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Edwin Smith

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## Adam Jones Joins Computer Science Faculty

Newest professor brings energy, creativity to department and students

MARCH 30, 2016 BY EDWIN SMITH

**FaTvLiErCcSMPrSt**



Adam Jones uses a piece of VR equipment

As technological advances continue, the imaginary line between fiction and reality is being erased. And that's one of the reasons Adam Jones is an assistant professor at the University of Mississippi.

"Why I came here is an interesting story," said Jones, who joined the Department of Computer and Information Sciences faculty in August. "When I interviewed, I found that the faculty in CIS are great, super-sharp folks, the students are eager and bright, and the city of Oxford is warm and inviting. This was the perfect opportunity to give back to my home state and work with a stellar group of people."

Jones, whose research area is virtual reality and augmented reality, has taught Computer Graphics, Special Topics in Virtual Reality and Computer Programming. He'll teach Introduction to Data Science next semester.

"I am also starting a virtual reality lab that I'm currently calling the High Fidelity Virtual Environments Lab, or Hi5 Lab for short," Jones said.

Jones is a welcome addition to the CIS department, said Dawn Wilkins, the department's chair.

"Our students are very interested in his virtual reality research, and it meshes well with the new digital media studies minor that was recently approved," she said. "Adam has quickly established a reputation as a caring and enthusiastic teacher. He definitely boosts the 'cool' factor in our department."

After earning his doctorate from Mississippi State University, Jones took a postdoctoral appointment at the University of Southern California, working for Mark Bolas, founder of Fakespace, and former CBS vice president Kim LeMasters.

"We were doing experiments in VR and designing low-cost VR displays, including precursors to the Google Cardboard and Oculus Rift," he said. "One of the guys in our lab was Palmer Luckey, who went on to found Oculus VR and spurred the recent resurgence of VR in video gaming. We were all super excited when his company was bought by Facebook for \$2 billion."

Although Jones enjoyed his time at USC, he found himself drawn to life in a college town more than the big city.

"I grew up in Mississippi, and knew I wanted to come back to teach and share my experiences with students," he said. "In the meantime, I took another postdoc at Clemson University working with one of the first VR researchers, Larry Hodges. While there I met my wife, Caitlin. Not long afterward, I got the offer to join the faculty of the University of Mississippi."

The most gratifying part of the job for Jones is working with students.

"It's great to see them learn, but what is even more awesome is seeing them take the things they learned in class and using it in their own projects and hobbies just for fun," he said. "Students will come to my office and show me the computer graphics or VR projects they've done on their own, and I'm just blown away. It's really rewarding to see students be excited, especially when the subject matter is really challenging."

He and his wife, who has a doctorate in genetics and works with students at the FedEx Student-Athlete Academic Support Center, are newly married. His family also includes his parents in Calhoun, Miss. and in-laws in Clemson, South Carolina.

"In my down time, I like to build miscellaneous gadgets – robots, VR displays, motion trackers and

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such – experiment with 3-D printing, cook, read and watch sci-fi,” Jones said. “Both Caitlin and I are big sci-fi fans. We are constantly amazed at how much of yesterday’s science fiction is today’s science fact.”

For more info, visit <http://cs.olemiss.edu/~jones>.



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