2. PROFILE QUESTIONS

Please respond to the following questions so we can get to know you better. Respond in two lines or less and do not feel compelled to answer using complete sentences.

Name your favorite books, authors, films, and/or musical artists.

Lord of the Rings/The Silmarillion - Tolkien; Gödel, Escher, Bach - Hofstadter; Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman - Feynman; The Code Book - Singh; The Elegant Universe - Greene. Films: Gattaca, Chariots of Fire. Music: Simon & Garfunkel, Basshunter.

What newspapers, magazines, and/or websites do you enjoy?

NYTimes.com, ScientificAmerican.com, XKCD.com, Punditkitchen.com, Wikipedia.org, LifeHacker.com (ways to optimize everyday tasks), Ubuntu.org, McSweeneys.net, The Economist, SURFER Magazine, Speedcubing.com (Rubik's cubes), Infinite Illusions (yoyos)

What is the most significant challenge that society faces today?

The adaptation and optimization of technology, information and other, to both fulfill the needs of the many and satisfy the demands of the individual. Indirectly touches upon resolving my three pet problems: habitat fragmentation, illiteracy, and intolerance of all kinds.

How did you spend your last two summers?

Intel STS project: designing FPGA microchip to rapidly compute solutions to the shortest path problem & self-study of programmable logic design. Int'l Autonomous Robotics Contest. Expanding web business & training/hiring members of programming club. Surfing!

What were your favorite events (e.g., performances, exhibits, sporting events, etc.) this past year?

Arabian Nights play at my school, Oceanic Art Exhibition at SDMA, Internat'l Mathematica User Conference, Body Worlds anatomy exhibit, US Open of Surfing, US Presidential Inauguration, Yo-Yo World Championship

What historical moment or event do you wish you could have witnessed?

-Teddy Roosevelt's "Man in the Arena" Speech at Sorbonne
-Future: when the first practical quantum computer goes into operation

What five words best describe you?

Exuberant, Innovative, Entrepreneurial, Reflective, Verbivore (i.e. language-eater/lover)

3. SHORT ESSAYS

Please respond to the following essay topics. Your responses must be at least 250 words but should not exceed the space provided.

1. Stanford students are widely known to possess a sense of intellectual vitality. Tell us about an idea or an experience you have had that you find intellectually engaging.

Surfing in the Fog

It is my belief that paddling out into the lineup through a bank of heavy mist and suddenly finding yourself unable to see the shore is among the most surreal and inspiring experiences a person can have. As fellow wave riders – strangers and friends – wink out of your sphere of sight and consciousness, as the steadfast constructs of society become transient and melt into the muffling grayness, all standards for comparison and preconceptions of perspective vanish and your thoughts branch out unfettered. As you ride (or duck beneath) the waves that silently appear before you, concepts that have long eluded you suddenly coalesce. The parallel pathfinding algorithm underlying my project for the Intel STS came to me not in a laboratory or classroom but as I watched the branching rivulets of water find their way down my surfboard as I emerged from underneath a wave (I saw how signals splitting and rejoining as they propagate through a network could simulate the shortest path problem in computer science). Often, I find it more productive to open my mind to the vast ocean's meditative lull than to study...

The adventurous aesthetic of nature is my source of intellectual vitality. Sitting at peace in the stillness between the hollow waves, inhaling the green-diffracted God-thought-breath of the morning forest, laughing as I hold wide my windbreaker and lean euphorically into the rushing torrents of the rain: this timeless rapture is my inspiration, this intricate, organic splendor a sanctified model for my thoughts. This is why I paddle out, never knowing exactly where I'll return to shore.

2. Virtually all of Stanford's undergraduates live on campus. What would you want your future roommate to know about you? Tell us something about you that will help your future roommate—and us—know you better.

I'm a marked man...

WANTED (hopefully by Stanford): concord4nce alias "J-Dog," "Comp-Sci Guy!"

ARMED & DANGEROUS: •Packs a pen (mightier than sword) •Known to carry a concealed yoyo •Rubik's Cube-toting •Prone to pun without provocation •Wont to wax poetic without warning •Practices karate katas in shower
CRIMES: •Grand theft cookie •Suspected bibliophile •Agitating for freedom of information •Treason against Microsoft: fomenting the Linux insurgency •Concocting, then trafficking open-source software without a license agreement •Impersonating Hamlet •Flagrantly sporting mismatched socks •Crashing Firefox by opening >40 tabs of Web 2.0 apps, LOLCats, Stanford Open Courseware, GMail chats, Greek relief sculptures, etc. •Curfew violations: discussing cool ideas with roommates late into night •Subversive strategies in robotics competitions, causing judges to change rules •Samosa smuggling
ACCOMPLICES: •Intercontinental cadre of co-conspirators skulk at Stanford, Whatchamacallit Inst. of Technology, "Stanford of the East," Ivory-bridge etc. Dangerous network of masterminds. You may be assimilated. •Other agents stake out remote surf breaks, national parks, snowboard slopes
AT LARGE: •Identifying features: overstuffed backpack, bulging laptop case, shorts, flip-flops •Nighttime prowler of XKCD forums •Sighted at Fresh Choice, dim sum joints, and near health food stores (munching granola and fair-trade dark chocolate). May also be found at McDonalds, but only for the free wi-fi. •Last seen: Dropping into a barreling wave at Torrey Pines State Beach on his shortboard
REWARD: •Free tech support •Gratifying and enduring friendship

Should you encounter this rapscallion, immediately report to nearest admissions officer.

3. Tell us what makes Stanford a good place for you.

I like ideas. I keep a list of "Good Ideas" myself: useful algorithms, designs for mechanisms, business strategies, general observations. **It generated my '09 science fair project and the modular PHP framework I use in my web business; even many of my Internet ventures, such as tpclubs.com, were once just notes in this compendium. It's now over 1800 entries long, and has transcended the label "list":** I've semantically annotated the file and marked connections between concepts. This organization facilitates lookup (I group synonyms and potential keywords) and directs my brain to novel associations. Now, as I peruse my notes and am prompted to new invention, I almost feel as if I am merely transcribing connections made by an independent consciousness that has miraculously arisen in my text-only Google Document.

So why is this relevant to my interest in Stanford?

If my simple list of only 1800 linked concepts can show hints of consciousness in isolation, I want to see what will happen when I expose it to Stanford's open, multidisciplinary atmosphere. The school's combined excellence in technology, philosophy, and business has produced some of the greatest scientific advances of the modern age: witness SRI, SAIL, and Silicon Valley. I cannot resist wanting to join this world of interconnection, innovation, and implementation. Stanford EE/CS is my goal.

Moreover, the very nature of the ideas Stanford produces resonates with my own thinking. For example, it was Douglas Hofstadter's discourse on how sentience arises from self-referential systems that inspired me to point the ideas in my list to one another, forming complete loops of thought. Combine this with Stanford's relaxed social climate and the match is perfect. Attending looks to be a good idea indeed.