

International Open Bidding Competition

Project for an Open Competition among Multinational Teams for the design of a Web-based Information System

Context

In this academic year 2021-2022, we are contacting staff in partner universities offering an educational course in information systems, web design and/or web programming, digital graphic design, communication on the digital media, and offer them to get involved into an international project bringing together students from many different countries, in order to work together on the design of a web-based information system.

Rationale

At some point in their professional life, web and multimedia experts are bound to participate in international projects involving working (probably online) with teams located abroad.

It would be interesting for them to be prepared in advance for this type of situation that involves interesting and challenging linguistic, cultural, and technical issues. Giving them the opportunity to get a taste of what this work situation really feels like would not only help them be more confident when having to actually deal with them, but will also show a potential employer that they bring more to the table than just a degree.

Proposition

We will open a competition to teams of students who will bid for a functional prototype of a web information system while meeting all requirements set by a project board. Board members will be team teachers or a partner organisation.

The teams will be made up of students from different countries. The idea is to purposefully avoid building “national” teams (e.g. the French against the Bulgarian), but to create international teams: in every team, there should be students with different skills or functions *and* from different partner sites (Bobigny, Hanoi, etc.)

The dates for the event will be set to a 10-day period (8 working days) at some point between the 25th of January and the 1st of April, depending on the different partners’ availability (the period should ideally be freed of other classes for the students).

On the French side, the students involved are 2nd-year students of a technology oriented education course called “DUT MMI” (University Diploma of Technology in Multimedia and Internet Technologies). The English description of this course is available upon request.

The goal of each team is to build a prototype of a web-based information system as if it was bidding to become the contractor to a project, with a strict deadline. The project also includes a communication axis (designing flyers, posters, planning a communication campaign on social media). The requirements includes co-operation between professionals with different skills (graphic designers, communication specialists, web programmers, information system engineers), who will have to work together to design the best prototype. The “Multimedia and Internet” team at IUT de Bobigny (Université Sorbonne Paris Nord) has experience in organising this type of competition between groups of students of different partner countries.

Expected gain in skill acquisition

This project has the usual benefits expected from project-based teaching: developing the students’ autonomy, fast learning of specific skills under constraints, increasing the ability to find and re-use relevant information, fostering work communication between specialists of different skills, learning project co-operation and project management.

To these benefits, it adds a specific goal: giving the students an actual, lively experience of international co-operation. This includes the following types of skills:

- ability to use remote collaboration tools (instant messaging systems, conference calls, integrated remote project management tools, shared virtual workspaces, version control systems);
- linguistic abilities (communication using the pool of linguistic abilities available in the team – a variable set of shared or semi-shared languages, generally including English);
- intercultural communication skills (understanding that there are different ways of working and communicating together, and using this understanding to better communicate).

Graduate students who would have participated in this project will be ready to address projects involving an international collaboration without suffering from the apprehension due to the lack of experience. Adding this project’s line to their résumé (and a link to the result in their portfolio) will with no doubt make their profile much more attractive for a firm seeking young internationally oriented candidates. Students who complete the projected are awarded 3 European credits (ECTS).

Implementation cost

Nil. Since the very goal of the project is to develop remote co-working within a virtual team connected by the network, the additional cost of this project-based assignment, compared to other comparable assignments, is zero, as long as the groups choose to use free technical solutions (which generally scale up well for teams of less than 15 people). The marginal cost in terms of *time* (to organise all this, for the teaching staff as well as for the students) is not zero, but we expect it to be more than compensated by the benefit of the experience.

Contact

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