



Rogelio Morales

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From diving to ‘surfing’

A metallurgical engineering graduate of the University of Venezuela, Rogelio Morales has some unusual entries on his resume. For one thing, he is a licensed commercial diver, and once worked as a professional diver for eight months in Seattle, Washington.

Morales loved his underwater work, but quickly decided that he was more interested in underwater inspection than in commercial diving. This led him back home, to a master’s program at Central University of Venezuela in non-destructive testing. “It’s a less-invasive method of testing,” Morales explains. “You don’t have to destroy something to see if it is warped. You can use different methods, like X-rays, testing magnetic particles, and ultrasonic. It fits in well with my background in metallurgical engineering.”

Morales first encountered MIT’s OpenCourseWare when he was looking on the Internet for information on stereoscopic vision, which has enormous potential for divers encountering turbid water conditions. Morales was able to find helpful information on MIT OCW, especially in Course 9.537 – Special Topics in Vision Science. The projects for Course 13.017 – Design of Ocean Systems I, also provided Morales with a wealth of new and useful concepts.

Morales acknowledges that some of the same ideas he has found on MIT OCW are probably also available in the Central University library, in books or journals. “But with books,” he argues, “it’s much harder to find this information in a timely fashion. And with OCW, you also know that it’s new information.”

Morales has been quick to share information about MIT OCW with other students—and professors—in his program. “I often download information from the Web site in different topics,” he explains, “and give it to a professor in my faculty. Sometimes we discuss the information, other times they use the slides from the site in class. It’s a great resource.”

Morales also feels that MIT OCW has a broader potential in Venezuela. “Not everybody in Venezuela has the opportunity to go to college,” he points out. “It’s really hard to get in to university. So OCW is a great option. For example, there’s a program here called New Neighborhood. They use OCW to download information for poor people on technology, or humanities, or other areas. This has allowed a lot of people to access this information who might otherwise have been unable to do so. OCW has enormous potential for our country.”