



Ian Manzi '18

Degree: Bachelor's in data science

Data science concentration area: Economics

Hometown: Kigali, Rwanda

Ian Manzi '18 has been intrigued by computers ever since he was a child. But it's not computers alone that spark his interest.

"A lot of people think of people interested in computer science as 'antisocial'—people and machines. But I am not that," he says. "I feed off the energy of being with people."

He's convinced he has found an ideal fit in data science for his analytical mind and gregarious personality.

Manzi arrived at Rochester unsure of what he wanted to pursue. He started with a major in computer science, but he found it too abstract. And so he moved this year to data science, which he says keeps the quantitative aspects of programming that appeal to him

but also offers more opportunities for practical problem-solving.

Last year he completed an internship as an operations manager in his hometown of Kigali, Rwanda, helping local schools to transition to digital record-keeping.

"Marketers and programmers don't speak the same language," he says. "I understand both, and I helped the project to grow."

It's the act of communication that seems to fascinate Manzi most. He says that he wants to create computer platforms that help people converse across disciplines. "The answers we need for societal problems may be on the 'other side'" of divisions, he says, and communication is essential.

Fostering conversations and looking for answers is something he knows a thing or two about. This spring, Manzi and Derrick Murekezi '19, a geology major from Nyagatare, Rwanda, received a \$10,000 grant from Davis

MAKING CONNECTIONS: Drawing together different fields and points of view is part of what attracts Manzi to data science. "I feed off the energy of being with people," he says.

Projects for Peace, a competitive national program that promotes peace and intercultural understanding. The two will use the funding to implement their summer project, "Critical Thinking for Peace: Sustaining Peace in Post-Conflict Regions," in Rwanda this July. They'll plan, set up, and operate a young leaders' peace camp for high school students, where camp-goers will reflect on Rwanda's 1994 genocide.

And while he didn't conceive of the project as having a data science dimension, he's beginning to see ways that he might potentially work that in.

One thing data science has cultivated in him, he says, is the "ability to relate to different fields."