Duffield Showcases BOOM Technology

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The next time prelim-cramming and paper-writing starts to take a toll, instead of taking a coffee break, how about relaxing with a game of Penguin Adventure? This latest computer game, designed by Eric Del Priore ’07 and Benjamin Sprattler ’07, along with fellow students in CIS 300: Introduction to Computer Game Design, was one of many digital technology research projects showcased at the 2006 Bits On Our Mind exposition.

Held in the Duffield Hall Atrium yesterday evening, BOOM is an annual research conference organized to highlight student research projects in digital technology. BOOM projects focus on digital technology applications in diverse areas ranging from art and biology to robotics and gaming.

Inspired by the original Super Mario Brothers and Sonic the Hedgehog games, the Penguin Adventure project grew out of a desire for "making video games that we wanted to play," Sprattler said. The game consists of controlling Tooks the Penguin, a whimsical character
with a colorful umbrella, designed by Lisa Allen '07, through a series of five different worlds as he tries to find his mother. Sprattler wanted to create a game that was "fast, where you had no time to realize you were thinking."

Del Priore explained that their project focuses on "twitch game play," where players are forced to react quickly while playing, without thinking about their every move.

"The game is not hard," he said, "but encourages and requires speed." Del Priore also wanted to create a game where "players always feel that they were succeeding."

"Our aim was to keep the target audience out of the hard-core gaming male, 20 to 25-year age range," Sprattler said. When Penguin Adventure was showcased last semester at the end of the course, the creators found that the game was popular among children.

"A ten-year-old girl won one of the free t-shirts we were giving away," Sprattler remembered.

"The game is geared towards kids," Del Priore agreed, noting that its popularity may stem from the fact that "there is no way to fail in the game."

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