Advertisers will have an easier time finding more efficient ways to reach their target audiences on television, thanks to a computer tool designed by Chase Hensel BS’10.

“I developed a tool that generates a list of TV programs likely to be the most cost effective for an advertiser based on their daily budget and target audience,” says Hensel, who devised it during an internship with Google last summer.

“This system provided advertisers close to optimal bids for each program in Google’s TV auction and reduced the price by an average of 30 percent to reach their target audience. My work was adopted internally during my internship and was released in October into production for customer use.”

For someone who was a Rhodes Scholarship finalist last fall and landed a job at Google before he graduated, Hensel’s personal credo—“Mo’ money, mo’ pizza”—might appear a bit laid back at first glance.

Do not be deceived—he gets results with this basic approach.

“My aim is not to make tons of money but rather to lead a fulfilled life,” he says, noting that he enjoys pizza. “I figure the more money I make, the more I will get to enjoy pizza.”

Hensel had quite a fulfilling experience at Columbia Engineering, where he finished his degree requirements last month. In addition to being a Rhodes finalist, he earned his degree in just seven semesters, making the Dean’s list each time and winding up with a 3.94 grade point average in his major.

Outside class and his studies, he was an officer in a fraternity, a member of the editorial board of the Columbia Spectator, designed the electronics system for a student-built race car, was a teaching assistant for two master’s-level computer science courses, and mentored an elementary school student in the Harlem Robotics program. In addition, he served as an undergraduate research scientist on campus with the Center for Computational Learning Systems and the Cardiac Biomechanics Group, and was a summer software engineering intern at Google.

Hensel’s academic work has focused on machine learning—teaching a computer to recognize patterns.

“I have worked in developing techniques on learning information from sensitive data—like medical records—while protecting the privacy of the records, and also on distributed data mining, which is learning when you have too much information to store on one computer.”

Hensel credits his preparation for the skills he learned to his degree program.

“The courses I took in my field were pivotal in my development, as was the time I spent in independent projects and working directly with professors.”

This fall, Hensel begins full time in Google’s Associate Product Management program. Much like his Columbia career, however, he intends to keep one foot in academia and one in other endeavors. He’d like to be an adjunct professor of computer science, while also working in a high tech field or in public policy.

“I want to work to be happy,” he says. “Fortunately I have thus far been able to work in fields allowing me to do so.”