

ASSETS 2005 Doctoral Consortium Overview

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The ASSETS 2005 Doctoral Consortium was a resounding success, involving eight doctoral candidates and three faculty advisors, plus one transitional advisor. The doctoral candidates included:

- Miguel Alonso
Florida International University
- Rita Hubert
Pace University
- Kanav Kahol
Arizona State University
- Peter Parente
UNC-Chapel Hill
- Kathy Price
UMBC
- Andrea Tartaro
Northwestern University
- Ted Wattenberg
NOVA Southeastern University
- Jacob Wobbrock
Carnegie Mellon University

The faculty advisors included Dr. Armando Barreto (Florida International University), Dr. Anthony Hornof (University of Oregon), and Dr. Steve Landry (Purdue University). In addition, a transitional advisor, a very recent Ph.D. graduate beginning a post doc position, V. Kathlene Leonard (Georgia Institute of Technology), participated to provide the students with the perspective of a brand new Ph.D.

Students were accepted to participate in the Doctoral Consortium based on submission of application material, including letters of recommendation, CVs, and 2-page papers describing their dissertation research. The format of the Doctoral Consortium required each student to prepare and present a brief presentation describing their dissertations followed by open discussion among the faculty and students. The 2-page papers are reprinted in this article to give the SIGACCESS community a sense for the breadth and depth of research represented at the 2005 Doctoral Consortium.

Students were evaluated based on metrics related to the clarity of their problem definitions, articulation of the current states of the science, the robustness and validity of the analytical approaches employed, and the broader impacts of the research. Topics ranged from enhancing digital information for people with visual impairment due to refractive errors, mobile devices in home health monitoring, haptic user interfaces for blind computer users, task based audio displays for graphical user interfaces, functional assessment of motor impairments, autism therapies, synthesized speech applications, and accessible text entry.

The Best Doctoral Candidate Award was made to Andrea Tartaro, for her research titled, "Storytelling with a Virtual Peer as an Intervention for Children With Autism." Andrea is working under the advisement of Dr. Justine Cassell at Northwestern University.

I would like to thank the students who participated in the 2005 Doctoral Consortium for their diligence, enthusiasm, and commitment to research that advances the state of the science and state of the art for people with special needs. This was truly an exceptional group of students, displaying an incomparable joy for their work and dedication to excellence. I would also like to thank the Doctoral Consortium advisors who participated. Without their dedication and willingness to collaborate, advise and mentor these students, the Doctoral Consortium would simply not be possible. I know that the students' work has been immeasurably improved as a direct result of the advisors' thoughtful input and consideration.