

UW CSE's Christophe Bisciglia receives 2015 Diamond Early Career Award



"Big data" affects us all. How do we begin to harness it to solve problems large and small? How do we design applications for big data that are accessible to everyone? Christophe Bisciglia (B.S. '03) is seeking the answers to these questions. For his efforts, he recently returned to campus to collect the Diamond Early Career Award, one of UW College of Engineering's highest honors.

In a fast-paced first leg of his career, Bisciglia emerged as a visionary who transformed how businesses use big data by co-founding two startup companies, Cloudera in 2008 and WibiData in 2010. Cloudera, based in Palo Alto, has since grown into a leading provider of open-source, Apache Hadoop-based software and services run on banks of networked computers, with an impressive array of large corporate clients, 600 employees, and a corporate value of about \$4 billion.

Bisciglia left Cloudera in 2010 to launch San Francisco-based WibiData and get back to his application roots. He is now executive chairman of the company, which uses a variety of open-source big data tools to help clients — many of them Fortune 150 companies in retail and media — develop real-time, personalized applications across the web, mobile, and other channels.

His early successes and accolades have not gone to his head. "I feel humbled to be included among the award's previous honorees," Bisciglia says. "I look up to them and to so many other people who helped me create these tools and companies. It's an honor to be able to tell their stories."

He singled out 2006 Early Career honoree Jeff Dean (Ph.D. '96), Senior Fellow and long-time Google employee who co-designed Google's MapReduce technology and other systems for large-scale data storage and management. "Jeff is such a leader and innovator and a tremendous influence on my work," Bisciglia says. "Hadoop, the open-source version of MapReduce, allowed me to shepherd his work into systems for wide public use."

Even before launching his entrepreneurial ventures, Bisciglia brought his passion for the new concept of cloud computing back to the students at UW CSE. In 2007, as a software engineer at Google, he used his 20 percent independent project time to launch Google 101, a series of classes that used Hadoop to introduce students to programming at the scale of the cloud. Bisciglia worked with Professor Ed Lazowska and a team of students to plan and implement the course, which was a huge success.

Google 101 went national after Google and IBM teamed up to build an academic data center administered by the National Science Foundation. The course drew a flood of students to Google, and Bisciglia made the cover of *Business Week* as the company's "cloud guy." His work there and with Cloudera also won him recognition in a 2010 issue of *Fortune* as "Smartest Engineer" in the magazine's list of "The 50 Smartest People in Technology."

Bisciglia's work with students and efforts to encourage the professional development of young employees is his greatest source of satisfaction. "We invest a lot of time in training the brightest and most talented and in building a company where they learn, grow, and develop into leaders," Bisciglia says. "Many have become CTO's at other companies or have launched their own startups. I'm tickled to see where they go and to keep in touch."

"The goal all along has been to bring great people together to develop world-class data management systems that benefit companies and people everywhere."

Bisciglia — and fellow 2015 honoree Yaw Anokwa (page 4) — are the 12th and 13th CSE alums to receive a Diamond Award since the award's inception in 2006. Previous Diamond Award winners may be viewed at:

www.cs.washington.edu/alumni/UW_recognition/