

# PressRelease

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THE OFFICE OF  
**ENTERPRISE TECHNOLOGY**  
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**CONTACT:**

**Cathy de Moll, Director of Communications**

**651-556-8002**

**[Cathy.de.moll@state.mn.us](mailto:Cathy.de.moll@state.mn.us)**

658 Cedar Street

Saint Paul, MN 55105

[www.oet.state.mn.us](http://www.oet.state.mn.us)

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## Unique University of Minnesota/Department of Revenue collaboration earns award

ST PAUL, MN – A unique collaboration between the University of Minnesota and Minnesota's Department of Revenue has earned a prestigious "Practice Prize" from the Association of Computing Machinery.

"This is very strong external validation from a respected professional organization," said Jaideep Srivastava, the students' professor in the University of Minnesota's Department of Computer Science and Engineering.

In the summer of 2007, two Computer Science and Engineering students who are pursuing their PhDs at the university interacted with the Department of Revenue to develop a "scoring system" tool to help the Department of Revenue decide which cases to select for audits. Routinely selecting the right cases allows the state to close the "tax gap" by collecting more of the taxes that are due. The collaboration partnership was organized by State of Minnesota CIO, Gopal Khanna.

"This type of cross-boundary collaboration between the Department of Revenue and the University of Minnesota is yet another shining example of how information technology solutions should be seen as a resource for government – a way to deliver more efficient outcomes and better customer service – and not simply part of the cost of doing business," said Minnesota's Chief Information Officer Gopal Khanna. "I congratulate Kuo-Wei and Nishith on earning the Practice Prize and I look forward to finding more ways the state can work with some of our best and brightest at the University of Minnesota to continue to improve government operations."

The University of Minnesota students, Kuo-Wei Hsu and Nishith Pathak, worked at the Department of Revenue on a limited basis to analyze audit data. The department put the students to work on helping to select the best audit cases from a pool of candidates. After thorough background and security checks, the students were given select pieces of data to work with in order to identify businesses that are the furthest from compliance with tax laws.

"We welcome opportunities to fine-tune and strengthen our compliance efforts," said Revenue Commissioner Ward Einess. "The students developed a new tool with the potential to make our work even better."

The collaboration was successful, and the students submitted a related case study to the Association of Computing Machinery's International Data Mining Project Competition, which is judged by experts from Microsoft, SAS Corporation, Yahoo!, IBM, and other notable companies. The Practice Prize awards data mining projects that can lead to measurable improvements in operations, advanced scientific discoveries, or that can provide benefits to humanity. The students who collaborated with the Department of Revenue comprised one of two University of Minnesota teams selected by judges to present their research in Paris this summer.

Kuo-Wei and Nishith took home second prize; their work was regarded as second only to medical imaging data mining research conducted by a team from Siemens Corp. This level of recognition was a first for the university; recognition usually goes to corporate competitors for the Practice Prize, said Srivastava.

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