

Automating Summer Camp Logistics: Building a Custom Schedule  
Generator and Attendance System for ChugBot

(Technical Report)

A Necessary Evil: Technology in Modern American Sleepaway Camps  
(Sociotechnical Research Paper)

An Undergraduate Thesis Portfolio  
Presented to the Faculty of the  
School of Engineering and Applied Science  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science

by

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May 1, 2025

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## **Preface**

While campers, staff, and families disagree about the extent to which technology may be available in sleepaway camps, a normative consensus favors campers having less access at camp than at home. Staff, however, may frequently use it for communication, logistics, and emergency management.

Camp Ramah in New England used many outdated systems for camper management, including paper tools, resulting in unmaintainable records and extra work for staff. ChugBot (a custom software for camp management) was extended to include a real-time, online attendance system and a personalized schedule generator. After determining requirements, solutions were designed and developed from scratch using PHP, MySQL, Docker, and Amazon Web Services. The improvements were designed, developed, and operational before the camp season began and they performed well during their inaugural season with consistent, near-daily usage streamlining camp operations. Following their successful pilot at one camp, these ChugBot features will be used by seven additional camps the following summer.

Technology at sleepaway camps is neither wholly rejected nor fully embraced; its regulation reflects competing priorities among campers, staff, and families. While technology can enhance safety and efficiency, its presence must be carefully managed to preserve the camp experience - affecting camper development, staff responsibilities, and camp culture. Cowan's "Consumption Junction" framework is applied to testimonials, blogs, a historical analysis, and published research to understand technology's impact and prevalence in camps. Camps must carefully evaluate their technology usage according to their values and intentions by understanding its effects on their delivered experience.