunch at Women's College
Lectures/tutorials/project

Evening

Dinner at Women's College
Simulation at Women's College

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Layout: Vanessa Moss/Thomas Kanold

Photography: Thomas Kanold