Perform at full capacity – as Bergx2 Team

14 December 2013 by Istok Sernc

Day of performance

The ‚*Day of Performance*‘ that the Bergx2 GmbH team was very much looking forward to, finally arrived on the 12 December 2013 and presented an opportunity for everybody to play an integral part even outside of our bits and bytes work environment. The goal was to not just passively talking about, but actively standing up for others beyond our digital world.

ISUS – Partner school of the SchlaU school

This time the beneficiary of our work was not a customer, but the unique school institution for young refugees without accompaniment: the SchlaU-School in Munich. More precisely: the affiliated partner school ISUS, for which Ivo, Matevz and Istok left bright and early in the morning.

Bergx2 GmbH Team Day for the ISUS school

We were on the road as a team in a big delivery van. As a part of the charity project we were able to come to an agreement with the management of the Hagebaumarkt Ebersberg to give us an exception on the rental fees for the van. Due to the very heavy volume of our load on the next day we returned the car two hours late, which resulted in the subsequent withdrawal from the rental fee agreement by the lender and we were charged with a punitive delay fee. Istok was able to win the AWM-Abfallwirtschaftsbetrieb Munich as a sponsor who issued a special permit and therefore enabled us to dispose of around 2 tons of hardware, consisting of IT, computers, electronic devices and school furniture at much better conditions.

In the name of Giving

What did we get up to in the end? On the one hand, we held a bilingual presentation – in German and English – on the topic of „Internet and the influence on youths – vice versa!". This presentation was very well received by the students and they all shared their personal experiences and impressions.

Bilingual presentation

Ivo teachs the basics of web programming

After a short presentation about our special Bergx2 company culture we introduced the typical as well as the atypical options for qualifications that lead to the profession of a great programmer. Amongst the latter alternative options are self-study programmes, MOOCs and further ways to qualification.

Versatile options to qualify

We compared the stereotypical geek with the reality; illustrated the history of the internet up until now; touched on the architecture and server landscape; and then discussed the multifaceted connections between social and business communities in terms of their chances and dangers.

Stereotypes and architecture

The issue of FOMO – Fear of Missing Out – was accounted special attention, because it can easily influence the private lives of many youths and young adults.

„Fear of Missing Out"

IT an culture? – IT and culture!

After the presentation we first had a refreshing meal in an Italian restaurant at Lenbachplatz, where Mohamed, a student at the ISUS school, joined us. The following visit at the 'Museum für Abgüsse klassischer Bildwerke' on Katharina-von-Bora-Straße as a contrast to the IT part of the programme was the cultural climax of the day.

IT and culture: an appealing inspiration

Team, Mohamed and Olaf

Head of the museum and main curator Dr. Ingeborg Kader took the lead in the in tour of the museum. Special thanks for the organisation of the tour on short notice goes to Olaf Herzog, renowned sculptor and restorer of the state collection of antiques and Glyptothek Munich.

Helping Hands

Back at ISUS on Schillerstraße began the main part of our work: what felt like a hundred elevator loads full of recyclable computer and furniture hardware was carried between people to the delivery van. The dedicated team from ISUS helped us with the selection and the heavy lifting. Although nobody believed it at first: we managed to get rid of everything with only one load. Thus, the goal was accomplished at least for this day.

Matevz and Ivo at non-programming work

On the next day we took the heavy load to the recycling facilities.

All in all it was a team effort of which we are still very proud of and look back on with satisfaction even today. We were especially impressed with the positive attitude and the persistent thirst for knowledge of the students. The SchlaU-school and the ISUS partner school are truly excellent school institutions, which gave us back the energy and drive many times over what power and effort it could have ever cost us.

Together as a team

My gratitude goes to our own Bergx2 GmbH Team, the students and the management of the ISUS school as well as the supporting sponsor AWM.

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All images

Preparation for the ISUS day

On the road to the city centre of Munich

Ivo teaches the main features of web programming

Matevz during lecture: influence of social media on people

Team & Mohamed in the Italian restaurant

Mohamed at the 'l'Osteria'

In the 'Museum für Abgüsse' in Munich

Team, Mohamed and Olaf (Thank you!)

On the way to the AWM (Recycling facilities) early in morning

Matevz and Ivo doing non-programming work & Istok behind the camera

Matevz carries an old 20 kg Fujitsu PC with one hand only - almost

Where the hardware may rest in peace

Summary of the presentation for the students of the ISUS school

1. Introduction to the web

2. Social Media: **- Use and (data protection) security risks**
                      - Influences on companies and the single user

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1. The work in an internet agency
What are the possibilities for qualification?

1.a) Professional training as IT specialist:
A professional training usually takes three years. It takes place within a dual system, which means that the contents of the teaching are divided between vocational school and company. In principle there are two directions: „application development" and „system integration". The average earnings in the training period are 789 Euro. The initial salary is around 2.247 Euro, however this depends on the industry sector and the size of the company.

1.b) Studies (Informatics, Information management etc.)
The period until successful graduation from a bachelor's degree is around 3 – 4 years. Disadvantage: There is no financial compensation in the study period. However, it is possible to get funding through foundations and the government (see also § 8 BAföG). Advantage: the initial salary is higher with 3.600 Euro.

1.c) Autodidact / Self-study
With the MOOC platforms universities offer the opportunity to go from absolute beginner to specialist with programming knowledge (or others) to EVERYBODY and FOR FREE.
Disadvantage: no official degree; only certificates; mostly only in English; A LOT of self discipline necessary
Advantage: free; the best universities worldwide; on the internet; any time (online); suitable for every age from around 16
Course providers are for example: coursera.org, edx.org, udacity.com

1.d) A good software developer is:

1. Open and impartial to new developments.
2. A software developer is a VERY social being.
3. Enjoys solving riddles and does not necessarily have to be a maths genius.
4. A software developer has an excellent verbal and written knowledge of the English language.
5. Must have a passion for all new technologies and have a positive outlook in regards to new technological developments of the future.

2. Who owns social media?
The owners of those platforms are mostly private companies who want to maximise their profits.

How do they achieve this? The purchasing power of visitors is crucial. They advertise other companies and orientate their work around target markets.

Often they are American companies. They don't have to comply with German data protection laws, which are often stricter.

2.a) There are also ‚business' platforms! (as opposed to social media)
e.g. Xing.de (German), Linkedin.com (USA, international), Tianji (China).

2.b) Social Media – Chances and Risks

Advantages	Risks
a) Social media distribute messages quicker than any other media.	a) Social media also make it easier to distribute wrong or manipulated information ('shit storm').
b) They support companies in finding employees; job seekers can find jobs.	b) They have insufficient privacy protection. Companies and the government have uncontrolled access to data.
c) Social media can support pupils/students to get better in school.	c) Pupils/students who are heavy users have a tendency to achieve lower grades.
d) Social networks can enable and enhance relationships between people.	d) Social networks tempt to waste time.
	e) Users of social media have tendencies of social isolation.
e) They support elderly people to connect better with their community.	f) Social media can spread hatred between groups.
	g) Entries in social media cannot be completely deleted – with unpredictable consequences.

2.c) Internet addiction

In Germany there are more than 550.000 people with an addiction to the internet.

Internet addiction test:

1. I prefer spending time online rather than with friends.
2. When I am out and about I constantly think of the internet and can hardly wait to go back online.
3. I cannot imagine a life without the internet.
4. I only really have fun while working on a computer.
5. When I am down I find comfort and distraction on the internet.