Duffield makes room for Bits On Our Minds projects

Q: What are Cornell students doing with computers?

A: Just about anything you can think of...

Each year the campus community gets a glimpse into the wide range of student computing projects at the BOOM (Bits On Our Minds) exhibition, this year held Feb. 27 in the Duffield Hall Atrium. Although presented by the Faculty of Computing and Information Science, BOOM is open to all students, and participants ranged from computer scientists and engineers to artists, sociologists and musicians.

According to Amy Fish, BOOM 2008 project coordinator, "BOOM is a chance to say, Congratulations, you've been working hard. We think your project is really fabulous, let's show it off!"

Through hands-on demonstrations, exhibitors showed visitors how a computer could be controlled with gestures or a listener could select music from a collection by using head movements. Games created by students in the Cornell Game Design Initiative were there to be played, and robots walked, rolled or wriggled on command.

Not so visible but still intriguing to learn about were social science projects, like tools to help teams work better together and a system to detect lying in chat rooms. One group studied the social climate in the A.D. White House by monitoring such events as whether or not the nagot was turned on.

BOOM was sponsored by Cisco, Morgan Stanley, Yahoo! and Lockheed Martin, all of whom unabashedly admitted they were there to nurture and recruit new talent. Morgan Stanley presented its Sponsor’s Award to the creators of AfiLinks, a project to allow Johnson Museum visitors to interact while viewing a sculpture (see Chronicle Online story at <http://www.news.cornell.edu/stories/Feb08/artlinks.gl.html>);

Cisco’s Sponsor’s Award went to Live Objects in Office Automation Systems, a framework for building office workflow applications.
The Where’s the BOOM? Award, chosen by computer science faculty, went to CUMotive, a project using sensors attached to a person’s body to control just about anything from a computer to a music system through body movements. The People’s Choice Award, chosen by attendees, went to the Cornell Minesweeper, a robot designed to detect landmines.

Tyler Steele ’08 was selected by a faculty committee to be honored in the BOOM Student Spotlight as a “student whose star is on the rise.”

The awards were presented to students and faculty members on Feb. 27 in the Duffield Hall Atrium. BOOM was sponsored by Cisco, Morgan Stanley, Yahoo! and Lockheed Martin.

Cornell Men’s Basketball Coach Steve Donahue celebrates with the team and fans and takes a souvenir piece of the net following the March 1 championship win over Harvard in Newman Arena.

Longtime fans, through thick and thin

BY ANNE JU

Though Newman Arena has been drawing near sellsout crowds this year with the success of Big Red men’s basketball, the team has always counted on its most loyal fans, who have been with them for decades.

Following the team’s victory March 1, the team attended a party hosted by the Rebounders, a fan group consisting of alumni, parents and friends. Some of the most die-hard fans are old enough to remember the last time Cornell went to the Big Dance in 1988, and some go back as far as Cornell’s first NCAA tournament bid in 1954.

Dor Greenberg ’55, the Jacob Gould Schurman Professor of Computer Graphics, played sports at Cornell, as did his father, who was in the Class of 1922. He has followed Cornell men’s basketball since the late 1930s.

“I played a lot of sports for Cornell, and it was a big part of my life,” Greenberg said. “It changed my life, and I hope it changes theirs.”

Prior to this season’s Ivy League championship, Cornell’s basketball team suffered through some lean years. Cornell has had only one overall winning season (2006-07) in the last nine. In Ivy League play, they finished with a winning record the last three years, but had six straight losing seasons from 1996-99 to 2003-04.

Carol Hardy McFadden, a retired biology lecturer who served as the men’s basketball team’s faculty advisor from 1982-2002, can also safely be counted among the team’s biggest fans.

“I never dreamed it would be another 20 years before another Ivy League championship,” McFadden said.

Women’s team also sees success

The Big Red women’s basketball team has also seen great success this season with a 9-3 Ivy League conference record and an overall mark of 17-8. On March 1, Cornell lost to Harvard, 56-48, and slipped to second place in the Ivy League.

The women will play their final two home games at Newman Arena March 7 and 8, against Penn and Princeton. The Big Red also plans to pay tribute to its three seniors, Gretchen Gregg, Megan Hughes and Moira Snyder, at the March 8 game.

Ivy victory

Cornell’s Jeff Foote tries for a clear shot during the game against Harvard on Saturday at Newman Arena.

Cornell’s Adam Gorg works his way around Harvard players.