

# INTERNSHIP SPOTLIGHT

## Alec Woods



**Graduation Year:** 2019

**Semester of Internship:** Summer 2017

**Major:** Information Technology

**Hometown:** Pittsburgh

**Minor:** Computer Science

**Hobbies:** Sports, fishing, camping, video games

**Campus Activities:** N/A

**Future Plans:** I plan to find a job in information technology and attend graduate school.

- **Internship (company/your title):**

**Company:** Carnegie Mellon University, Software Engineering Institute, CERT Division

**Title:** CERT Technical Student Intern

- **What were your duties?**

My primary duty was to help build 100 All in One systems for two major events. An All in One system is a case which contains the monitor, keyboard, mouse, and monitor stand. The first event was a competition for the Army Reserve Cyber Operation Group called the Cyber X Games. The second was a three-day event for high school students called the Cyber Student competition. CERT employees created lab exercises and the students used them to learn skills and compete with each other. In addition to those events, my team worked on a variety of other IT related projects such as fixing servers, fixing cabling in the server room, and more.

- **What did you enjoy most about your internship?**

I enjoyed the team environment and working with the group of people, everyone was welcoming and helpful. I worked with six other interns during the summer and I enjoyed going into work every day and working with them. It was nice knowing that if you got stuck you always had a group of people who would go out of their way to help you.

- **What was the most difficult aspect of the internship?**

The most difficult aspect of my internship was working on a server blade, which is basically a small, modular circuit board. I was tasked with troubleshooting a broken server blade and finding out how much it would cost to fix. I started this at the beginning of my internship. When I wasn't working on the other major projects, I tried to figure out a way to fix the blade. I took the broken server blade and a good server blade and swapped parts back and forth one at a time trying to isolate the broken part. Towards the end of my internship, I finally discovered that the blade had a mother board failure. This was difficult as I had never worked with a server before my internship, and it was a great learning experience and very fun tinkering with it and seeing how servers are put together.

- **How did your experience at UPG and in the Information Technology Department prepare you for your internship?**

The Information Technology Department did prepare me for my internship. I took two courses, JAVA and Computer Security, in the spring semester heading into my summer internship that gave me more of an understanding of computer systems and how they work.

- **How has your internship prepared you for a career?**

My internship has definitely helped prepare me for a career. It was a great learning experience and gave me great experience in my field of study. I learned a lot from everyone there and as the summer went on I was able to do more tasks without having to ask questions. Our team leader was there to help, but he encouraged us to figure out problems on our own and only gave background help. Learning how to figure out hard problems by myself and with my team was very helpful and prepared me for working in the real world.

- **What recommendations do you have for other students about doing an internship?**

I recommend that they do one. It's a great learning experience and gives you so much more knowledge in the field that you want to go into. You gain valuable experience on the job working with people, and you get an idea of the kinds of work you will be doing in your future if you continue to stay on the path after your internship. Also, make sure you connect with everyone you can at your internship. They are really helpful and can also give you valuable information on how you can improve.