Building projects involving graphics, sound, music, animation, video, and other forms of media can motivate computer science students, particularly those who may not be excited about more traditional programming projects. (Does anyone really believe that “Hello, World!” is a motivating assignment?) Valued computer science learning objectives can be met with multimedia assignments as well as with traditional assignments. Modern hardware makes these kinds of projects possible on traditional computers, and modern software like Squeak makes multimedia approachable, understandable, and usable.

Squeak is a new cross-platform implementation of Smalltalk that emphasizes multimedia and educational applications. Several Squeak-using CS classes are having students tackle interesting and motivating assignments like building movie editors, MP3 players, personalized Web newspapers, and 3-D adventure games. The basic techniques are usable in other programming platforms, but Squeak provides an infrastructure that fades much of the non-relevant complexity.

The NSF Division of Undergraduate Education is sponsoring a workshop to help CS faculty to learn about integrating multimedia construction in CS courses.

Call for CS Faculty Attendees

We have funding for some 25 CS faculty to attend the workshop. Workshop attendees will have their lodging and meals covered, but are responsible for their own travel. Attendees will also receive a CD with workshop materials and a copy of the textbook “Squeak: Object-oriented design with multimedia applications” by Guzdial (2001) courtesy of Prentice-Hall. CS faculty interested in attending the workshop should email guzdial@cc.gatech.edu with a subject line of “MM-CSED: Attend.” Please tell us:

- Your name and institution (Sorry, only US institution faculty are eligible)
- The course(s) you teach where you might integrate multimedia and Squeak
- Your email address, phone number, and fax number
- If you have any previous Squeak experience

There are limited funds available to pay travel expenses of some faculty attendees. If you are interested in receiving these funds, please make your argument in your application and give us an estimate of your travel expenses. Our criteria in selecting faculty for travel funding are: increasing diversity in faculty attendees and in students potentially being reached; number of students potentially being reached (e.g., we will favor teaching institutions over research institutions); enthusiasm of the faculty applicants. Applications will be accepted until March 5. We will inform applicants of decisions by March 15.