

Webster combines strat comm and entrepreneur goals as Reese News Lab intern

By Leigh Browder, spring 2014



Thomas Webster is a 21-year-old from Greensboro, N.C. A junior at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Webster is majoring in strategic communications at the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at UNC-CH and minoring in entrepreneurship. He has been a part of the Reese News Lab team for the 2014 spring semester. I talked with Webster about his experience interning with Reese News Lab and learned how he will take his skills gained from the Lab and use them in the real world.

Q: Why did you apply to Reese News Lab?

A: As a strategic communications major and an entrepreneurship minor, I wanted to take part in an organization that would allow me to streamline my major and minor. I wanted an opportunity to experience the two from a different angle. Coming into the Lab, I expected it to be more structured. But the whole experience was better than expected. Working with a group of first-time interns, like myself, it was great to not have the structure that I initially expected because it allowed me and my team to have more freedom to figure things out on our own and be more creative.

Q: What projects have you taken part in this year while working in the Lab?

A: This semester I worked on Capitol Quest. Capitol Quest is a political strategy game for smart phones or tablets that focuses on the North Carolina General Assembly. Starting out, we thought it would be an application to be used by elementary school students, but as we continued to develop the idea, we changed the focus to college-aged youth due to the increased interest of the House of Cards series. Working with this project was very interesting and fun because we wanted a gratification of the news and local politics using this app.

Q: Do you have a favorite project that you worked on or helped to create?

A: I'm a little biased when it comes to a preferred project, but I would say Capitol Quest was my favorite. This is because I spent so much time on it and have a great connection and shared satisfaction with everyone in my group. I think that this was mainly due to the fact that we were all new to the Lab and had to work together to teach ourselves about apps and creative development. Also, this project, along with Reese News Lab, was enjoyable because it taught me to learn how to develop applications and projects and learn how to make time.

Q: If you could describe your experience with Reese News Lab in one word, what would it be?

A: Fun. When you first enter Reese News Lab you think that it is very chaotic because everyone is talking and it is very communal. What makes it fun is that it is unlike normal businesses and startups, which are normally very organized and structured. Reese News Lab has taught me that with chaos and constant communication comes more fun and creativity. People tend to outgrow their creativity, and I think Reese has helped to cultivate my organic creativity.

Q: What kind of career do you aspire to have?

A: After graduation I want to go out West and join a communication startup company of an 8- to 10-man team. After a few years of that, I am interested in launching a communication company of my own. Once I have launched a few companies and sold them, I am thinking of switching mindsets to work with an investment company. I can't wait.

Q: How will you take your experience from Reese News Lab into your future?

A: Coming into Reese News Lab, I think I was more narrow-minded. There are so many different majors and creative minds that the more diverse a workforce, the better. Working with the Lab, I see the strength in team building and diverse ideas. The more diverse majors and backgrounds a team has, the stronger and more creative a project will be during development and product launch. I will definitely take this experience and the skills learned into my future.