For Paul Felt, the combination of computer science and linguistics spells passion. With an undergraduate degree in English under his belt, Felt is working on adding a PhD in computer science to his academic tool belt.

Felt won a Nibley Fellowship from the Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship for his research in computer annotations of ancient languages. The Nibley Fellowship is awarded to students who study historical—particularly religious—texts.

“Usually people who are applying for this fellowship are associated with ancient language scholars, not computer science,” Felt said. His advisor, Eric Ringger, helped him discover the fellowship.

“Eric Ringger is continually on the lookout for funding opportunities for his students, and he encouraged me to apply for the Nibley fellowship,” Felt said. Ringger also set up collaborative opportunities for Felt with Kristian Heal from the Maxwell Institute.

The two collaborated to study Syriac, a specific dialect of ancient Aramaic used by Christians in the Middle East. They used natural language processing

The West Mountain Observatory is experiencing stardom for the second time this summer. NASA’s Astronomy Picture of the Day (APOD) posted another composite image taken by Michael Joner and others at the West Mountain Observatory.

Entitled the Tulip in the Swan, the image features the Tulip Nebula within the nebula-rich constellation Cygnus the Swan. A glowing cloud of gas and dust creates a strong contrast of fiery red and peaceful blue within the image, which NASA featured July 26.

The processed data combined several frames from a year ago and was assembled with narrow-band data. Just like the West Mountain Observatory image featured May 26, Dr. Robert Gendler, an amateur astronomer and medical doctor from Connecticut, processed the image and submitted it for consideration.

The website is viewed worldwide by astrophysics enthusiasts and those interested in staying up-to-date on the most recent galaxy images. Very few images are selected for the website, so having two images chosen from the West Mountain Observatory, in just a few months, is quite an honor.

by: Alysa Kleinman

Computers Reading Between the Lines

BYU Featured as Astronomy Pic of the Day . . . Again

Photo: Composite Image Data - Subaru Telescope (NAOJ), Hubble Legacy Archive, Michael Joner, David Laney; Processing- Robert Gendler

ABOVE Paul Felt

continued on page 2
**College Grants**

Chemistry and Biochemistry
- **Jaron Hansen**
  - Sponsor: SCE
  - Title: Identification of Sources of PM2.5 in the Los Angeles Basin

Geology
- **Jani Radebaugh**
  - Sponsor: NASA
  - Title: Climate and Organic Inventory from Dunes on Titan

Summer Rupper
- **Richard Watt**
  - Sponsor: China Lake NWS
  - Title: Synthesis of Anionic Host Guest Complexes

Mathematics
- **Gregory Conner**
  - Sponsor: Simons Foundation
  - Title: Wild Topology, Attractors, and Algebraic Invariants

- **Todd Fisher**
  - Sponsor: Simons Foundation
  - Title: Entropy for Smooth Dynamical Systems

Physics and Astronomy
- **Dallin Durfee**
  - Sponsor: NSF
  - Title: Matterwave Interferometry with Ions

**Dates to Remember**

STEM Fair
- Thursday, Sep. 20
- 9 a.m.-3 p.m., WSC Ballroom

Summerhays Lecture
- Friday, Sep. 21
- 7 p.m., 1080 HBLL

CHIRP Proposals Due
- Sunday, Sep. 30

HITS Proposals Due
- Sunday, Sep. 30

Career and Internship Fair
- Wednesday, Oct. 3
- 10 a.m., WSC Ballroom & Garden Ct

Major Fair
- Wednesday, Oct. 10
- 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m., WSC Ballroom

**Summer Videos Posted on YouTube**

Missing summer already? Catch up on videos produced over the summer at cpms.byu.edu/newvideos/to relieve your back to school blues.

The new “Hands On” videos posted prove that science is a lot more than just textbooks and formulas. From researching geology at a nearby lake to turning waste into energy, these videos show that getting your hands on real science is exciting. You might even want to enroll in one of our CPMS undergraduate programs.

Another video shows the swag of Sounds to Astound, a group of students who use acoustics to make things boom and bang. The public is welcome to attend their free shows! Look at the Sounds to Astound site to check out upcoming show dates and learn more about the acoustics group.

**Paul Felt** continued from page 1

(NLP) to study Syriac texts from the time of Christ. NLP applies machine-learning techniques to extract meaningful information and annotate it for organizational purposes.

Annotation through NLP can apply to a variety of fields. For example, email servers use NLP to sort junk emails by determining which words are typically found in a junk email and sorting them into folders.

Linguistically, Heal and Felt use NLP to label the different parts of speech in the Syriac language.

“[On] the linguistics side, we’re researching ancient languages for interest in the [Syriac] language,” Felt said.

From a cultural standpoint, this interest in the language could unravel some writings and details of Syriac culture. Many Syriac writings haven’t been well studied due to a lack of resources, but Heal and Felt’s research is contributing to digitizing a body of manuscripts and data while labeling approximately 10 million words of text.

In this sense, Felt’s research contributes not only to findings related to annotation and NLP, but also sheds new light on religious studies.

by: Alysa Kleinman
College Publications

Chemistry and Biochemistry


Mathematics


Institutional Information

EPSCoR opportunities available for faculty and graduate students.

Information presentation on Utah EPSCoR website (http://iutahepscor.org/presentations/BYU_EPSCoR_26Jul2012.pdf). Additional information about EPSCoR opportunities can be found on the website or from Zach Aanderud from Life Sciences (422-4220; zachary_aanderud@byu.edu, the P.O.C for the current NSF Track II infrastructure grant) or from Conrad Monson (Research Development Specialist, Conrad_monson@byu.edu, 801-422-7722).