

# Things That Go BOOM

This annual showcase of student creativity in digital technology is a blast.

**F**ebruary's BOOM (Bits On Our Mind) computer science exhibit spotlighted some of the most exciting creativity in digital technology that Cornell University students are working on. Ranging from the Web Agent that can learn to follow Internet data to face-matching applications, "Artificial Intelligence and Potential Energy Modeling in the Game 'Go'" to Digipaper by Xerox, BOOM 2000 projects emphasized more than ever the interdisciplinary quality of the three-year-old event.

The exhibits represented both undergraduate and graduate work from engineering, fine arts, psychology, communications, and, of course, computer science.

Bart Selman, associate professor of computer science and this year's BOOM faculty adviser, explained that this interdisciplinary representation made the event "fairly unique," and even more so because of the "emphasis on undergraduates."

Charles Van Loan, chair of the computer science department, agreed wholeheartedly, adding, "It's a great place to show your work to faculty and students; in fact, it's the main social event of the year."

These social interactions aren't limited to the Cornell community. This year the BOOM plan-

ning committee decided to accept the sponsorship of two traditional computer science moguls: Microsoft and Dell. The \$9,000 in funding from the two corporations went toward providing the catering, shirts, and gift certificates to each participant. But more important to some, a representative from Microsoft attended the event, creating the opportunity for talented students to showcase their skills for a potential employer.

One exhibit that received a slew of visitors was a project by CS senior Aaron Erimez entitled "Ornaments." In this computer-animated piece that has grown

out of Erimez's personal interest in this field, the viewer follows a fast-paced sketch in which a Santa Claus ornament vies for a very distant plate of cookies. Using 3D Studio MAX, Erimez developed the plot, storyboards, and a short script. He is now about midway through production.

Cornell's RoboCup team also made an appearance at BOOM, highlighting two major renova-



CAROL TERRIZZI

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tions to the bots that took the championship in the Robot World Cup Initiative in Stockholm, Sweden, last August. According to team member Chin Hong Tong '99 EE, M.Eng. '00, the group has added a dribbling capacity, using a spinning bar that pulls the ball close to the bot and allows it to do "funky curves and moves" while still controlling the ball. Additionally, the bots will now be omni-directional. They will compete again in RoboCup, this year in Melbourne, Australia.

Looking ahead to next year, organizers anticipate a wide range of projects from computer science and engineering—particularly systems engineering—as well as work from departments across the university, continuing the trend for BOOM to resonate well beyond the Engineering Quad.

—Emilie Dirks

[www.cs.cornell.edu/boom](http://www.cs.cornell.edu/boom)

**BOOM exhibits:** (above) Mancala, (below, l-r) World Wide Face Match, Potential Energy Models in the Game of Go, RoboCup, Microsoft display.

