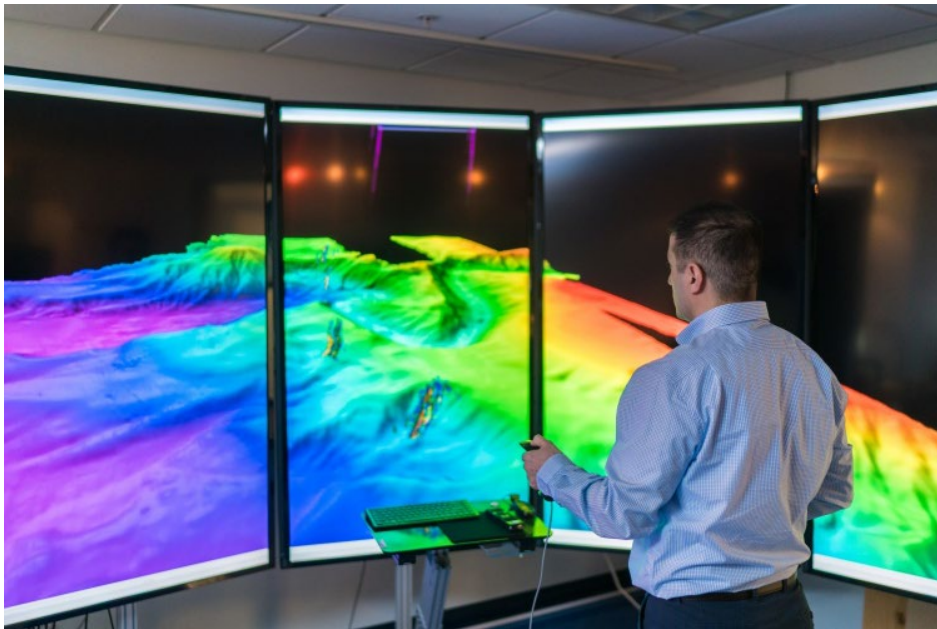


Voice Recognition and Data Visualization

Pursuing Dual Master's in Computer Science and IT

Tuesday, March 21, 2017



Most students struggle to finish one master's thesis, but by May 2017, Erol Aygar will have finished his second thesis in a year, earning him Master of Science degrees in [computer science](#) and [information technology](#) from the University of New Hampshire.

Aygar's first thesis, for his degree in computer science, was on scientific data utilization. It incorporated the work he conducted at the Data Visualization Research Lab at the Center for Coastal and Ocean Mapping on the Durham campus. There he worked with lab director Colin Ware developing software for experiments,

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writing apps for managing large sets of data and co-authoring a scientific article funded by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Aygar's second thesis in information technology is focused on an emerging field within the tech industry: voice recognition software. Hundreds of products are available today that feature some kind of voice recognition software, from mobile phones to home assistant tools like the Amazon Alexa and Google Home. One of the problems with voice recognition software, however, is it doesn't always work great for everyone. Aygar's thesis focused on the work he did with Michael Jonas, assistant professor of computer science, who is conducting research on better ways to apply the speech recognition process in developing applications.

Aygar said he was willing to take on the challenge of dual master's degrees with encouragement from [Mihaela Sabin](#), associate professor and coordinator of computing technology.

"I started as an IT major and switched to computer science because I have more than five years of experience in the field, and I performed really well in those classes in the first two semesters," said Aygar.

After hearing about Aygar's indecision about the direction of his studies, Sabin suggested he seek the dual degree. He agreed to take on the task, and was able to use work he'd done as a student to complete both projects.

Before coming to the United States in 2013, Aygar lived in Turkey. He grew up in a small town in the southern region of the country and moved to Istanbul to go to college. After graduation, he worked for broadcasting company designing user interfaces and internet software. He then worked for a tech firm managing a team of 20 to 30 engineers and for Vodafone, one of the largest mobile carriers in the world, giving him significant experience as an engineer. While in Istanbul, Aygar also got his master's in engineering management.

“When I came to the United States, I decided to make a change and started to look for alternatives,” said Aygar. “I was going to do an MBA, but since I had an engineering background, I thought UNH would be a good idea.”

As someone who doesn’t shy away from a challenge, Aygar is considering a future either in academia or in the tech industry.

“I’m thinking it might be a good idea to find a job and apply what I’ve learned,” he said. “I know what I want to do in academia, and I know how to research, but I’m also looking to solve problems.”

Aygar said he’d especially like to tackle problems in speech recognition software, and finding ways to improve that technology.

“I’d like to apply the research I’ve done to real working products,” Aygar said.

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