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Student's software tracks progress

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HIGHLAND HEIGHTS - Northern Kentucky University senior Bradley Stephens has been recognized for helping to give Newport and Covington children - and those who help them - a leg up using technology.

Stephens, an employee of NKU's Infrastructure Management Institute, helped design and develop the Northern Kentucky Early Childhood Database, a Web-based application used by the cities to track child program involvement from birth to kindergarten. The database tracks about 1,700 children across 25 programs.

For his work he was recently awarded the ConnectKentucky's 2009 Postsecondary Student Technology Award in Frankfort.

"I have children of my own and firmly believe education is the greatest gift we can give the next generation," said Stephens, 29. "I appreciated the opportunity to bolster the efforts of the dedicated people of the Newport and Covington school districts."

Stephens said he never expected to win an award for his work. He was nominated for the award by the institute.

"When I first heard of the project I was intrigued by the technical challenges inherent in a project of this size," said Stephens. "I was really excited to have the opportunity to leverage my budding technical talents on a meaningful project, on an application that people need and will use."

Stephens said he was involved in every phase of the project's development and that the hardest part of this job was to translate human needs into the software design.

"Software development requires a specificity that is uncommon among human endeavors," he said. "Software has little tolerance for ambiguity."

Stephens will graduate in May and hopes to be a Web-development entrepreneur.
