# **Zain Merchant**

# **Education**

B.S. in Computer Science, The University of Texas at Dallas

Junior, Expected Graduation in May 2019

Programming Experience: Python, C, C++, C#, MATLAB, Arduino, Verilog, OpenCV, SQLite, Git, GNU Radio, FreeRTOS, and UNIX

**Relevant Coursework:** Algorithm Analysis & Data Structures, Computer Architecture, Digital Logic & Computer Design, Operating Systems Concepts, and Artificial Intelligence

**Extracurriculars:** American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (Design Projects Director), SpaceX Hyperloop Pod Competition 2016 (Flight Control Team), Robotics and Automation Society (Tutor)

# **Experience**

# NASA Johnson Space Center; Houston, TX

August 2017 — December 2017

Internship — Integrated Guidance, Navigation, and Control Analysis Branch (EG4)

- Used the Trick Simulation Environment to analyze ascent abort procedures and created mathematical models for estimating propellant slosh in the SpaceX Crew Dragon landing and orbit tanks.
- Created a Python modeling and animation tool to visualize propellent slosh movement within various tank geometries. The software is currently used in the Commercial Crew Development Program at JSC.

#### Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Cambridge, MA

June 2017 — August 2017

Research Affiliate - Haystack Observatory

- Developed a prototype avionics system for an air-dropped penetrator system to be used for autonomous antarctic research.
- Wrote software for remote communication and command via the Iridium satellite network, autonomous system health monitoring, process management, data collection, and reduced power optimizations. Developed using FreeRTOS and embedded Linux.

### NASA Johnson Space Center; Houston, TX

January 2017 — May 2017

Internship — International Space Station On-Orbit Engineering Office (OB2)

- Developed a multi-platform (Android and iOS) mobile application in C# (using Xamarin) to interface with the International Space Station Mission Evaluation Room (MER) Web System and various NASA / ISS resources.
- · Created a user login and verification system, a SQLite database, and developed a search engine for the console log.

#### William B. Hanson Center for Space Sciences; Richardson, TX

May 2016 — December 2016

Undergraduate Researcher — Upper Atmosphere and Remote Sensing Laboratory

- Developed a beacon satellite receiver to calculate total electron content (TEC) in the ionosphere. Investigated different methods of signal acquisition and built a nested Quadrifilar Helicoidal (QFH) antenna system.
- Wrote a satellite tracking and signal recording program in Python for autonomous data acquisition.

# **Projects**

# Blade Runner Voight-Kampff (Visual Polygraph) Machine in Python

- Using the OpenCV Python library, I developed a rudimentary program to calculate heart rate visually (via webcam). The project also utilized an Arduino to measure body temperature, perspiration, and speech patterns to calculate a user's stress.
- The user's heart rate is calculated using changes in skin pigmentation as a subject's heart beats.

#### **Enigma Machine in Verilog**

· Developed a digital processing unit to simulate a WWII Enigma Machine with 4 states - On, Reset, Encrypt / Decrypt, and Calibrate.

#### iOS Road Conditions Detection and Reporting Application in Swift

- · Created a mobile application to autonomously detect, verify, and report roads with rough pavement or potholes.
- · The application utilizes the iPhone's GPS, gyroscope, and accelerometer to distinguish normal road conditions from those unsafe.
- The city of Richardson received a \$25,000 grant from State Farm for continued development on the project.

#### **Awards**

- 1st Place at HackNAU 2017
- 1st Place at Richardson Community Hack Week 2016
- Best Microsoft Hack + Best Drone Hack at TAMUHack 2015