

Computer Science Major Designs, Sells Software Applications for new iPhone

Contributed by Edwin Smith
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Deepak Mantena shows off his iPhone application "Wordy." UM photo by Robert Jordan

OXFORD, Miss. - Since the new iPhone 3G launched last week, Deepak Mantena has been seeing dollar signs. That's because many people have been buying both the phone and downloading four software applications designed by the University of Mississippi computer science major.

Mantena is among 4,000 software developers selected by Apple following a worldwide search begun last spring. His downloads are available in the App store, at the iTunes site or directly to an iPhone.

"I received the good news in May from Apple," Mantena said. "It is really exciting to have been selected."

Mantena, left with Dawn Wilkins, UM associate professor of computer science. UM photo by Robert Jordan.

Mantena's software includes "Chores," a to-do list application; "Wordy," a program that helps expand a person's vocabulary; "Gratuity," a program that tabulates tips; and "Fright," which offers scary scenes and sounds. Chores costs \$4.99 and the others are available for 99 cents each.

"Once you pay the one-time application fee, you will receive routine updates of your product," Mantena said.

The self-professed computer geek, who started his own software company, TapeShow, last fall, has been featured in the business sections of The Clarion-Ledger and the Los Angeles Times. He has noticed a considerable increase in business since the release of the iPhone 3G.

"It is great to show growth, being an independent businessman," he said.

Mantena's efforts to create Apple software began in March. In the competition, the computer manufacturer had more than 200,000 people download development software and received 20,000 applications.

Watch video package on Deepak Mantena.

"I wish I had that much maturity, forethought and energy to do what Deepak did," said Dawn Wilkins, UM associate professor of computer science. It was in her independent study class that he decided to create the "Chores" program.

"He's a real go-getter who has so many ideas, he has to filter which ones will work best for him. When you have a student on Deepak's level, you find yourself trying to find new ways to challenge them."

Drawn to computers at an early age, Mantena has always known he wanted a career in the computer science field. "Instead of watching TV, I was always on the computer," he said.

Mantena works as a consultant when he is not working at the university's National Center for Computational Hydroscience and Engineering, where researchers develop new computational models and engineering tools to simulate water flows, sediment and pollutant transport, soil erosion and flood damage.

"Deepak designed the order forms we use in the IT Helpdesk store on campus," said Teresa McCarver, manager of the Helpdesk, which assists UM students, faculty and staff with computer problems and installations. "He was always a pleasure to work with. I wish the best to him in all of his endeavors. He is a really deserving young man who should have an excellent career."

Math and science are in the Mantena family's blood. His father, Raju Mantena, is a UM mechanical engineering professor. His mother, Veena, works in the university's financial aid office. Mantena's older brother, Ravi, works as a computer engineer in the Seattle area and his younger brother, Nitin, is an Ole Miss pharmacy major.

Beyond his growing success, Mantena finds time to enjoy photography, the outdoors, making short films and playing in a band.

Mantena plans to graduate with a bachelor's degree next spring and attend graduate school at the University of Washington. After completing his master's degree in computer science, the sky's the limit.

"I've got plenty more ideas for applications in development," Mantena said. "I want to be making software for the rest of my life."

For more information about Mantena's company, visit <http://www.tapeshow.com> . For more information about computer and information science at UM, visit <http://www.cs.olemiss.edu> or call 662-915-7396.

