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Meet the Course Team

Instructors

Shashi Shekhar is a McKnight Distinguished University Professor at the University of Minnesota (Computer Science faculty). For contributions to geographic information systems (GIS), spatial databases, and spatial data mining, he received the IEEE-CS Technical Achievement Award and was elected an IEEE Fellow as well as an AAAS Fellow. He was also named a key difference-maker for the field of GIS by the most popular GIS textbook . He has a distinguished academic record that includes 280+ refereed papers, a popular textbook on Spatial Databases (Prentice Hall, 2003) and an authoritative Encyclopedia of GIS (Springer, 2008).

http://www-users.cs.umn.edu/~shekhar/

Brent Hecht is an assistant professor of computer science and engineering at the University of Minnesota. With interests that lie at the intersection of human–computer interaction, geography, and big data, his research centers on the relationship between big data and human factors such as culture. A major focus of his work involves volunteered geographic information and its application in location-aware technologies.
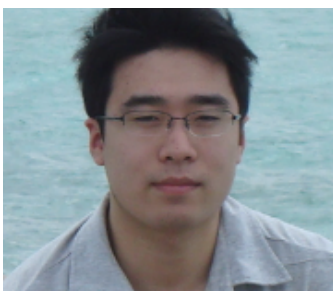
Dr. Hecht received a Ph.D. in computer science from Northwestern University, a Master's degree in geography from UC Santa Barbara, and dual Bachelor's degrees in computer science and geography from Macalester College. He was a keynote speaker at WikiSym – the premiere conference on wikis and open collaboration – and has received awards for his research at top-tier publication venues in human-computer interaction and geography (e.g. ACM CHI, COSIT). He has collaborated with Google Research, Xerox PARC, and Microsoft Research, and his work been featured in the MIT Technology Review, New Scientist, AllThingsDigital, and various international TV, radio, and Internet outlets.

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Teaching Assistants

Xun Tang is a Ph.D. student at Department of Computer Science and

Engineering, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. His research focuses on spatial data mining and spatial databases. Before joining University of Minnesota, he received his bachelor's and master's degrees in Computer Science from Harbin Institute of Technology, China, in 2011 and 2013 respectively.

Toby J. Li is a research assistant in the GroupLens research lab at the University of Minnesota. His interests lie in the domains of human-computer interaction, social computing and location-aware technologies, and his current work examines the nature of volunteered geographic information (VGI) and VGI's applications in spatialization technologies. Toby is also a major contributor to the WikiBrain software library, especially to the spatial module. His works in GIScience and Wikipedia Research are presented in top-tier publication venues in these fields (e.g. ACM SIGSPATIAL GIS, OpenSym/WikiSym). As a Rising Junior, Toby expects to receive a B.S. degree in Computer Science from the University of Minnesota in Spring 2015.

Created Wed 6 Aug 2014 7:14 AM PDT

Last Modified Mon 22 Sep 2014 2:12 PM PDT