

Personal Evaluation Research Internship

Jorrit de Boer

I did my research internship at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen at the fundamental computing group. I did it there because I was interested in going to another university for my internship and specifically I was interested in doing it in Groningen because I am from there and wanted to live there again for some time, and also to see if I might want to live there permanently again after my master. It was an interesting and educational experience to do it in this way. For example, it taught me that you can achieve a lot by just emailing a random teacher and seeing if they might want to host you as an internship student. It was also very interesting to see another research group at another university and compare them to what I know in Nijmegen. The atmosphere was quite comparable to what I was used to in Nijmegen, rather informal and relaxed, and I felt welcome in the group.

Regarding the specific activities I did. During the internship I was mostly supervised by Anton Chernev. He and I had a weekly meeting in which we discussed my progress and general questions I had about the material I was studying. The initial and also largest part of the internship was spent studying existing literature. As a way to have some goal half way through the internship and to help in grasping the concepts, Anton suggested I make a report half way through explaining the material I had read thus far. I found this to be quite useful because trying to explain things forces you to understand the concepts more thoroughly. This report then was the basis for the final report. Reviewing the current research into the topic and discussing this in the report fulfilled the first goal of the internship as outlined in the research plan.

Towards the end of the internship I focussed on the second goal of the research plan, which was trying to apply the game semantics to derive the coalgebraic representation. The details of these results are explained in the report. This was a lot of fun to do because it was something new (even though small) that I produced. It was also a fun experience to work with Anton together in trying to come up with the solutions, as he also did not know the answers.

Also, I attended some of the ‘Stroopt’ talks, which is a weekly meeting with members of the fundamental computing group where one person gives a talk about some subject related to their research. I found it nice that I was invited to these and it was fun to join these informal gatherings and talk with the members of the group. The presentation at the end of my internship I gave in Groningen I gave as a talk for Stroopt.

Next, about the things I have learnt during the internship and looking ahead to my master thesis and career after my master. The internship has confirmed my interest in pursuing a PhD, perhaps in Groningen if the opportunity arises. I enjoy doing research into theoretical computer science, and like the atmosphere at a university. For this reason I am looking forward to starting my master’s thesis.

However, I have also identified some areas for improvement. First, I sometimes struggle with spending long periods reading research papers during the initial exploratory phase. I think this has to do with the fact that this process is slow and progress can be hard to observe because I am producing nothing concrete. It is not a major issue but it is good to be aware of the fact that this phase appears to move slower to me than it actually is.

Secondly, regarding writing. I have definitely noticed that I am relatively easily motivated to work on writing. I think this has to do with the fact that, in contrast to reading, I see that I am constructing something concrete. I do, however, need to work on some details of my writing. I have a tendency to copy things like definitions or notation from the literature without thinking how best to incorporate them into my report/paper, which sometimes leads to inconsistencies. I also am sometimes sloppy and

make quite some (small) mistakes. I noticed this in the large number of small feedback points Anton gave me on my writing. Like with reading, I do not think this is a major issue and I will improve over time, but it is good to be aware of these points.

Overall, I enjoyed the research internship very much and I am happy I did it in Groningen with Helle and Anton. It was a great opportunity to learn, both in the subject I studied and how I work. I am grateful for Helle and Anton for the opportunity and their support throughout the project.