

Jeremy E. Block

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## Profile:

updated 10/2020

Fascinated by student motivations and how specific explanations can encourage curiosity, my research is focused on the design of black-box explanations. With more and more machine learning systems making decisions influencing our daily lives, deciphering the best ways to communicate how the machine makes its decision is incredibly important. More recently, I have been exploring automatic report generation in the area of analytic provenance. My background is a diverse mix of education, animation, game development, human-centered computing, data visualization, and computer science.

## Education:

**Ph.D. Student at The University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida; Human-Centered Computing** | Present

Herbert Wertheim College of Engineering | Advisor: Eric Ragan

**B.S. Ithaca College, Ithaca, New York; Emerging Media** | May 2018

Roy H. Park School of Communications (Magna Cum Laude)

## Publications/Research Experience

- **J. E. Block** and E. D. Ragan, "Micro-entries: Encouraging Deeper Evaluation of Mental Models Over Time," *2020 IEEE Workshop on Evaluation and Beyond - Methodological Approaches to Visualization (BELIV)*, Salt Lake City, UT, USA, 2020, pp. 38-47.
- Mahsan Nourani, Donald R. Honeycutt, **Jeremy E. Block**, Chiradeep Roy, Tahrima Rahman, Eric D. Ragan, and Vibhav Gogate. 2020. Investigating the Importance of First Impressions and Explainable AI with Interactive Video Analysis. In *Extended Abstracts of the 2020 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '20)*. Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 1-8. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3334480.3382967>
- Paul E. Dickson, **Jeremy E. Block**, Gina N. Echevarria, and Kristina C. Keenan. 2017. *An Experience-based Comparison of Unity and Unreal for a Stand-alone 3D Game Development Course*. In *Proceedings of the 2017 ACM Conference on Innovation and Technology in Computer Science Education (ITiCSE '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 70-75. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3059009.3059013>

### Graduate Research Assistant | Fall 2019 - Present

University of Florida: Computer & Information Science & Engineering

- Explored visualization techniques for provenance data communication and optimization.
- Managed a small design team to identify design solutions that prevent heatstroke deaths in vehicles.
- Designed experimental study looking to improve trust parity from first impressions of black-box systems.
- Found nonresult in an experiment involving students learning mandarin vocabulary with suggestions.
- Published conceptual mental model evaluation methodology capturing user's reflections over time.
- Iterated development of an interface for novel research on first-impressions and trust in AI.
- Conducted literature review on automated report generation techniques for provenance data.

### Research Assistant | Spring 2017

Ithaca College: Computer Science Department

- Examined over 100 papers on how to assess project-based learning effectiveness in messy learning scenarios with undergraduate classes.
- Met weekly with additional researchers to distill findings and clarify goals; results were unpublished.

### **Research Assistant** | Summer 2015

Ithaca College: Computer Science Department

- More than 400 hours researching literature relating pedagogy and Game Engines.
- Transposed a 60-hour curriculum and notes from Unity Game Engine to Unreal Engine.
- Authored and presented an academic paper in proceedings to Information Technology in Computer Science Education (ITiCSE) 2017 conference, Bologna, Italy.
- Research and recommendations resulted in a new game engine standard for the department.

## Teaching Assistantships

### **Ithaca College Computer Science Department**

Spring 2018 - **COMP325: Human-Computer Interfaces**

- Mentored student projects, providing one-on-one feedback and technical support. Often many were building web Interfaces from popular frameworks but students were not limited to one technology.
- Assessed student aptitude through weekly quizzes.

Fall 2017, Spring 2018 - **COMP106: Introduction to Multimedia Web Programming**

- Taught Canvas and Javascript methods to 30 non-computer science majors.
- Assessed student aptitude through weekly quizzes.
- Enhanced student comprehension through stack trace, metaphor & practice.
- Provided on-the-fly scaffolding for students to create algorithms for complex game mechanics.

Fall 2015 - **COMP172: CS2: Object-Oriented Programming (Java Development)**

- Assessed quizzes weekly for comprehension, completeness, and understanding.
- Constructed metaphors to assist in student understanding.

## Mentoring / Service

### **Assistant Gardening Coordinator** | Fall 2019 - Present

Student Compost Cooperative in Gainesville, FL

- Organized weekly student meetups to discuss how and what to compost at local gardens.
- Directed video productions and developed graphics for online learning initiatives during pandemic.

### **Undergraduate Student Mentor** | Summer 2020

Research Experiences for Undergraduates (REU) - Fully Online

- Advised 3rd-year undergraduate student on proper research methods and software engineering practices to explore provenance visualization techniques and develop a novel research design.

### **Founder, Mentor, and Advisor** | Fall 2017 - Spring 2019

Park Post - Ithaca College Roy H. Park School of Communications in Ithaca, NY

- Founded technical mentorship community for college students pursuing post-production passions.
- Coordinated 8 alumni Skype Q&A sessions for students.
- Helped organize and present workshops on post-production topics ranging from building lower thirds and graphics packages to scripted SVG and gif animations with Adobe creative suite tools.
- Mentored undergraduate peers weekly to deconstruct complex visual effects or build assets together. Offered mini-projects to encourage tool exploration.
- Attend at least once a year as a special guest to provide an alumnus perspective and describe how post-production experience still supports my work as a researcher.

### **Lead Coordinator** | Fall 2016 - Spring 2018

Connecting Elders with Technology - Various locations in Ithaca, NY

- Scheduled weekly hour-long "Genius Bar" help sessions with volunteers at retirement communities.
- Debunked common questions related to the internet and its real-world applications for seniors.
- Mentored replacement coordinator to keep the organization active after leaving Ithaca, NY.

### **Lead Coordinator** | Fall 2014 - Spring 2017

Media Club - Various school and activity center locations in Ithaca, NY

- Media Club is an after-school enrichment program that provides students hands-on knowledge about how media influences society.
- Volunteered weekly in afterschool enrichment activities to discuss media literacy and production with various age groups, transitioning between elementary, middle, and high school students each semester.
- Topics included game algorithm analysis with middle schoolers, documentary filmmaking workshops for elementary school students, journalism ethics for high-schoolers, and newsletter design and production with underprivileged youth.

### **Notable Media Projects**

#### **Communications Director** | Summer 2020

Director, Producer, Editor, and motion graphics director - "So you want to Compost at the SCC?"

- Coordinated the remote delivery of instructional videos with multimedia support from local gardeners and novice media production students. A full series of videos are planned.

#### **Mobile Lead** | Spring 2018

Emerging Media Project - "QR-late"

- Worked with a team of 3 to develop a digital sync slate for Independent Filmmakers. Desktop application partners with a local database of on-set notes with captured footage automatically via QR codes and computer vision to organize files and add metadata.
- Developed local session variable architecture and downloadable web app for offline use on phone. A demonstration and talk of the project can be found at [https://youtu.be/DvOvIJVvX\\_Q](https://youtu.be/DvOvIJVvX_Q)

#### **Programing Lead and Project Manager** | Spring 2017

Emerging Media Project - "Space Escape VR"

- Used SCRUM methods to manage a team of 4 over a 3-month department-wide project timeline.
- Developed and delivered a 10-minute Puzzle-based VR "Escape Room."
- Modeled and textured low-poly assets with Maya and Hypershade then integrated interactions within Unreal Engine 4 scripting.
- Managed pilot roll out of 13 invited student users for playtesting on HTC Vive and feedback.

#### **Video Production Specialist** | Spring 2016

University of Canterbury, NZ: International Relations Department

- Produced walking tour videos to introduce the campus to prospective international students.
- Directed and managed international student talent and production team of 9. I cross-culturally interfaced with International Relations Staff to ensure project vision, plan, and on-time deliverables.
- Captured, animated, edited, and packaged 8 instructional videos using Adobe suite. One can be found at <https://youtu.be/XtP5x14jl40>

### **Awards/Certifications**

- Graduate School Preeminence Award; January 2019
- SSI Specialty Diver Certification; July 2018
- Roy H. Park School Dean's List 2014, 2015, and 2018
- Roy H. Park Scholar full-tuition merit-based scholarship; 2014 - 2018
- Inducted to National Communication Honor Society Lambda Pi Eta; Spring 2016
- Inducted to Oracle Honor Society; Fall 2015
- PADI Open Water Scuba Diving Certification; Jan 2015
- Eagle Scout with Silver Palm Distinction; Dec 2013