Sac State alum engineers Facebook pages

The next time you check the Facebook page of your favorite celebrity, whether it’s Taylor Lautner or Betty White, a Sacramento State alumnus will be working hard to make sure you get the information you’re looking for.

Dave Ferguson ('88, Computer Science) is the engineering manager for all of Facebook’s “pages,” the sites that belong to celebrities, national companies or local businesses – in short, anything that has a public persona.

Ferguson’s team monitors sites with the intent to add new features and capabilities so users find the pages more interesting and engaging. “We provide more tools to the companies or the celebrity or the band so they can find more powerful ways to connect and engage with their fans,” he says.

After graduation, Ferguson started his career building applications for businesses at IBM. He later formed his own company, Ignite Logic, which Google bought in 2004. He stayed with Google until 2008, taking a break for a couple of years before joining Facebook in July 2010. “The idea of making the world a more open place really appealed to me,” Ferguson says of taking the job with the social network.

Ferguson credits Sacramento State’s Computer Science program for giving him the practical knowledge needed for the field. “When I came out of college and started working at IBM, I immediately felt I was productive,” he says. “It was something new, but I had a solid background and got off to a fast start.”

He and his classmates were a close-knit group, Ferguson says, and he has good memories of late nights in the lab with his fellow students.

Two department members he remembers well are former Professor Martin Meyers – “I learned a great deal from him” – and career programs coordinator Cici
Mattiuzzi – “She mentored me and provided advice on how to start a career and get off to a strong start.”

Ferguson lives in El Dorado Hills with his wife and two daughters. He flies his own plane to Palo Alto and works out of Facebook’s office four days a week, working the fifth day from his home office.

And he still finds time for Sac State.

Once a year or semester, Ferguson is a guest lecturer in the Computer Science program. “Sac State gave me a lot in terms of a foundation to be successful,” he says. “The value is exceptionally good, and I feel this is one way I can give back to the University.”

For more information on Sacramento State’s College of Engineering and Computer Science, visit www.ecs.csus.edu/ or call (916) 278-6023. For media assistance, call the University’s Public Affairs office at (916) 278-6156.

– Craig Koscho

ckoscho@csus.edu

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