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| Phone: + 49 681 302-70750  Fax: + 49 681 302-70155  E-Mail: jens.krueger@mmci.uni-saarland.de  *www.mmci.uni-saarland.de* |

Cluster of Excellence *MMCI*, Campus E1 7, 66123 Saarbrücken, Germany

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To whom it may concern,

I am very pleased to recommend Thomas Fogal, born 01-27-1984, for ad-hoc admission to the qualifying exam for entry into the dissertation phase of the graduate school of computer science at Saarland University.

Thomas Fogal is already working in my group, financed through the EU STREP “SCENE – Novel Scene representations for richer networked media” as part of the Intel Visual Computing Institute. Before Thomas joined my group, he worked at the Scientific Computing and Imaging (SCI) Institute in Salt Lake City as a developer on the NIH Center for Integrative Biomedical Computing (CIBC) and the DoE Visualization and Analytics Center for Enabling Technology (VACET). His main responsibilities were research and development of the ImageVis3D volume-rendering project and the VisIt visualization an analysis package. As I originally started the development of ImageVis3D as a post-doctoral researcher at SCI, we naturally worked very closely together. In the course of this collaboration, I realized that Thomas is not only an outstanding developer but also an excellent researcher. Consequently, we started writing proposals and submissions to scientific journals and conferences together, before he even finished his master’s degree. Many of those submissions were successful and Thomas has accumulated an impressive number of nine publications in peer reviewed journals and conference proceedings as a masters student.

In addition to his work with me, Thomas is involved in a number of collaborations with other research groups at US national laboratories. I cannot remember any other master’s student that has built up such an extensive research network.

Once Thomas finished his master’s degree – the incompletion of which came as a surprise to me, given that he unofficially supervised PhD students at SCI - he mentioned that he is looking for a PhD position. Despite offers from UC Davis, SCI, and from the Computer Graphics and HCI Group at the University of Kaiserslautern, he told me that he is interested in working in my group. Knowing Thomas’ abilities I did not hesitate to hire him, and he therefore started his work on the first of February. Since then he has integrated himself as a vital part of a number of projects in my group.

Besides his scientific accomplishments Thomas has achieved a very good master’s degree with a 3.84 GPA, scoring an A in almost all classes.

As a native English speaker he obviously has the required English language skills for the graduate school and beyond that, he has taken German language classes in Salt Lake City already and is looking for a continuing education in the German language here.

In summary, Thomas Fogal is one of the top students in my group and I’m looking forward to supervising his Ph.D. in the graduate school. In addition to me Prof. Dr. Philipp Slusallek and Prof. Dr. Christopher R. Johnson–the director of the SCI Institute–have agreed to serve on his committee.

Best regards,



Jens Krüger