

Research Presentation Luncheon

Tuesday, March 20, 2012 • 12:00p - 1:30p • Singleton Room, Roberts Hall



Ryan Turner, PhD EPP

Ryan Turner is a second-year PhD student in the Engineering and Public Policy Department. As part of the Carnegie Mellon-Portugal Program, he spent his first year in Lisbon at the Instituto Superior Técnico. He is originally from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and holds a Bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering, Computer Science, and Computer Engineering from the University of Virginia. He enjoys running, playing music, and traveling with his wife.

"Effects of Internet Usage on Academic Performance in a University Setting: Evidence from Portugal"

Abstract:

The Internet can be beneficial to students but can also be a disruptive distraction. Using Wifi usage and student grade data from the Faculdade de Engenharia da Universidade do Porto (FEUP) in northern Portugal, we found a consistent, positive relationship between Wifi Internet usage and student grades. We look to control time-constant unobserved effects using first differences. Our results are robust across several variations of the model, and in fact reveal certain categories of students who use wifi are more productive. For example, Chemical Engineering students, fifth-year Master's students, and daytime users all seem to be more productive online than Mechanical Engineering, first-year students, and nighttime users. These results are contrary to earlier results for the same country in secondary education, thus raising interesting questions about how different implementation strategies and deployment contexts can yield different outcomes.

Rui Correia, PhD LTI

Rui Correa is a second year student of the dual Ph.D. program in Language Technologies between Carnegie Mellon University and Portugal. He received his masters degree from Instituto Superior Técnico (Lisbon, Portugal) in 2010, over the topic "Automatic Question Generation for REAP.PT". Since then, he focused his work on Computer Assisted Language Learning systems, covering topics such as Word Sense Disambiguation and Serious Games. Currently his focus goes to Multimedia Learning Materials, under supervision of Maxine Eskenazi (CMU) and Nuno Mamede (IST).



"Multimedia Learning Materials"

Abstract:

In a world of global connection to the Web and permanent exposure to gadgets and interactive applications, the necessity to motivate students to learn increases. The traditional view of the student, being an individual with sufficient motivation to learn by reading books, going to classes and doing their homework, has changed in the past years. With students becoming pro-active, the task of selecting good curriculum materials is often a challenge. Having these two points as a premise, this work focus on providing students with easy-to-use, interactive and exciting language learning systems and exercises, while using contents that are adapted to the preferences of each student. The adopted strategy is rooted on the usage of real data in learning driven software (such as TEDTalks, broadcast news, TV shows, movies, class recordings, music, etc.), allowing students to learn in tasks that were already part of their quotidian.