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Carnegie Mellon Graduate Student at Heinz College Receives Yahoo! iSTEP Fellowship

PITTSBURGH—Jonathan Muller, a first-year master’s degree student in the School of Information Systems and Management at Carnegie Mellon University’s Heinz College, has been selected as the Yahoo! iSTEP 2010 Fellow. Yahoo! is a corporate sponsor for this summer’s iSTEP (innovative Student Technology ExPerience) internship, which is a program organized by the TechBridgeWorld research group in Carnegie Mellon’s Robotics Institute.

The Yahoo! iSTEP Fellowship seeks to motivate students to think creatively about how they can use their technical skills, business knowledge and global awareness to solve social issues around the world. Muller was selected for his excellent and broad range of technology and business experience, and education.

“We are very excited about the Yahoo! iSTEP 2010 Fellowship Award and we have no doubt that Jonathan will have a huge impact on the field of information and communication technologies for development (ICTD) and the world as a whole,” said Jamie Lockwood, an academic relations manager at Yahoo! Labs. “The world is facing some very serious challenges right now. It is inspiring to see this incredibly capable group of students and faculty focusing their energy on working with developing countries to understand the real problems and finding potential solutions using information and communication technology. Yahoo! has international offices that are starting to focus more on understanding how to develop new technology, services, tools and content to support the needs of these developing regions. We are thrilled to partner with TechBridgeWorld and iSTEP on these efforts.”

Launched in the summer of 2009, iSTEP is a unique program designed to provide Carnegie Mellon students with opportunities to get first-hand experience in carrying out technology research relevant to developing communities. Last summer, six Carnegie Mellon students worked closely with communities in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to develop technology tools for enhancing Braille writing skills for visually impaired students, English literacy for primary school students, and data collection for para-

social workers helping AIDS orphans and vulnerable children. This summer, the iSTEP 2010 team, composed of students from Carnegie Mellon's Pittsburgh and Doha campuses, will be working with the Asian University for Women and Young Power in Social Action to work on two projects that address the needs of developing communities in Chittagong, Bangladesh.

Another feature of the iSTEP internship is the global distribution of the team. This summer, Muller will be the team's technical floater based in Pittsburgh and will coordinate with five teammates based in Chittagong. One advantage to this global distribution is that Muller will have access to resources not readily available in Chittagong. His major responsibility will be to support technical development of the internship's two projects: (1) creating and evaluating culturally relevant educational technology and games for children's literacy; and (2) enhancing and evaluating a low-cost Braille writing tutor for visually impaired students.

"The iSTEP internship is a great way to make a global impact from right here in Pittsburgh," Muller said. "It also gives us the rare opportunity to work with colleagues from the Doha campus. Through this internship, we are gaining an understanding of different cultures as we work and this is an invaluable experience in a global economy."

Muller is no stranger to educational technology projects. A telecommunications graduate of Michigan State University (MSU), he worked on similar projects with the Comm Tech Lab, an association at MSU that creates "innovative learning experiences, which elegantly integrates technology." After graduation, Muller developed online learning experiences for Charles Schwab. He served as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Dominican Republic and has used technology to teach Environmental Science with the San Francisco Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy. Before coming to the Heinz College, Muller was a key member of the Stanford Technology Ventures Program, where he worked on Entrepreneurship Corner, an educational Web site.

"We are excited to have Jonathan on the iSTEP team this year. His skills enhance an already adept multi-disciplinary team of Carnegie Mellon students. We are confident that the iSTEP 2010 team will positively impact communities in Bangladesh," said M. Bernardine Dias, founder and director of TechBridgeWorld and an assistant research professor of robotics. "We are also extremely grateful to Yahoo! for their support. Corporate partners like Yahoo! are leading the way in enabling us to offer innovative learning experiences such as iSTEP to students who will be our future leaders."

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About TechBridgeWorld: TechBridgeWorld is a research group of the Robotics Institute in Carnegie Mellon University's School of Computer Science that innovates and field tests technology solutions to meet sustainable development needs around the world. Working closely with local partners who understand the needs of specific communities, TechBridgeWorld contributes its technical expertise to

help realize the community's vision of development by inventing new tools, customizing existing technology, and inspiring the community's future technologists. For more information about TechBridgeWorld, visit <http://www.techbridgeworld.org>.

About the H. John Heinz III College: Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College comprises the School of Public Policy and Management and the School of Information Systems and Management. The two schools share a unified faculty that bring expertise in multiple areas to bear on the most complex problems facing the world today. The schools offer master's and doctoral degrees in areas ranging from information security and policy, and information systems, to public policy, arts and health care management. Heinz College delivers academic programs in Pittsburgh, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles and Adelaide, Australia. For more about the Heinz College, visit <http://www.heinz.cmu.edu>.

About Carnegie Mellon: Carnegie Mellon (www.cmu.edu) is a private, internationally ranked research university with programs in areas ranging from science, technology and business, to public policy, the humanities and the fine arts. More than 11,000 students in the university's seven schools and colleges benefit from a small student-to-faculty ratio and an education characterized by its focus on creating and implementing solutions for real problems, interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation. A global university, Carnegie Mellon's main campus in the United States is in Pittsburgh, Pa. It has campuses in California's Silicon Valley and Qatar, and programs in Asia, Australia and Europe. The university is in the midst of a \$1 billion fundraising campaign, titled "Inspire Innovation: The Campaign for Carnegie Mellon University," which aims to build its endowment, support faculty, students and innovative research, and enhance the physical campus with equipment and facility improvements.