

CMU – Portugal Faculty Exchange Program

Nestor Catano, University of Madeira, Portugal

My visit to Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) commenced with an informal chat with Daniel Siewiorek. He described to me all the great research opportunities at the Human Computer Interaction Institute (HCII) of CMU, pictured Pittsburgh to me, and recommended to me all the best amusement opportunities the city of Pittsburgh can offer.

I joint Anind K. Dey as Instructor of Programming Usable Interfaces (PUI). I had the opportunity to participate and to witness CMU's teaching dynamics. As far I can tell, there are some similarities and some differences between teaching at CMU and teaching in Europe. At CMU courses are project-based so that importance is attached to be able to deliver and perform whereas in Europe (e.g. in France, Italy or Germany) importance is rather given to be able to understand the theoretical foundations underlying practice. I enjoyed technical discussions with PUI's students and liked to answer students' questions about life and academic and research opportunities in Madeira Island.

My visit to CMU offered to me the opportunity to undertake CMU-Portugal funded research work in some cases and to set future collaboration in other cases. I closely worked with Jonathan Aldrich (Institute of Software Research and School of Computer Science) on the use of static checking techniques for the verification of access permissions specifications for concurrent programs. I also worked with André Platzer (Computer Science Department) in the setting of a Proof Carrying Code (PCC) based framework for the verification of social-network plug-ins. I had interesting discussions with Norman Sadeh (Human Computer Interaction Institute and Robotics Institute) on the use of formally verified privacy settings for location-aware advertising mobile applications. I also had the opportunity to interact and to have fruitful discussions with many CMU Ph.D. students, e.g. Ciera Jaspán, who introduced dynamic checking of properties to me, Nels Beckam, who introduced me to The Plural Tool, and Sven Stork with whom I discussed concurrence by-default semantics.

Jonathan Aldrich invited me to give a talk for the ISR's seminar. I presented on-going work on the use of formal methods techniques to enforce social-network privacy and security settings. This work is funded by CMU-Portugal. I also have the chance to interact with researchers from other laboratories. Radu Siminiceanu invited me to give a talk at the National Institute of Aerospace in Hampton, Virginia. I presented CMU-Portugal funded research work at ABZ 2010 in Canada.

In short, this has been an unforgettable and fruitful experience for me to live. I want to particularly thank to Nuno Nunes, Daniel Siewiorek, and Anind K. Dey to make my visit to CMU happen.