



The Sentinel: September 14, 2020
News and events happening in the [Computer Science Department](#)

Welcome Message from Department Chair Jeff Ondich:

Welcome back, or welcome for the first time, to computer science at Carleton! As weird and non-optimal as the COVID-19 world may be, we're all excited to get our new school year underway and our CS community back together. We have many exciting CS Tea Talks coming up, great classes, and many opportunities to work and learn together.

If you're new to the CS Sentinel, this is where you'll see: announcements of events; advertisements of internships, jobs, and other opportunities; celebrations of student, staff, and faculty achievements; and whatever other news we come up with. Want to keep up with CS at Carleton? Then keep your eyes on the Sentinel!

If you have any questions about CS at Carleton, or if you don't have questions but just want to learn more about what's going on in the department, don't hesitate to check in with me or any of the CS faculty.

Good luck, have fun, and stay safe.

Jeff Ondich, Department Chair

CS Tea: What is it? CS Tea Talks

CS Tea is our weekly Thursday afternoon (4:00-5:00PM) get-together to spend time together, to share our interest in computer science, and to learn interesting new things. Sometimes we'll have a guest speaker, sometimes we'll have a panel of Carleton faculty or students, and sometimes we'll just get together to chat.

CS Tea is taking place on Zoom this term. **Sign up for the [cs-interest mailing list](#)** to get the link and **join us via Zoom**.

9/17 - CS Tea: Social

This week, join us to connect or reconnect with faculty and fellow students who are interested in CS. We'll have informal conversations and activities to celebrate getting our community back together. Sign up for the cs-interest list (see above) and watch for the email from Professor Rafferty with the Zoom link.

9/24 - CS Tea: Bad News: AI-Assisted Immersive Theater with James Ryan, Visiting Professor in the Carleton CS department.

[Bad News](#) is an award-winning installation work that combines novel AI technologies and live improvisational acting into an emotionally charged interactive experience whose story and setting is uniquely generated by a computer program. Each 45-minute performance is an original work of immersive theater, produced for an audience of one by a human-and-machine troupe. Since its inception in 2015, *Bad News* has been mounted internationally, at venues including the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Slamdance Film Festival, and IndieCade, where it won the 2016 Audience Choice award. Writing about the piece for Rolling Stone, Steven T. Wright remarked, "This marvel of procedural performance can only be played by a lucky few, and that's a crying shame." In this tea talk, I'll present an overview of the *Bad News* project, with special attention to the underlying technologies that make it possible

SDAs for 2020-2021 (Student Departmental Advisor)

Ellie Mamantov and Tessa Newman-Heggie! Ellie and Tessa are the Computer Science department SDAs for 2020-21. They're here to answer your questions about academic matters such as courses, prerequisites, requirements, registration procedures, and so on. They also organize special events, and will send special email announcements about those events.

Meet Our Newest CS Faculty Anya Vostinar and James Ryan

Interviewed by CS department SDA's Ellie Mamantov and Tessa Newman-Heggie



Please welcome back **Anya Vostinar** (she/they) to the Carleton CS department! Anya did her undergraduate work at Carleton before attending Michigan State for graduate school. She obtained a dual-PhD in Computer Science & Engineering and Ecology, Evolutionary Biology & Behavior. Her research interests are interdisciplinary; she studies the evolution of cooperation within biological systems using agent-based simulations. A major aspect of her research has been the creation and development of Symbulation, an open-source, agent-based, artificial life and evolution software. Anya is looking forward to returning to Carleton because of the students, her colleagues in the department, and because Minnesota is home -- she grew up in Duluth! Her favorite part of teaching is seeing a student have an "aha!" moment, when concepts finally click and they understand a difficult topic. In the past, she has taught to a live audience in a classroom, so learning how to teach effective online classes is a challenging new undertaking. However, she is excited to find the best aspects of online learning that she could carry into in-person teaching, such as using a flipped classroom to incorporate more hands-on experience. She also wants to ensure that her class is flexible and that her students are able to succeed even while studying during a time of social change and a pandemic. Anya wants to make sure her students know that she sees them as whole people and wants them to be successful, which she believes looks

different for each student. Outside of academia, Anya enjoys reading sci-fi and fantasy books, gardening, and spending time with her dog Cache.



The Carleton CS department is excited to welcome **James Ryan** (he/him) as a visiting professor! James is a first generation college student, and attended Normandale Community College and the University of Minnesota for his undergraduate work in Linguistics. After getting into computational linguistics research his senior year at UMN and wanting to pursue a masters degree, James decided it was time to learn how to code. Having gotten into coding relatively late, James describes learning to code like learning to read, because computation provided both a new way of understanding the world and also a new way to create media and inscribe on the world. After coding "clicked" in this way, James got his PhD in Computational Media at UC Santa Cruz. During this time at Santa Cruz he worked on a collaborative project called Bad News (www.badnews.ai), an immersive theater experience where the story and setting are uniquely generated each performance. James loves teaching and is planning to embrace online teaching this fall. He's thrilled to collaborate with and get to know Carleton students in his classes, into which he's excited to incorporate hands-on projects. He'd like to cultivate an inclusive environment where everyone, including students without a lot of CS background, have something unique to contribute. James, who's research in computational media is fundamentally interdisciplinary, would also love to work with students, so consider reaching out to him if you'd like to be involved in his research during the winter or spring terms. James lives in Minneapolis with his wife Nina and his 1 year old daughter Vivian. Outside of computer science, James enjoys collecting books and has been learning about the letterpress printing method. He's starting an indie printing venture in Minneapolis called Aleator press (www.aleator.press), specializing in computer generated literature.

OPPORTUNITIES:

Presenting: CarlTech

Carleton students Maanya Goenka and Luisa Escosteguy have put together a list of [tech opportunities \(CarlTech\)](#). These are opportunities that are not-well publicized and include CS and Finance exploratory/diversity programs: undergraduate internships, interview prep resources, and mentorship programs. Click on the link above and check it out!

Carletonian Web Editor Position

The *Carletonian* student-run newspaper is recruiting a web editor! We're looking for someone to help maintain and develop our Wordpress [website](#). This is a great opportunity to put your technical skills to work on campus and contribute to student

journalism. The time commitment is low – about three hours per week at most, with many weeks being significantly less. Responsibilities include working with the editors-in-chief and managing editor to implement new features on the website. Please contact Amelia Broman (bromana@) and Sam Kwait-Spitzer (kwaits@) for an application if you're interested.

Carleton Career Center Computer Science Technical Interview Workshop:

What is a technical interview really like? Find out more about IT recruiting from the perspective of an IT recruiter. [Sign up now](#) for this virtual event. This event is sponsored by the Carleton College Career Center.

Date: Thursday, Sept. 24

Time: 7:00 pm

Hack4Impact: Are you interested in CS and want to improve your coding skills? Are you also a Carl who's passionate about social activism? Then Carleton's new chapter of [Hack4Impact](#) (H4I), a 501c(3) organization that connects student software developers to nonprofits and other socially responsible businesses to create tools for social change, is the club for you! Existing H4I chapters have worked with at least 19 organizations, completing 24 different projects comprising over 400,000 lines of code. Notable projects include the [Asylum Connect Catalog](#), a dynamic, centralized database that connects LGBTQ+ asylum seekers to service providers in the US (2016) and the [Philly Food Finder](#), a map based web app to find local food resources in Philadelphia (2014). If you are interested or would like to be part of the Carleton chapter, let us know by emailing either Aishwarya (varmaa@carleton.edu) or Nicole (bindern@carleton.edu). While there will be lots of learning opportunities, we recommend that you have at least taken CS 111 or the equivalent. Thanks!

MN Tech Connect Conference: An Interactive Online Conference for the Minnesota Tech Community -- Tech Connect is a half-day fully interactive online event that delivers the awesome learning and networking opportunities from MnTech's in-person events to your desktop. The conference includes innovative examples of Minnesota companies applying technology to power tech-enabled business models, 1-1 networking, small group discussions, and opportunities to connect with sponsors.

Date: Wednesday, Sept. 23

Time: 8:30 am. (3 hrs, 30 min)

Sponsored by: Carleton Career Center

[Register online](#)

Broadstreet Internship Opportunity: The COVID-19 pandemic is a globally historic event. **If you have wondering how you can help**, please consider joining [The COVID-19 Data Project](#). The COVID-19 Data Project is organized by a dedicated, volunteer group of statisticians, public health professionals, physicians, and software engineers. The team is currently looking for interns in **data** and **design**. The project is backed by BroadStreet, a data and software company for social good.

Anyone with a love of data (and/or design!) is welcome to apply!
Learn more at <https://learn.broadstreet.io/internships/>

The Redistricting Reform Project is a non-profit non-partisan group currently gearing up to help people fight the partisan gerrymandering that will take place over the next couple of years when every state redistricts after the census is done. They are designing web tools, training materials, and databases (The redistricting Data Hub) so that anyone can design a redistricting of their state---and understand what their state legislatures are up to. The leadership team (including Carleton grad John O'Neil) has experience battling overly partisan gerrymanders. RRP just got a large grant to support the work and they're hiring 5-6 people immediately. No redistricting knowledge is necessary; they'll train people. They want people who can understand technical material and who have oral, written, and graphical communication skills. For a couple of the positions they would like programming experience.

Interested? See RRP's hiring page: <https://www.redistrictingdatahub.org/hiring.html>

One-day Cyber-Security workshop for undergraduate women in computer science. College of the Holy Cross is planning to host a free online workshop. This workshop will take place on a weekend in late October/early November. It will be entirely online over the course of about 6 hours, with a mix of video (e.g. zoom) and live peer/group chat (e.g. using discord), with time built in for lunch, breaks and socializing. The hands-on workshop would focus on reverse engineering and exploitation, starting with the fundamentals of software, software vulnerabilities, and how to leverage those vulnerabilities to gain control of software. The technical content would be somewhat self-paced, with group work encouraged, so participating students need not have extensive CS background or any previous experience with cyber-security---only some basic programming skills (e.g. completion of a CS1 course in Java, C, C++, or similar) and some exposure to a command-line terminal. Besides getting a taste of cyber-security, we aim for this to be a fun event where students can make connections with their peers and get to meet and talk with alumni and experts in the field. If interested contact Kevin Walsh kwalsh@holycross.edu

Bit by Bit – recently founded by two recent Dartmouth grads, is a company to help students prepare for software engineering internship interviews. Key goals for Bit by Bit include:

1. Review key technical concepts
2. Participate in a mock interview on different technical topics each week
3. Learn how to communicate their thought processes during interviews
4. Work with each of us to polish their LinkedIn, GitHub, Resume, and Personal Website
5. Practice behavioral questions independently and in group settings
6. Create a plan to maximize their networking success