Huge shout out for Google Waterloo for hosting this competition as it was one of the unique sets of challenges I’ve faced to this day. Huge shout out to fellow East Oners (East One is the building name of Village One the first year residence) to a razor thin third place finish. I must say the YouTube pillows are pretty darn soft.

In the middle of finals week on an early Saturday as an act of ultimate procrastination, the five team members from left to right Ryan (CS), Fengyang (Math), Matthew (Tron), Kevin (SE), and I headed out to the local Google office expecting absolutely nothing. Arriving at the office, we had the “OMG its google” geek out and the “pretend I work here” photo shoot. This year the Google Games theme was time travel, so we buckled up and accelerated to 88 mph (back to the future).

The first two challenge was a set of unique trivia and puzzles both which gave me a bit of a laugh. I felt that they wanted to start the day on a lighter foot. The trivia was pretty straight forward with questons such as “Dis or Dat” where you had to pick what category a word or thing belonged to and “name as many as you can.” Let us just say that none of us watched American Idol but we did pretty well naming all the reindeers. We did ok at the trivia each of us had our own niches and it was entertaining. The puzzles on the other hand was when Google started being serious. With five people working we managed to only solve one question! The team that solved the most was only at a mere three. We were so close to the hardest question worth 50 points. The three team member had a matrix drawn out and even had all the words figured out. The answer had a bit of a trick to it and it was found within seconds of the timer ending.

The third challenge was the most enjoyable and unique out of all of the challenges that day. Google had created a word association map where the it was up to the team to explore and find new words. Basically as you add words that are associated with a pervious word on the map the map will keep on expanding developing more interconnections and new nodes. Let your creativity run high and just “feel it,” making a connection or having an idea bounce off a teammate was a fulfilling experience. It is hard to explain but please take a look at the screen shot above. I believed we finished second for this challenge. I would love to play this game for a lot longer than the 30 mins that was allowed.

The coding challenge was pretty standard we did pretty darn well and finished second place here. Everyone managed to pull their weight but an outstanding effort to Fengyang who put the team on his back to say the least. For the last challenge it was a bit different as we needed to build a physical contraption out of straws. The goal was to keep the marble moving for the longest time possible. I have actually completed in almost the exact same event during the Phycis Olympics at UBC. The Brachistochrone Curve (wiki link here) is the curve of fastest descent so this was basically an Anti-Brachistochrone machine. Matt and I were able to direct the team to create a half-pipe like structure that allowed us to again you guessed it second place.

I will say this Google, we will be back!