Senior Christian Hyatt, who already runs his own web consulting business, was ideally suited to lead a student team's Archway Partnership Project on behalf of a neighboring county.

By Matt Waldman (AB '96)

Three years ago, an internship at the Paulding County IT department sparked Christian Hyatt's interest in web design. Hyatt took that experience to heart and eventually co-founded a web consulting business while still enrolled at Terry. Now a senior, Hyatt brought a great deal more experience to last summer's internship assignment. This time around, he was the one providing the service.

Hyatt served as project manager for a team of MIS students completing a web portal for Washington County, located 90 minutes southeast of Athens, as a part of the Archway Partnership Project.

"They want to give their audience a more interactive experience," says Hyatt of the team's design of a new website to revamp the community's online image. Washington County will use the site to post news, upcoming events, and happenings in community development for each of its cities.

"We felt we got real bang for our buck," says Ree Garrett, vice president of the Washington County Chamber of Commerce, who explained that partnering with the University System of Georgia and its faculty and students is a great benefit to them as one of a number of cities and counties known as Archway Communities. These communities identify their needs and work with an Archway professional whose job it is to find the educational resources necessary to execute the project.

"When we [told Archway professional Roger Harrison] we needed help with our website," says Garrett, "he immediately went to Terry and their MIS students."

Harrison contacted MIS professor Mark Huber, who traveled to Washington County to assess their needs. Huber recommended a team of students for the project under his direction for class credit, with Hyatt as the project manager.

"He's easy to direct because he's a self-starter and does stuff on his own," says Huber about Hyatt, who, in addition to hitting it off with Garrett immediately, already had sufficient web design experience as a co-founder and director of Hyped Consulting, a strategic marketing firm with a portfolio of clients that he built as a student.

Hyatt also received praise from his teammates for his communication and delegation of the workload among several students.

"Working with Christian was a real pleasure. He is very personable and extremely knowledgeable," says rising senior Jeremy Hahn, a dual major in MIS and finance, who was responsible for writing a lot of the website content. "I learned a lot more about the process of developing business solutions for a specific client."

Huber says the project modeled many his students will eventually take on as professionals.

"It was a great way for them to extend the learning they get in the classroom, and it's service to a community in Georgia in an area where you typically don't see a lot of UGA presence," says Huber. "It's a chance to show the community that we have great students who are talented, work hard, and they can help by taking what they learn in our programs and giving back."