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Degree Subject: Computer Science
Joined: 2008

1. What was it about the EB program that stood out to you?

Extreme Blue stood out as being quite different from a lot of the other internships, both outside and inside IBM. I obviously looked round at other companies. But with Extreme Blue it's very different, you're working on projects that actually matter to IBM, and even to the clients of IBM. And you're working in teams with other students, you have control, to some extent, over the direction that the project takes, and what decisions are made. It's much more involved, it's much more meaningful than a lot of other internships.

2. What project are you working on?

The project that I'm working on is focused around IBM's product documentation, the help files and user guides that IBM provides for all of its big product. IBM's products tend to be on the large and complex side of things and so it's very difficult to present documentation in a way that makes it easy for users to find all of the answers to all of the questions they have, and the solutions to the problems they might have. The goal that we're working towards with my project is to make it easier for users to find information within IBM's documentation and help files.

3. What does your role involve?

My role is that of a technical intern, so every Extreme Blue Team has four interns, three technical interns and one business intern. What I'm working on is more focused on the technical side of the project, so the software design and the software development part of the project. Each Extreme Blue product also has a business proposition behind it, and what I'm working on, along with the rest of the team throughout the project, is developing that business proposition, and then pitching it to various teams within IBM.

4. What is the culture like at Hursley?

The culture is really very relaxed. I was surprised, as someone who's never worked at IBM and doesn't have a very good idea of what it's like I had the impression that it was quite a strict environment. You picture going to work in a big grey office block in a small cubicle, everyone wearing the same suit. That's the kind of preconception that you have about it. But Hursley is completely different, it's basically like working in a park. It's a big manor out in the countryside, there's huge grounds with a football pitch and a cricket oval, and a club house with a bar, that's onsite for employees. And it's very laid back. I went to work most days in short, T shirt, and flip flops. And it's just very friendly as well. Everyone knows about Extreme Blue, everyone knows about the projects that are going on, and everyone really wants to help and get involved.

5. How do you believe that the skills you are learning during your placement will help you when you return to university?

The skills that I've learnt in Extreme Blue, will be more useful to me when I leave university and go into the world of work. My degree is quite theory focused so the practical skills that I've picked up aren't going to directly apply to the work I'm doing at university. I have gained more confidence in my abilities, and perhaps a better work ethic, through working at IBM, so that will certainly help me at university.

6. Have you received a lot of support from your team and others since starting your placement with IBM?

I've had a lot of support from a lot of people within IBM. I've been working at Extreme Blue. As well as the project owner, who is the person who came up with the idea for the project, each Extreme Blue team has a technical mentor and a business mentor, who are around a lot to help you and give you advice and answer questions about things that you're working on. Throughout the whole time there, whenever you need help with anything, there is always someone who has the expertise to help you.

7. What was the best bit about Extreme Blue?

The best part about Extreme Blue, I found, was the stuff that went on outside of the office. Although I did enjoy the working day we had a lot of fun doing other things. My team went for pub lunches every Wednesday, which was a lot of fun, and really helped us get to know each other. And actually produced some of the best ideas that we had during the program. We went team building too, we went on a team building day go-karting, which was a lot of fun. And we'd go on nights out and things. And obviously there is the Extreme Blue expo where all of the European teams get together to share their projects, which is also really good fun.