

MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

DATE: WEDNESDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2010

ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors



Historic Longford motor racing comes to life in 3D

A Launceston based second year Bachelor of Arts student with a flair for computing has created a virtual simulation of the historic Longford motor racing circuit.

Shannon Woolley, 26, built the 3D simulation in his spare time, recreating every detail of the track which was a racing hotspot during the 1950s and 60s.

Mr Woolley is majoring in Human Interface Technology through the school of Computing and Information Systems.

The project took more than 18 months to complete, with Mr Woolley often working up to 16 hours a day in his spare time to finish it.

Since releasing the virtual track online, it has been downloaded more than 10,000 times by racing simulator enthusiasts around the world.

“I didn’t know much about the Longford race circuit until I started researching it,” Mr Woolley said.

“I had to do a lot of research – I found a website that had several hundred photos of Longford from the race weekends back then and that was crucial. There was also a book floating around the library which I found useful, along with a few videos.”

While Mr Woolley did the majority of the work on the track himself, he said he had also received help from Longford racing enthusiasts and members of the online racing community.

With the project complete, Mr Woolley is now working with the University of Tasmania’s HITLab to bring it to life, displaying the game in the lab’s dedicated “VisionSpace” projector room.

HIT Lab Interim Co-Director of Management Daniel Rolf said Mr Woolley’s project showed how flexible the HITLab’s technology could be.

“For example, instead of requiring expensive, dedicated equipment for ship or flight simulators the VisionSpace can be used as part of a configurable environment to satisfy multiple uses,” Dr Rolf said.

“You are seeing this as a motor racing track but there is no reason why different periods of history cannot be recreated like this.

“Here you are driving a car, but it could be anything – an aeroplane, a ship, you name it.

“It is an interactive way of immersing yourself in history, getting a sense of what a place was like, what a certain time was like.”

Dr Rolf said the HITLab was happy to help Mr Woolley showcase the project. “For Shannon to have put it together in his spare time -- to us that indicates commitment and focus, and it also has a local connection,” Dr Rolf said.

“That is the kind of mentality we want to have at the HITLab. We want to reward good work and passion, to allow people to experiment and give them the freedom to explore their ideas.”

The media is invited to a demonstration of the simulator, which will be held at the HITLab at the University of Tasmania’s Newnham campus TODAY from 11am.

Former Longford Motor Racing Association secretary Ian Carins will also be attending to watch the simulator in action.

Footage and still shots from the simulator can be provided on DVD.

For more information or to arrange interviews, please call Luke Scott at the UTAS media office on (03) 6324 5019.

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