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People look at research during the Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center's open house Monday in Woodburn Hall. (MICHAELA SIMONEI IDS) [Buy Photos](#)

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Interactive open house shows SOIC tools

By **DANIELLE CASTONZO** | IDS
 POSTED AT 11:26 PM ON NOV. 11, 2013 (UPDATED AT 11:28 PM ON NOV. 11, 2013)

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Students and professors trickled into Woodburn Hall, looking around at the screens lining the front of the room and the rows of empty tables, serving as seats for incoming visitors.

Colleagues and presenters from the School of Informatics and Computer Sciences milled around the cluttered room, swapping research updates and wishing each other luck on their upcoming presentations.

The SOIC's Cyberinfrastructure for Network Science Center held an open house on Monday for students and faculty interested in the CNS's newest technologies.

Attractions included hands-on demonstrations, talks with experts in the business and a viewing of the

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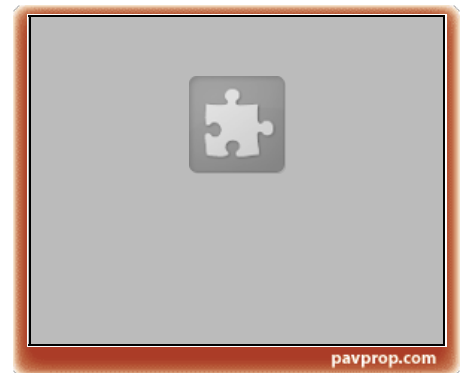
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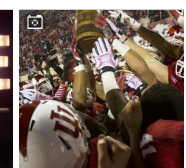




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award-winning short film
“Humanexus: Knowledge and
Communication Through the Ages.”

CNS specializes in repurposing big
data by analyzing data and recreating
it visually, making it more easily
accessible to the public.

The IU School of Informatics and
Computing operates the center, which
is located in Herman B Wells Library.

Katy Börner, professor of information
sciences, informatics and statistics, and
director of the CNS, organized the
event to show the work of CNS interns
and faculty.

“What we are trying to achieve with
this open house is to help people
understand how to make better sense
of data and learn to use advanced tools
that are actually easy to use,” Börner
said. “I believe that being able to
generate and understand data is as
important as being able to read and
write.”

Scott Emmons, a CNS intern and high
school junior from Bloomington High
School North, presented his research
on predicting consumer purchases based on consumer demographics.

“Once you go from data to space, the relationship between the products becomes
clear,” Emmons said.

Emmons, by far the youngest speaker of the group, got his internship through the
service learning program at his high school. He said that because of this internship,
he is considering attending IU after high school.

Ali Jafari, an IUPUI professor who also created OnCourse, presented his work at
the open house. His new project is CourseNetworking, an online service that he
described as “academic social networking.”


Jafari said that CourseNetworking combines learning management services with
social networking aspects, making it a more “engaging” and “student-driven”
resource. This service is free and available to students worldwide.

“We’re trying to make learning really exciting,” Jafari said.

In addition to research presentation, the open house provided information on the
Information Visualization MOOC course, the first of which was launched January
2013.

This graduate-level class provides a foundation on the art of information
visualization.

The first course had 1,780 students enrolled from 93 different countries. Most of
the students were from the United States, India, Canada, the United Kingdom and
the Netherlands.



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Lecturer Scott Weingart will teach the spring 2014 course.

For this coming semester, there are some proposed extensions to the course material, including information visualization for the digital humanities and statistics.

Gabriel Zhou, a Ph.D student in Computer Sciences, said he attended the event because he wanted to see his colleagues and hear Börner speak.

“I’m also doing info-based research so the demos were beneficial to my own research,” Zhou said.

After the presentations, members of the audience mingled with the speakers.

“Ultimately, I believe anyone can make sense of data,” Börner said. “Just like anyone can cook, anyone can map and visualize data and make sense of it.”

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