

# Glimmer Labs: Summer 2007 Summer Research Application

This document is available online at

<http://www.cs.grinnell.edu/~rebelsky/Department/glimmer-app-2007.pdf>.

Information on summer research projects is available at

<http://www.cs.grinnell.edu/~rebelsky/Department/samr-summer-2007.html>.

Applications for summer research in Samuel A. Rebelsky's *Glimmer Labs* must include answers to some preliminary questions as well as a description of a project you wish to undertake. You must also submit the divisional application to the division office. Applications are due Monday, 19 February 2007. I will select students (and make a waiting list) by Monday, 12 March 2007. You must make a decision by Friday, 16 March 2007. However, since many REU's and other off-campus opportunities do not make decisions until after that date, I will understand if students who initially accept positions with me later choose an off-campus opportunity. (At that point, I will make an offer to the next person on the list.)

Please send your answers in a **plain text** (ASCII) email. (I hate receiving Microsoft Word documents and prefer not to deal with HTML mail.) Your answers should be part of the message and not an attachment.

Note that there are two parts to the application: A preliminary list of questions and a project description.

To the horror of my colleague John Stone, I use a formula to compute a number for each applicant and, with some exceptions, choose candidates based on their computed number. The most significant factor in that computation is the quality of the project description. Other factors include your GPA in computer science courses, the number of programming languages you know, and other characteristics I deem to be important. Therefore, you improve your chances by writing a better description and by carefully indicating what makes you special on the questions that permit you to do so.

## Preliminaries

1. Name
2. Major (or "Undeclared") and Year
3. This research requires some preparatory work in spring, and some followup work in fall and spring, as described in this document. Will you, to the best of your ability, do this work, even though it includes uncompensated work in the spring and fall?
4. What courses have you taken in computer science? Please indicate what grades you received in those courses. If you have not taken any courses in computer science, tell me your math GPA.
5. What other courses have you taken that will contribute to your ability to do this project?
6. What programming languages do you know, and how would you rate your ability to use each of these languages?
7. Assess your writing skills.
8. What other applicable skills or background do you bring to your project?
9. Experience shows that group projects are more successful. Would you be willing to work with other students on your project?
10. What projects of those listed in the accompanying document would you prefer to work on? You may

want to provide a ranked list.

11. Are there other related projects you'd like to suggest that fit within the general rubric of ScheMedia? If so, describe them briefly.
12. Are you prepared to do summer research under Grinnell's *Mentored Advanced Project* (second- and third-year students) or *Mentored Introductory Project* (first-year students) rubric?
13. Will you eat ethnic foods, such as Indian and Thai food?
14. Will you be willing to have your work released under some form of Open Source license?
15. What sets you apart from other students? (That is, for what reasons should I select you rather than the many other applicants I have?)
16. What else would you like me to know?

## Project Description

*For first-year students*

Pick one of the projects and explain what you find interesting about the project. If you have ideas on how you might approach the project, please include them. (Since you're relatively new to CS, I don't expect you to have a particularly in-depth response, but your response will give me some sense as to how you might fit into the project group.)

*For second- and third-year students*

Pick one of the projects that you indicated you would prefer to work on and write a few paragraphs describing what component of the project you find most interesting and how you would approach it. Make sure that you note how it relates to my overall research agenda. You should also discuss technologies you will rely on (languages, other programs, etc.) and some of your preliminary design ideas. You will strengthen your application by showing me that you've looked into related research and talked to students who have previously worked on the project. You will weaken your application by writing poorly.

You must write these paragraphs even if you intend to do one of the suggested projects, since your project description will show me how you intend to approach the project.