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Contact

Melissa Weber, Director of Communications
Phone: 320-589-6414, weberm@morris.umn.edu

Jenna Ray, Editor/Writer
Phone: 320-589-6068, jrray@morris.umn.edu

Lamberty's DigiQuilt software wins a 2010 Learning Challenge award

Summary: DigiQuilt was chosen for clearly addressing key knowledge concepts to promote creativity and social collaboration in young learners.

(September 16, 2010)-DigiQuilt software, designed by Kristin Kaster Lamberty, assistant professor of computer science and a 2000 graduate, received the Award for Outstanding Educational Impact in the 2010 Learning Challenge sponsored by Disney Research. The software was chosen for this award “for clearly addressing key knowledge concepts to promote creativity and social collaboration in young learners.”

DigiQuilt and the 13 other finalist projects were presented at the SIGGRAPH 2010 International Conference and Exhibition on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques at which Learning Challenge awards were announced.

Lamberty and fellow finalists created learning widgets, layered activities that move learners from minimal knowledge to active knowledge in one or more sophisticated and entertaining learning concepts. The Learning Challenge projects focused on mathematics, art, science, music, reading, or writing.

Lamberty’s software, a tool designed to help elementary children understand mathematical concepts like fractions and symmetry, was first imagined as part of her dissertation work at the Georgia Institute of Technology. At Morris, development of the current version began in the spring 2006 Software Design and Development course. Lamberty’s team of student researchers, of which Jason Biatek ’10, Excelsior, played a key role, wrote the current version of the software. DigiQuilt has been used in Georgia and Minnesota classrooms and in homes by third through fifth graders for the past eight years over the course of its development.

“The whole experience was incredible,” says Lamberty. “All of the finalists had interesting projects and ideas for supporting children’s learning. It was a great opportunity to discuss our work with others from a wide variety of settings and hear about their work. It’s a wonderful idea for Disney Research to sponsor such a competition, and I’m honored that our project was given this recognition. The prize money will be used to support further research.”

For all of the Learning Challenge awards, visit learningchallenge2010.com/finalist. Disney Research is an association of research labs within the Walt Disney Company that share the common mission of inventing new pioneering technologies for the media and entertainment industry.

ACM, the Association for Computing Machinery, hosts the SIGGRAPH conference. It is the world’s largest educational and scientific computing society, uniting educators, researchers, and professionals to inspire dialogue, share resources, and address the field’s challenges.

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