

The offer to work abroad at the German Archeological Institute (DAI) represents an amazing opportunity that has great potential to positively impact my life personally, academically, and professionally. Such an experience depends upon an ability to rapidly learn new information, collaborate effectively, and synthesize information so as to generate ideas that benefit Perseus, the DAI, and humanities as a whole. During my time at Perseus, I have developed the technical background, communication skills, and passion necessary to maximize the opportunities (to the best of my ability) that Perseus has presented. Working at the DAI would enable me to continue my work at Perseus while both enhancing my academic research and exposing me to the technologies I need to pursue one of my long-term professional goals.

Much of my work at Perseus has focused on Perseus' Art and Archaeology collection. Along the way I have acquired technical and personal skills that would help both Perseus and Arachne. Through increasing my technical skills, I have created an open source, freely downloadable A&A webapp, leveraged Google Maps' API to create a tiled image browser that will be used by the CHS and Perseus, and exposed Perseus' images and archaeological data for others to use in applications like the ImageFinder, or as an initial data source to map into CIDOC-CRM. Collaborating with Neel Smith, Chris Blackwell, and recently Robert Kummer has increased the utility of Perseus' archaeological data, and taught me a great deal. This spring, I will continue to build upon this foundation of technical and personal skills. I am working with five Computer Science students to develop widgets, gadgets, and HTML applications that are both Scenarios aware and well documented so that others might use them as examples to create their own interfaces built upon TICI services. Future work with Robert Kummer, Robert Chavez, and Neel Smith will involve integrating the TICI services into Fedora disseminators, thinking about the relationship between CIDOC-CRM and the Collections API, and researching how such an architecture would function within a grid environment. Having three to four months extra time would allow me to continue working on these projects, and bring us three to four months closer to having a standard architecture for American and European archaeological data.

Academically, working at the DAI would prove an invaluable opportunity that would allow me to finish my current program at Tufts, while simultaneously expanding my research network with an eye towards my doctorate. While at the DAI, I would be free to further develop my diagram markup with two semesters of experience in computational geometry and computer graphics. However, I could do this work anywhere. What the few months at the DAI represents is further experience working with datasets of cultural heritage objects. Through working with Perseus and the DAI, I would increase my background in art and archaeology while gaining knowledge about CIDOC-CRM, and potentially the application of semantic web technologies to this ontology. The Masters' in Computer Science at Tufts requires 10 credits, and up to two credits may be granted for research. The trip to the DAI would arguably merit two research credits, allowing me to graduate from Tufts with a masters degree. Furthermore, research at the DAI would allow me to plan to meet, contact, and discuss research with Professor Mark Levoy, Dave Barker-Plummer, and Project Protege from Stanford during the summer of 2007. I am confident that my experiences at Perseus, combined with those at the DAI would be of great interest to them as they are interested in cultural heritage objects, the role of diagrams in text, and ontologies respectively.

Working for Perseus at the DAI has the potential to greatly impact my long term professional goals as well. This experience would add legitimacy to my long term professional goal: increasing accessibility and awareness of our world's cultural heritage through sustainable business models. This would be accomplished through adding to my background working with the humanities datasets, and technologies necessary for the visualization of humanities data be it textual, image-based, or 3D graphical data. VRTainment, a Berlin-based tech company, provides services involving the planning and design of 3D models and 3D display systems ("VRTainment"). Assuming I can find a business mentor, the added time in Germany would enable me to investigate how 3D modeling and display systems might interface with collections of cultural heritage objects, be they from Perseus, the DAI, or Professor Levoy's datasets. Continuing to work for Perseus at the German Archaeological Institute represents a life-altering opportunity. This opportunity would allow me to build upon my research at Perseus, fully complete my Masters, prepare for my Ph.D., and start developing business models for the humanities. Undoubtedly I would need to learn German, but this is not an issue as my next door neighbors are from Germany. In other words, an immersive German environment is just a door away. Certainly my determination and drive make the German language more of an learning opportunity than an obstacle. If given this opportunity, not only would I pursue my personal, academic, and professional interests, but it would allow me to help Perseus and the DAI, both immediately and in the long-term future.

REFERENCES

"VRTainment - Where virtual dreams come true!" VRTainment. 8 Jan 2006.
<http://www.vrtainment.com/vrtainment_web/intro/intro1.htm>