Dear Alumni,

Welcome to Issue 3 of CS Alumni News. It’s been a busy few months for the Department, culminating in hosting the CS Inaugural Alumni Dinner, more info below. Don’t forget we’re always eager to hear from CS Alumni. If you haven’t done so already, please get in touch here and tell us what you’re up to!

Feel free to pass on our newsletter to other CS Alumni– we’re delighted our Alumni Network continues to grow.

CS Inaugural Alumni Dinner

On Wednesday 16 November over forty CS Alumni joined past and present staff for an evening of celebration. It was the first time we have attempted to put on an event dedicated to our Alumni and we were thrilled to see so many familiar faces.

After a drinks reception in the Department, dinner was laid on in the Jeremy Bentham Room, followed by a talk from our Special Guest Christian Nentwich.

Our many thanks to Christian who spoke brilliantly about his time at CS – and who amused us all with reminders of the ancient internet from not so long ago(!) – and of course thank you to all Alumni who were able to attend and whose contributions made it a most memorable evening.

We now plan to make our Alumni Dinner an annual event. Hopefully those who did not make it this year will be able to do so next year!

In the meantime we will keep Alumni up-to-date with other future events through our newsletters and mailshots.

Watch this space!

CS Prize winners

A special congratulations to the below winners of our IBM sponsored Academic Prizes for BSc/MEng Computer Science Best Individual Projects. Winners were presented with their prizes by CS Alumnus and Associate Partner for IBM UK Dr Reza Hazemi.

1st prize (£250) Luke Dodd ‘Finite representations of relation algebras and the flexible atom conjecture’
2nd prize (£150) Thomas Davies ‘Change blindness on mobile devices’
3rd prize (£100) jointly awarded to James Pié ‘Trinucleotide repeat disease database with automatic updating web resource’ and Dinesh Alwar ‘Coursework marker made in Java’

Well done to all!
Professor William Shaw – Inaugural Lecture

William Shaw, Chair of Mathematics and Computation of Risk, joined CS earlier this year, and in October Professor Shaw delivered his Inaugural Lecture *Risky Business.*

Introduced by Professor Anthony Finkelstein, Faculty Dean, William’s lecture explored the reasons for human deception and error when financial trades go wrong – what happens when computers that are meant to guide your financial trades become a hidden source of danger. Very topical indeed!

It was a wonderful (and popular!) occasion – the Lecture and subsequent Drinks Reception were brilliantly attended. Many thanks to Department of Mathematics for jointly organising and sponsoring the Reception. We are looking forward to more Inaugural Lectures in the new year.

CS in Japan!

Dr Dean Mohamedally, Senior Teaching Fellow, took a party of Software Systems Engineering Students to Tokyo to take part in a joint exercise in programing robots for embedded systems – an area in which CS’ partners from the TopSE project between Japanese universities and industry have a particular expertise.

CS and TopSE students worked together to design and develop software for LEGO Mindstorms robots. Dr Mohamedally explained: "UCL-CS made friends with Dr Tsuyoshi Kitani, Head of Research and Development at NTT Data Japan – NTT Data is the 9th largest software services company in the world. Dr Kitani is himself a researcher in AI from Carnegie Mellon and answers to the CEO of NTT Japan.

“We heard about NTT’s progress on grid based crowdsourcing from mobile devices to reveal new trends from phone networks. He gave a demo of rapidly extensible cloud resourcing hardware that puts current load balancing solutions on the market to shame. He also showed us a formal activity method for software engineers that brings development time down by up to 30%. I hope to cite this in future teaching as it uses Eclipse and Java and is growing throughout Japanese consulting companies.”

Virtual Experimentation in CS

Cedric Fleury, Research Student from the IRISA Laboratory Rennes, France, has been carrying out Virtual Experimentation in the CAVE™ – the Immersive Virtual Environments Laboratory at UCL-CS. The aim is to improve mutual awareness and understanding between users collaborating in the same virtual environment.

Participants from UCL-CS and Rennes, France, were tasked with performing remote manipulations together using gestures in the CAVE™ aided 3D visualisations and head-tracking. It's hoped this will produced shared data about migration mechanisms, user synchronisation, immersion in a virtual environment, integration of a user’s physical environment and co-manipulation.
New MSc’s

We’re pleased to announce a new **MSc in Financial Risk Management**. This brand new programme aims to meet the growing demand for highly skilled professionals in quantitative risk management. Students gain core competencies in risk analysis; they will gain statistical and computational modeling skills; have clear appreciation of different types of risk within the industry, and of the managerial and psychological issues related to risk control. For more information on Financial Risk Management please see here: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMSCOMSFRM01](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMSCOMSFRM01)

CS is also launching **MSc and MRes courses in Web Science**. These programmes will provide students with a knowledge and understanding of the fundamental principles and technological components of the World Wide Web, preparing them for a career in scientific research or within Internet-based industries. Topics covered will include detailed coverage of multimedia information processing, information search and retrieval, data mining and knowledge acquisition, and large-scale distributed data analytics. For more information on Web Science please see here: [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMSCOMSWEB01](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMSCOMSWEB01)  [http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMRCOMSWEB01](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMRCOMSWEB01)

UCL FIndS

UCL FIndS, or Financial Industry Series, lead by Dr Donald Lawrence, Honorary Senior Research Fellow and Finance Lecturer, has had a busy 2011. Computer Science students have contributed towards the student-run forum and helped to organise high profile conferences, debates and presentations on financial topics.

In particular the Financial Markets Conference 2011, held in November, was a great success. Computer Science students had the chance to participate in talks on numerous subjects such as Equities, FX market, and Quantitative and Systematic Trading with industry partners from businesses including Barclays, Citi and Goldman Sachs.

To find out more about UCL FINDS, take a look at their website [here](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMSCOMSWEB01)

***Computer Science Shop – customize your own CS products!***

Buy your own CS clothing and accessories online! Students design the products and can spend the income in association with the Staff Student Consultative Committee. Now with new and updated merchandise.

Well worth a look [here](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMSCOMSWEB01)!

Don’t forget you can also follow us on Facebook [here](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate-study/degrees/pgt/TMSCOMSWEB01).

Kind regards,

John Shawe-Taylor
Head of Department
Professor of Computational Statistics and Machine Learning
Director, Centre for Computational Statistics and Machine Learning