Welcome to the 2005 TopCoder® Collegiate Challenge, sponsored by Yahoo!®. Since last year’s Collegiate Challenge, TopCoder has grown by more than 14,000 members. Membership hit a critical point earlier this year and currently stands at over 50,000 members. Many of the finalists are tournament veterans, but with the continued membership growth, some new faces are spicing up the competition.

We started the Algorithm Competition of the TCCC05 with more than 1,300 students. Of the final 24, thirteen have been previous onsite finalists, eight are returning finalists from the TCCC04, and eleven are here for the first time. The competition maintains its significant worldwide presence, with four finalists from the US and the remaining 20 from other countries around the world. Many of the students have traveled a great distance to participate in the finals, and TopCoder welcomes each of you.

Rivalry in the Component Competition of the tournament continues to intensify as well. Participation in this year’s Collegiate Challenge was 130% higher than in last year’s tournament. TopCoder members remain focused on competing to develop commercial software for our customers in the form of components and applications. Our component competitions bring a real-world software development dimension to the tournament by measuring design and development ability.

Once again, our sponsors are top notch. Yahoo!® has been terrific to work with as the title sponsor for the second consecutive TCCC. They have been working very closely with us to make sure our collegiate event continues to expand and improve. Motorola® has joined us as a first-time sponsor of a major TopCoder tournament. They have broadened the range of our sponsoring companies into the mobile space, and we welcome their support. We are also thankful for NVIDIA®’s sponsorship of five consecutive major TopCoder events. It is evident that they are committed to celebrating and rewarding talent in the industry, and have teamed with TopCoder to do so.

I would like to personally thank the TopCoder staff. A more diligent and reliable group of people would be nearly impossible to find. Maintaining our large population of members and coordinating the myriad tasks that go into an event of this size would not be feasible without their enthusiasm and commitment. I would also like to thank all of the TopCoder members who build our systems, write problems, review designs and code, and administer contests.

Once again, I welcome you all to the 2005 TopCoder® Collegiate Challenge, sponsored by Yahoo!®. As always, best of luck to you in the Arena!

Jack Hughes
Founder, TopCoder, Inc.

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GREAT MINDS DON’T THINK ALIKE, THEY THINK AHEAD.

In this marketplace, there’s a lot to look forward to. There are problems yet to be solved. Innovations yet to be uncovered. Challenges yet to be conquered. The past ten years we’ve celebrated many accomplishments, but there’s no limit to the rewards ahead. What does our future hold? You tell us.
WEDNESDAY - March 9, 2005
9:00am – 5:00pm .......... Competitor Game Room
6:00pm – 8:00pm .......... Welcome Reception

THURSDAY - March 10, 2005
9:00am – 4:00pm .......... Component Design & Development Championship Round
9:30am – 10:00am .......... NVIDIA Presentation
10:00am – 12:00pm .......... Algorithm Semifinal Room 1
12:00pm – 1:00pm .......... Lunch
1:00pm – 3:00pm .......... Algorithm Semifinal Room 2
3:00pm – 3:30pm .......... Motorola Presentation
4:00pm – 6:00pm .......... Algorithm Semifinal Room 3
5:00pm – 8:00pm .......... Spectator Showdown
6:30pm – 10:00pm .......... Yahoo! Evening Event

FRIDAY - March 11, 2005
10:00am – 12:00pm .......... Algorithm Wildcard Round
12:00pm – 1:00pm .......... Lunch
12:00pm – 3:00pm .......... Spectator Showdown
1:00pm – 2:00pm .......... Presentation by Steven Skiena, PhD
2:30pm – 4:30pm .......... Algorithm Championship Round
4:30pm – 5:00pm .......... All Champion Announcements
5:00pm – 6:00pm .......... Media Hour / Press Conference
7:00pm – 9:00pm .......... Awards Reception
Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Richard Feynman - because of his passion for many aspects of science and life.

How do you generally approach solving TopCoder problems? Read the problem statement; read the easy examples; read the problem statement with understanding; read the easy examples with understanding. If I don’t know the algorithm off the top of my head - I think about possible approaches, draw more difficult examples on paper, draw some random things on paper. Now comes the implementation: if it’s a few-liner – I write it in my head then copy into the editor; if not - overall design on paper, then copy into the editor while filling out the details in my head.

What do you think is the most beautiful algorithm? Quadratic Sieve.

If relentless bragging were more socially acceptable, how would you introduce yourself? I am here to win.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists? Good problem solving skills, excellent bug-free coding and nerves of steel!

What will you do with the money if you win the grand prize in this tournament? I just got my driver’s license, so I’d probably buy a car.

In the movie of your life, what car would you be driving in a high-speed chase? A Ferrari Testarossa.
What is the most interesting field in computer science? Algorithms are the most interesting field in computer science.

What is your favorite computer animated movie or TV show and why? I have to say ‘The Incredibles’, since I’ve just seen it and I really liked it, especially the humorous scenes.

Do you think there’s too much computer animation in entertainment today? As long as it’s good, I don’t have a problem with it.

What is your favorite computer animated movie or TV show and why? I have one! One that I discovered myself.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists? First of all, luck (unless you are tomek :-)). Second, basic algorithmic knowledge. Third, lots of training. Fourth, a clear mind and error-free programming.

How do you generally approach solving TopCoder problems? I read them, think about an algorithm on paper, and estimate the time complexity. If that fits, I start coding.

What are the key qualities to be successful in IOI competition, you have to practice a lot. So preparing for competition. To be among the best for the last 3 years where I learned a lot about theoretical areas.

What’s the secret to your success? First of all, luck (unless you are tomek :-)). Second, basic algorithmic knowledge. Third, lots of training. Fourth, a clear mind and error-free programming.

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What’s the secret to your success? First of all, luck (unless you are tomek :-)). Second, basic algorithmic knowledge. Third, lots of training. Fourth, a clear mind and error-free programming.
If you could choose to work for any company in the world, which would it be and why? I would like to work for a small research-oriented company.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists? Ability to stay concentrated under pressure, broad knowledge of algorithms, great coding skills.

If computers hadn’t been invented, what would your career path be? I would have a career in inventing computers.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Gauss. He is genius and a very hardworking scientist.

What do you think is the most beautiful algorithm? Dijkstra algorithm for the shortest path problem.

What will you do with the money if you win the grand prize in this tournament? Buy a car.

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Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? John von Neumann, for his work in game theory and other areas; and G. H. Hardy, for the book “A Mathematician’s Apology,” amongst other achievements.

How did you get to the point where you program as fast as you do? The hard part is being able to type that fast. How do you get to the point where you code it. Then I test it on examples and corner cases. And if I can’t get it, then I think for a very long while until I realize how blind I was and then code it. Then I test it on examples and corner cases and submit. In the movie of your life, what car would you be driving in a high-speed chase? Red Ferrari.

What do you think is the most beautiful algorithm? Depth First Search, because it’s simple and yields many important efficient algorithms.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists? He has to be a fast coder and fast thinker. Practice helps, but is probably not sufficient, unfortunately.

What is the most interesting field in computer science? Theory of computation, because you are working with things that don’t exist. What's the secret to your success? To have no private life.

How do you generally approach solving TopCoder problems? I read the statement. If I get it, I code it as fast as possible. If I don’t get it, then I think for a very long while until I realize how blind I was and then code it. Then I test it on examples and corner cases and submit.

What do you think is the most interesting field in computer science? Programming language design (I like functional programming.)

What is the most interesting field in computer science? Euclid, because he was the first one to see the need for axioms in mathematics.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Father of oiliness. What do you think is the most beautiful algorithm? The Stable Marriage problem’s solution. Very cool.

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If you could choose to work for any company in the world, which would it be and why? NVIDIA, because I would love to know how those graphics cards get that fast.

What is the most interesting field in computer science? Algorithms, because they make me think, and it gives a good feeling when I finally understand why a particular algorithm works.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Albert Einstein, for his ability to think outside of the box.

If relentless bragging were more socially acceptable, how would you introduce yourself? You have always wanted to have a son like me.

If computers hadn’t been invented, what would your career path be? I would probably study mathematics.

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How do you generally approach solving TopCoder problems?
I quickly read the problem statement. Sometimes an algorithm is obvious, sometimes it is not. I usually have a sheet of paper, which is very useful for geometric and some other problems. I generally implement the first algorithm I find that is reasonable. Sometimes I implement parts of the solution that I think I’ll need to use, like parsing, before I know the whole solution. I usually submit my solution when it passes all system tests, and then I look at it and/or test it.

What’s the secret to your success?
If I told you, it would not be a secret.

What beverage is most analogous to your personality?
Carrot juice mixed with multifruit juice.
What is the most interesting field in computer science? Artificial Intelligence. Algorithmic complexity.

If computers hadn’t been invented, what would your career path be? Probably a physicist (which I am studying now anyway), or a mathematician.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Albert Einstein for changing our view of the world.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? I would choose Albert Einstein for changing our view of the world.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? I don’t see any problem with computer animation being used. It just provides more possibilities to us from the tournament. The difference is I haven’t made any stupid mistakes yet.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? If relentless bragging were more socially acceptable, how would you introduce yourself? I can’t point to exactly one beverage, but I’m sure that it must have carbon dioxide. When I have any new idea, I’m also filled with energy and enthusiasm. Later in level decreases, but it doesn’t disappear.

Mathijs Vogelzang, top notch doctor and excellent programmer.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? If relentless bragging were more socially acceptable, how would you introduce yourself? Vodka-martini: shaken, not stirred.

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Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? 
Leonhard Euler: he did amazing work throughout his whole life, and still lived well.

How do you generally approach solving TopCoder problems? 
From the front, otherwise I cannot see the monitor.

What is your favorite computer animated movie or TV show and why? 
Finding Nemo: Pixar consistently puts out great movies.

In the movie of your life, what car would you be driving in a high-speed chase? 
A supersonic hovercraft full of eel.

If relentless bragging were more socially acceptable, how would you introduce yourself? 
I’ll wait until being myself is socially acceptable.

What separates you from the rest of the contestants who didn’t make it this far in the tournament? 
The Canadian border.

If you could choose to work for any company in the world, which would it be and why? 
Either Google or Microsoft, as they are the companies which currently do the most research in the areas I am interested in.

What is the most interesting field in computer science? 
Artificial intelligence (specifically machine learning). Computers are getting powerful enough that really interesting things can be done using large amounts of data.

What’s the secret to your success? 
My biggest strength at TopCoder is consistency. I rarely make small mistakes, and when I submit a solution I am usually very confident it will succeed.

Do you think there’s too much computer animation in entertainment today? 
For the most part, computer animated movies have been “better” than the average non-animated movie (although I’m not really sure why). It’s definitely not at the point (yet) where people are making computer-animated movies just to make computer-animated movies.
If you could choose to work for any company in the world, which would it be and why?
Sun Microsystems, because I would love to have the chance to work at improving Java.

What is the most interesting field in computer science?
Development / design tools.

What separates you from the rest of the contestants who didn’t make it this far in the tournament?
Although there was very little competition in design, I guess the level of experience made the difference.

What’s the secret to your success?
Choosing to work in a domain that I like and which I’m reasonably good at.

If relentless bragging were more socially acceptable, how would you introduce yourself?
Designer, developer and coder.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists?
Quick thinking.

In the movie of your life, what car would you be driving in a high-speed chase?
A Ferrari.
If you could choose to work for any company in the world, which would it be and why? I would love to work for IBM, Google or Microsoft because they represent, in my opinion, the most innovative companies in the world.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? I admire most Leonardo da Vinci, because he was able to be both a great scientist in a wide variety of fields, and an original and famous artist.

In the movie of your life, what car would you be driving in a high-speed chase? A Porsche Carrera GT - beautiful and strong.

What is the most interesting field in computer science? To me, programming languages, compilers and Software Engineering addressing tools for developers. I consider these to be the fields from which the evolution of computer science and the development of better applications begins - simple and powerful programming languages, smart and performant compilers, easy to use and helpful developer tools.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? I think I would have been a writer or a poet.

What separates you from the rest of the contestants who didn't make it this far in the tournament? Persistence.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Newton.

How did you get to the point where you are in programming? I started programming when I was young and it's still really great.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? Mathematics research.

What is the most interesting field in computer science? Algorithms & compiler design.

If you could choose to work for any company in the world, which would it be and why? Google because of their good culture and working environment.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists? Patience & willpower. It can be boring at times doing development.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? Mathematician or economist. I’d like to be a scholar.

What separates you from the rest of the contestants who didn't make it this far in the tournament? I do not program very fast, just a little faster than ordinary people.

If you could choose to work for any company in the world, which would it be and why? IBM or Microsoft because they are leading IT companies. Google because of their good culture and working environment.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists? Patience & willpower. It can be boring at times doing development.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? I would love to work for IBM, Google or Microsoft. It was the first IT company I knew and working there when I was young and it’s still really great.

What separates you from the rest of the contestants who didn't make it this far in the tournament? It can be boring at times doing development.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? I would be an engineer.

What is the most interesting field in computer science? To me, programming languages, compilers and Software Engineering addressing tools for developers. I consider these to be the fields from which the evolution of computer science and the development of better applications begins - simple and powerful programming languages, smart and performant compilers, easy to use and helpful developer tools.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? A doctor.

What separates you from the rest of the contestants who didn't make it this far in the tournament? Persistence.

Out of the history of science, who would you choose as your role model and why? Newton.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? Mathematics research.

What qualities does one need to be among the TCCC onsite finalists? Patience & willpower. It can be boring at times doing development.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? Mathematician or economist. I’d like to be a scholar.

What separates you from the rest of the contestants who didn't make it this far in the tournament? Patience & willpower. It can be boring at times doing development.

If computers hadn't been invented, what would your career path be? Mathematics research.
What is the most interesting field in computer science?
There are so many. :-) If I had to pick one, I’d go with Artificial Intelligence. This means many different things, but essentially making computers do the things that humans do so well is a fascinating problem.

How did you get to the point where you program as fast as you do?
Through writing a ton of code and practicing on TopCoder and ACM problems.

What do you think is the most beautiful algorithm?
The elegance and power of Floyd-Warshall is tough to beat.

Do you think there’s too much computer animation in entertainment today?
Yes, sometimes there is. It should be used only where necessary, otherwise the illusion is easily lost. Computer Animation is good, but not replacement for the real thing most of the time.

What beverage is most analogous to your personality?
Root beer.
TopCoder Admins:
What would you do if you won $20,000?

Bill Blais
Project Manager
“I would go on a vacation to Australia.”

Chip Bradford
Project Manager
“I would put some of it toward college loans, but the rest I would invest.”

Ryan Fairfax
Developer
“I’d use the money to take some time to write a book.”

Javier Fernandez-Ivern
Component Manager
“I’d pay off my college loans.”

Travis Haas
Infrastructure Manager
“I’d buy a freaking Walser carbonfiber bicycle with all Campagnolo parts.”

MaryBeth Luce
Operations Manager
“Take an around-the-world vacation for as long as the money lasted.”

Mike Lydon
CTO
“Put it on red.”

Dave Mesinger
Project Manager
“Buy club seat season tickets to the New England Patriots.”

Mike Morris
VP Software Development
“Try to win more next time.”

MaryBeth Luce
Operations Manager
“Take an around-the-world vacation for as long as the money lasted.”

Mikaela Henke
Administrative Assistant
“I’d buy a freaking Walser carbonfiber bicycle with all Campagnolo parts.”

MaryBeth Luce
Operations Manager
“Take an around-the-world vacation for as long as the money lasted.”

Matt Murphy
Project Manager
“Buy enough socks to wear a new pair every day until I am 70 years old. I like new socks.”

Greg Paul
Director of Competitions
“Prove that you can’t swim in Jell-O.”

Christie Tanguay
Accountant
“Take a trip to Paris for a week and buy a convertible.”

Nick Tief
Graphic Designer
“Pay someone else to process member photos.”

Anthony Yuen
Project Manager
“I would use it to enter the World Series of Poker Tournament.”

Motorola is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. We welcome and encourage diversity in our workplace.

Throughout its 75-year history, Motorola’s role as pioneer, innovator and visionary in mobile communications is well-known. Now, as we bring seamless mobility products and solutions to market, Motorola has firmly established itself as a global leader in wireless, broadband and automotive communications technologies and embedded electronic products. In the home, auto, workplace and all spaces in between, seamless mobility means consumers can reach the people, things and information they need, anywhere, anytime. Seamless mobility harnesses the power of technology convergence and enables smarter, faster, cost-effective and flexible communication. Moving at the pace people are living, Motorola will continue its efforts to make things better and life easier. For more information, please visit our website at: www.motorolacareers.com. Motorola is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Employer. We welcome and encourage diversity in our workplace.
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