

USINET Newsletter

Issue 1 (11) 2010

Have a pleasant summer and enjoy!

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July 2010

Dear USInet members,

This year USInet celebrates the 5th birthday! With the new team mostly consisting of Generation 2009, we were driven by a new spirit in arranging the USInet party and other events that promoted USInet within USI alumni and also CHI community in The Netherlands.

A lot of coverage from I4D (Innovation for Development) combined with a CHI 2010 coffee talk about HCI in India complete our USI knowledge for more contribution to the world.

With the new USInet team, our website is undergoing a reorganization and we now have a twitter account for sharing more up-to-date news at www.twitter.com/usinet.

In the last part of this news letter, you can find the profiles of the Generation 2009 including those who are in the USInet team. Do not hesitate to send us feedback and suggestions. Enjoy the summer with lots of sunshine!

The USInet team

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USInetvents

5 Years Anniversary Celebration!

- Dalila Szostak -

USInet turned 5 in 2010 and it celebrated in style. The party included over 50 USIs that arrived from all over Europe to Smalle Haven, an independent restaurant/bar in the centre of Eindhoven. The party started at 7pm and it included great speeches from Maddy (the USI director) and Olha- one of the founders of USInet. Champagne helped everyone cheer for 5 years more as the party continued with a vintage souvenir surprise in the shape of a Polaroid picture to remember the occasion.





A few special “thank yous” go to some key participants of the event:

Rafal (USI 09) put the twitter page together and took great pictures jointly with Suleman (USI 05), Sara (USI 09) designed our new amazing logo, Aljosja (USI 08) put the party stream online, Yannis (USI 09) was the DJ and the Polaroid photographer, Vanessa (USI 08) gave an “electronic” performance, Maddy (USI Director) gave a great speech, Areti (USI 09) coordinated the whole event, Beant (09) was a perfect host, Dali (USI 09) found the location, Miro (USI 09) worked intensively on the web site (release coming soon), Sophia (USI 08) ordered the pretty and yummy cakes, and all of you (more than 50 to be exact!) showed up and made the party great!

We couldn’t have done it without you! We hope that you had a great time, and that you are as pumped as we are to continue with USInet for many many years to come.

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The Web and Beyond 2010:



Chi Netherlands organized the Web and Beyond Conference 2010 in Amsterdam on 1st June this year and USInet was one of the sponsors.



A rewarding day for USInet, both professionally and socially as we interacted with prospective USIs as well as the past ones, and with other members of the HCI community in Netherlands.

I4D-Day 2010: Slums: Poverty and Opportunity

Innovation for Development (I4D) forum organized the third I4D day on May 19th at TU/e. I4D is a forum of the TU/e, TU Delft, University of Wageningen, Engineers without borders and Oikos foundation.

This forum organizes a symposium - I4D day to create an awareness regarding role of technology in helping create better living conditions and sustainability, especially in the context of developing countries. The theme for this year's symposium was Slums and associated challenges as well as opportunities.

USInet offer a sponsorship for any USI member willing to attend the event. Three members chose to attend the event and their articles report on the talks they attended during the symposium.



New Year's drink



What a better way to start 2010 than with our traditional USInet New Year's drink event?!

About 35 USIs that are still around the Netherlands joined the "borrel", including a person from generation 1998! It was the first time the new generation was meeting graduate USIs from past generations and it was nice to listen to their stories and get more inspired for the rest of the year!

The drink took place on 13th of January at Zwarte Doos inside the TU/e campus.

This is one of our favorite traditions, so make sure you don't miss the next one! See you all next January!

Coming up!!!

We have a design contest, an industrial visit or a workshop and several other events coming up. Send us your suggestions for events, newsletters etc; or, just drop us a line! We'll keep you posted.



The new USINET logo

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PHILIPS

sense **and** simplicity

I4D Innovation FOR Development

- Javed-Vassilis Khan -



Dr. Khalil presenting a cooker designed for the African market

Among the many available workshop in the program I found the most interesting workshop (particularly for us USIs): 'Product design for the base of the pyramid'. It was organized by Dr. Mohammed Khalil from Philips Lighting and Mrs. Myrtille Danse of BoP-lab. Dr. Mohammed Khalil presented some very interesting stories of Philips Lighting products which were successful and not-so-successful in the African continent. The example of a pocket torch which was charged by rotating with your hand it was one successful example of a product which is already adopted by many people in a light-hungry continent. Again the role of context-based research, close to the user was according to Dr. Khalil the maker or breaker of success for any product.

Although we do not really focus at our USI studies in developing products and services for the least privileged of this planet, I have the positive feeling that from all I heard at the I4D-Day we can contribute a lot also to this field with the user-centered approach that we learn and practice.

In our studies at USI we too often focus on creating the next 'cool' thing, or think of a great idea which will apply for a lot of people, but usually not the less privileged ones. The I4D-Day 2010 one day conference organized at the TU/e in May the 18th, had as a theme: 'Slums: Poverty and Opportunity' and it addressed the needs of the less privileged ones in this world.

The main program began by a thought provoking talk of Prof. Dr. I.S.A. Baud from UvA International Development studies. The main, controversial to my opinion, point of professor Baud was that we should not see slums just as a place which we need everything to do in our power to abolish but also as a place of opportunity in which a lot of economic activity, creativity and entrepreneurship is taking place. For example, did you know that in Africa there are \$17 billion per year on kerosene for lighting?

It was interesting to see the similarity of the approach that professor Baud was taking towards studying and approaching slums and the user-centered methods we are taught at USI. Her approach was user-centric and more of trying to understand the situation rather than impose policies and top-down measures which to her opinion will be ineffective.

ID4D INNOVATION FOR DEVELOPMENT. SLUMS: POVERTY AND OPPORTUNITY

– Jorge Peregrin Empanza –

Early on Wednesday 19th, the symposium began with fewer people than expected and the absence of the keynote speaker. Despite the not-so-promising first impression for such an interesting event, the program was worth the time spent.

After the protocolary introductory speech, I.S.A. Baud, offered a very good introduction for the non-experts to the Base of the Pyramid (the poorest socio-economic countries). Baud's dissertation paid special attention to the differences between cities and rural areas, why is it important to focus on city slums and the issues that produce urban poverty. Worth mentioning are facts like the forecasted 80% of urban population in emerging countries for 2030 (big part of it being slums), and that currently 32% of the world population lives in slums, This indeed drives home the point that we need to change our top-down approach for incremental solutions.

When most western people think about poverty in emerging countries, they think of slums, lack of education, poor hygiene conditions and eventually criminality. Despite those being amongst the most influential factors, there are more issues to solve. The city-inside-city character of a slum implies huge differences in social classes: government has few policies for slums (and much corruption), there are no clear community structures or institutions, the housing quality is poor

due to its illegal character (resulting in tenure insecurity), all of these lead to a third class citizenship where slum inhabitants can not form collectivities, or have a clear voice to raise demands.

Furthermore, the middle class interprets slums as a non-contributing part of a city and getting rid of slums becomes a part of their agenda. In a nutshell, we are talking about 'cities' of millions of people who are almost invisible, and with half the inhabitants being younger than 18 years. Still, it is a common western mistake to think all slums are the same. As a matter of fact, cultural characteristics make the potential market smaller and more segmented than what would be expected. Although the problems are generally similar, a single solution does not fit the peculiarities of the different types of slums around the world.

The issues mentioned above, create a set of challenges such as incremental house building, protection of local employment, ensuring security in the neighborhood, facilitating informal social networks and linking informal institutions to formal ones (for access to services, solving conflicts etc). Many of these challenges could be addressed by proper system design thinking.

What can we, as interaction designers, do? Well, first of all, we have to think further than a screen and a computer. i.e.

technology (with and without electricity) and systems that not have to follow the western paradigm. However, we have to be aware that, to a certain extent, western technology is perceived (and appreciated) as high quality, and slum inhabitants do like quality. A speaker mentioned an anecdote involving the frequent sightings of DVD players and Blackberries in slums in Casablanca (Morocco)). The peculiarity of the culture of each slum, makes it necessary to research the slum context well so as to understand the constraints, requirements, and wishes of the inhabitants of these unique environments. Educational tools, local culture and social awareness, and tools for behavioral change in, for example, hygiene and food health, could benefit from our dual human-system approach.

Although I have never been to a slum, the speakers presented a clear picture of the people in the slums: generous yet selfish, young, uneducated, living on a day by day basis, without social cohesion or collective awareness, with big professional and housing uncertainty, and with a high entrepreneurship character. These characteristics already make one think about a required change of mindset while designing, don't they?

An interesting recurrent debate concerns the NGO vs. Company. As a speaker said: "Nobody lies more than the poor to NGOs, because they get things for free". While

NGOs alleviate poverty in many places, they can create a big dependency effect on people. Given the usual high entrepreneurial spirit of people in slums, this might not be the optimal solution. Also, due to the much more limited resources NGOs can have, and the low budget they can allocate to R&D. Companies addressing emerging markets, face two obstacles: the need for a "driver" or a way to get accepted by the mass market, and a stable supply chain i.e. despite the existing needs and opportunity, there is no bridge to bring a product to the market. To overcome both obstacles, companies tend to associate with local partners who have the local know-how and the right networking. The "Product design for the base of the pyramid" workshop, with speakers Myrtille Danse (Wageningen University and Dutch BoP Innovation Center) and Mohammed Khalil (Philips Lighting) provided with insights into business approach of companies towards emerging markets and the difficulties and opportunities faced by them during this process.

Among the opportunities are the collective purchasing power of slums, with a potentially big volume where the sum of the small margins produces the benefit. Furthermore, the latent entrepreneurial drive and motivation of slum inhabitants, and the "lack of consumption" as competitor, define slums as a challenging opportunity for corporations.

Equally important are the obstacles companies encounter: “BoP (Base Of the Pyramid) is difficult for companies to work with, because there is no identifiable customer to bill, and a lot of corruption”. One of the burdens of emerging countries is the everyday corruption that, through direct “taxation” and lack of transparency, limits the economical development of an area. As a result of this, many western companies try to encourage billing, since “billing means transparency, and that is the way to fight corruption”; nevertheless, several issues in this respect were noticed by the audience, since there is always a delicate trade-off between cultural differences and habits, and corruption, especially when (for many), in the end, stakes are high.

Although not directly mentioned, emotional values of the targeted consumers seem not to play an important role in product design for emerging markets. It seems that because of budget constraints, the character and look and feel of a product are often overlooked or their importance is underestimated. This can have terrible consequences like the case when a community rejected a water filter for the inexistent taste of the water (“it is probably losing some ingredients and might make me infertile”), a stove because of the materials used and its energy requirements, or a lamp because of the color(temperature) of the light (to warm/cold). The characteristics of these kinds of markets reaches a point where products not only have to be robust and reliable, they also have to be repairable and re-sellable, due to the very extended repairing and reselling habit, opposed to the use- and- throw attitude we are used to in the western world. Once again, we have to question our assumptions when designing.

As designers, we should never underestimate the emerging markets’ needs and wishes, and in order not to fail, it all starts with context and user research. This has to be even more thorough than when addressing western markets, since all our previous knowledge might be misleading or biased.

Waste picking, recycling and income generation in slums

– Angeliki Angeletou –

How can sanitation, agriculture and energy be linked together ensuring sustainability and profit at the same time? Liliana Abarca from WASTE non-profit organization and Sjoerd Kerstens from DHV presented the session “Waste picking, recycling and income generation in slums” describing the situation in Ghana in the water and sanitation sector and introducing Safi Sana, a company that deals with organic human waste.

Article next page.

In the constantly expanded and overcrowded cities of Ghana, sanitary infrastructure is a critical matter; sanitary blocks consisting mainly of toilets and lavatory basins, fee are accessed daily by citizens with a fee. The faeces and the wastewater end up in the sea resulting in pollution of the ecosystem, sea and water, often with consequences on habitants' health.

Safi Sana, a Public Private Partnership, financially supported by Aqua for All (a dutch NGO) and many private companies, has built sanitary blocks placed in central areas and collects from them human waste that is later transformed into biogas and organic fertilizer. The company buys also from the waste-pickers organic waste - that would otherwise end up in the sea - for the same purpose. The enterprise is interested in long-term profit; sanitary blocks are accessed with a not-for-profit-not-for-loss fee of 10 cents, and the high investments in infrastructure are expected to be gained back after high volumes of organic waste.

Interfering in the sanitary system and public services of a whole country is not easy; bureaucracy is a critical issue, as well as acceptance. Similar projects in other countries have come across religious beliefs and public opposition. Often people are sceptical because they want to see results to believe while others might have recognised the necessity of clean environment by their own experiences; many children have died because of infected water.

During the presentation, a young African raised his hand and said that the progress should be in the direction of the western culture; one toilet for every house. He reported that he had been there and it seems that the common sanitary blocks are still a problem; people have to walk sometimes far to reach them. A big discussion was fired then, about whether the ideal for the developing world is the western way of living and if it meets people's needs.

Nevertheless, Safi Sana is shown to gain acceptance in Ghana, by improving its livelihood. Biogas can replace traditional forms of energy -and energy from wood formerly used in Ghana- in almost all applications ; cooking, lighting, heating, transportation fuel and in industry. Moreover, the effluent from these biogas digesters is estimated to increase agricultural production by 25 % (Netherlands Development Organization, 2007).

Some critical concerns are raised about the sustainability of the whole project; other initiatives that started in Ghana, were efficient as long as the shareholders stayed at the place but later they were abandoned due to lack of trained personnel. The presenters however were well informed about previous unsuccessful endeavors and assured the audience that they are going to stay there for as long as new personell comprised of local people is trained and willing to take over.



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HCI in India

- Beant Kaur Dhillon -

Some Coffee Conversations at



“... challenging, exciting, and at times maddening, but nevertheless, always a learning experience”, is how Ed Cutrell, a research manager at Microsoft Research India describes his working experience in India. Ed has been working in India for around 6 months now and in the past, he worked there as a visiting researcher. HCI field is steadily moving towards becoming global and addressing the needs of billions of users based in developing countries. We, as a community, are finally ready to take up the difficult and rewarding task of designing for developing economies where technology is used in the most innovative ways, and, illiteracy, lack of electricity, lack of hygienic facilities doesn't imply a lack of need or desire for communication. Consider, for example, a country like India where 7% of the population has TVs but 45% of the population has mobile phones. This year, CHI conference saw an impressive number of papers related to or based in developing economies like India, China, Kenya, Rwanda and so on. It was an invaluable opportunity for USInet to chat with HCI practitioners working in India about the 'action' going on there.

Ed describes MSRI's work as exploratory, trying to further the state of the art in different areas of computer science. His group 'Technology for Emerging Markets' works on several projects related to developing products for rural and the low-income sections of the society; e.g., interface design for users with low literacy levels, Mobile phone banking and ICTs for education. He says that it took him some time to get used to cultural differences like politeness towards superiors, high context communication and flexible deadlines in the Indian context. He also commented on the inadequacy of HCI methodologies developed in the western countries for use in developing countries like India.



Ed Cutrell, Microsoft



Jan Blom, who served as the Research Head at Nokia Research in Bangalore for 3 years, says that he misses working in India because he felt rewarded working as a researcher there, as he could see the direct impact of his work on people's lives. He is now working as a Principal Scientist at Nokia Research Center, Lausanne. "Some things are, of course, easy in Europe, because it is home [here], but it is just that there's some energy, something intriguing about India that can't be described in words", he says with a smile. Since Nokia already has a large consumer base in the entry level devices in mobile phone users in India, the company is exploring further avenues for expanding its consumer base. India is the base spear-heading many affordable technologies that later become global, permeating to other developing economies. Jan feels that one of the biggest opportunities for HCI practitioners lies in developing methods for conducting user research in India. Most HCI methods originate in the west and they don't apply very well to the Indian context, or even to the context of other developing countries. He gets a feeling that while interaction design in India is developing at a fast pace, the academia in India still needs to tune-in to the needs of its own HCI industry. This was also suggested by the fact that most research papers concerning HCI in India, presented at CHI, came from the industry.

Madhu Marur, an ex-USI who is presently working with Samsung India feels that the action is starting but HCI research has really a long way to go. User Centered Design practices in industry are primarily UI design activities with very little or no focus on user research and usability testing. Holistic user-centered design process is still a foreign concept in practice due to lack of product ownership, low UCD awareness among decision makers and lack of a heterogeneous talent pool - very few design teams have members from social sciences or liberal arts background. This comment coincides with Ed's observations who said that it is interesting that in India most of the HCI work is approached from a design perspective while in the western countries, it emerged out of psychology, management studies and later, engineering traditions. Thus, HCI as a discipline in India seems to be evolving differently than in the west and this divergence results in a different set of priorities, methodologies and goals of the work. Indian designers can bridge the gap between an ideal user experience design and the practice of it by championing the cause of a multi disciplinary approach towards design, not only in the industry, but also in education by bringing the technical, social and humanities streams together.



Madhu Marur, Samsung

Anupam Jain, a researcher with IBM Research India, Delhi feels that HCI is not only being explored as core research field but there are other research centers dealing with HCI-related research as well. He works in the Telecom Research Innovation Centre which is currently developing the 'Spoken Web' - a network of user-generated voice sites for the next billions. The principle behind the idea lies in making information accessible to all sections of the society and extends the concept of internet to include the speech and auditory modalities. When asked how does it feel to study abroad and come back to India for work, he says, "Unlike a few years back, it's quite usual these days to return to India for work, and the work culture has also become much more flexible and satisfying over the years." It seems that HCI as a field is growing rapidly, and it is our; i.e., user centered designers' responsibility to develop methodologies suited to varied contexts and adaptable to developing countries at the same, quick pace; are we up to that challenge?



Anupam Jain, IBM

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The Generation 2009

A lot USIs from the Generation 2009 contributed to this newsletter. In fact some of them joined the USINET team since the end of 2009. Their enthusiasm has brought different taste to USINET life especially this year. Get to know more about them here! ☺

Rafal

Rafal is an ambitious computer scientist from Poland. Having mastered the domains of Programming, Game Design and 3d Graphics, he decided to abandon a life of fame in his home land and enrich his expertise with Interaction Design. But he is not just a promising scientist. He is also a very interesting person, with an advanced sense of humor. With his optimism and inspiration, he always brings out the bright side of things, leaving his colleagues startled and awe-stricken with his motivational comments.

Jokes aside, Rafal is a joy to work with and a worthy representative of USI's 2009 technical subset.

Flavio

If you think sandy beaches, exotic fruits and samba describes Brazil you would be right, you would not, though, have described our Brazilian friend from USI 2009. Perhaps because he is half Italian, a lover of WW2 aircraft and of American cars, Flavio's only evident connection with Brazil can be recognized during a soccer match, or when grilling a nice steak in a BBQ.

With a Master in Computer Science and a focus in robotics, his expertise and passion for the domain have been contributed extensively in every USI project with immense success. His techniques can be

seen in most prototypes lying around the office. Always bringing a smile to everyone in the group, Flavio is the one to go to with a concern from photography to vintage music, movies and TV shows. But even if you don't have any concerns, Flavio is the one that will always agree to go out at any time, day or night, to keep you company for a drink or a nice walk.

Ioannis

This bearded rockstar comes from the country of olives, feta and spanakopita – the sunny Greece. After finishing his studies in Computer Science at the University of Athens, he sought to further sate his thirst for knowledge, so he joined USI and moved to Eindhoven. When he's not writing about something in his blog he is usually listening to reggae, playing crazy musical instruments (Stylophone!) or just being plain cool.

Did I mention that this guy has the best timing for jokes? He might be silent in a group sometimes, but every word he says is gold – he knows how to make us all laugh. If you ever need a real out-of-the-box idea, Ioannis is the man to see. Outside the office, he's a great friend to hang out with, have a drink and a laugh and listen to music together.

Charl

After a long day at CHI conference, I was walking back to the hotel for a quick nap and saw this familiar face in a sleek fitness outfit with earphones in his ears. Yes, it was Charl. He was going for a run! He is probably one of the most physically active person, unlike other sedentary USIs. His discipline and determination are impressive and admirable and they apply not only to his fitness regime but also to his work ethics. Being one of the Dutch in USI generation 2009, he studied Industrial Design at Delft and his aesthetics and attentions to details are impeccable. He is great to work with!

Dali

Dalila or just Dali is a Human Factors expert. She was born in Israel and raised in Argentina. She then moved to US, in beautiful Florida where she lived for more than 10 years before deciding to try Europe for a change.

When working she is really organized and professional and she has the special ability of getting 'lazy' people back to work immediately. Jokes aside, she's a really compassionate person and she's the first to check how everybody's health and mood is doing every day. If you're not feeling well, she's the one to cheer you up by sending e.g. pictures of cute bunnies. Haha!

She enjoys cooking tasty vegetarian food and for some people the words "risotto" and (especially) "tiramisu de limon" are now connected with her name. You'll hear from Dali a lot since she's the vice chair of USInet!

Agata

She is a polish interaction designer with social science background. As much as she loves what she does, she believes it is very refreshing to lose oneself in the not so "nerdy" world sometimes too. She travels a lot to far away countries and also enjoys cooking and baking. She used to say that she also enjoys biking, but since moving to the Netherlands and having to bike every day regardless of the weather, she keeps a bit of a distance to that statement. Still, weekend trips with friends, camping in the woods, bonfires and baths in a lake are some of her favorites in summertime, preferably accompanied by some sports (swimming, tennis, horseback riding) and board games!

Angeliki

To quote an USI from Gen 2008, "if there was a 'fairy rock n roll' genre , then Angeliki would be a follower". Her talks usually start with green prairies and floral dresses and then move on to 80s rock 'n' roll. This dreamy electrical engineer comes from the city called Thessaloniki in sunny land of Greece. Don't let her childlike conversational style deceive you though, she can impressively talk about algorithms, music and art; all together. Her passion for vintage arts and eco-design is inspiring. If you are looking for advice on retro-style dressing or layering or just for independent art movies, she's the person to talk to. An aspiring vegetarian ...oops... flexitarian and a skilled hip-hop dancer, she is fun to work with!

Beant

A girl, coming from India with background in Industrial Engineering and Human Factors, could be a brief description for Beant, but that doesn't say anything about what made her so beloved between the USI 2009 generation. Thinking at the same time, both as an engineer and as a Usability designer, Beant's most valuable contribution to our projects is not only her strong rationale -that has been proved by the many wins she holds from Indian competition in arguing- but also the fact that you know you can rely on her work. Beside this, she is fair - I admire her sense of justice - she is naturally cool and unpretentious, a trustworthy friend, a passionate vegetarian cook, a food lover and a tomboy, but not when it comes to dance; then a Bollywood princess wakes up inside her! Being both professional and fun, Beant definitely worth being the USInet chair person!

Advice; if you want to see her bright smile and her eyes sparkling, ask her to tell you a story about her childhood in India!



Ryo

Ryo is the USI responsible for two of the nicest “traditions” of USI: potlucks and Inspiring Thursdays. The former gathers USIs to have dinner (usually at his place), where everybody brings their own specialty to share with the rest, which during the first months at the Netherlands allowed many of us to eat nice homemade meals. Inspiring Thursdays, the other Ryo's invention, is a series of lectures ran by USIs to share their expertise within the group, which in a group with such different backgrounds could run for ages. Before starting these two amazing traditions, he studied in Japan, Switzerland, USA, Canada and England, collecting a bunch of degrees in design, medical and computer science. Rumors spread over USI say that his next destination is La Habana (Cuba) to get a Master in Salsa!

Leoni

Leoni is a bright eyed optimistic Dutch girl that decided to join USI to get some hands on experience on user centered design after her applied cognitive psychology education. She is very enthusiastic about a lot of things and smiles all of the time. Leoni is very dedicated to the USI program, wants to learn out of every experience she gets and it is a real pleasure to party with her! Besides this, she likes to go for sports, beats people in squash with her famous killing “Leoni-balls”, does volunteer work on festivals, likes to travel around, etc. In a nutshell, this girl is really nice to work and to have fun with.

Sarah

Sarah is a product developer from Antwerp (Belgium). She is an optimistic girl, always full of energy, and she likes to work hard. Thinking of her, I see her taking notes during lectures, making nice drawings or templates in Illustrator, playing squash after work, and showing clothes / bags / etc. she bought or sewed herself. Besides working hard for each project, she is always willing to help others, and she likes to be part of social events. Her enthusiasm for the USI program makes it a pleasure to work with her!

Emiliano

Emiliano adds to the Argentinean charisma of the group. With a background in Industrial Engineering and a natural feel for management, he is the role-model timekeeper of this generation. In his final for management, he is the role-model timekeeper of this generation. In his final Master's degree project Emiliano made Argentina value its local fruit industry even more. Using fruits that lost their aesthetic value by being malformed by hail, with his project he helped to improve the local economy by using the fruit for high quality juices. With his experience he adds to the flavor of any of our projects as well.

With blue-white being his favorite color and football his passion, Emiliano is having a hard time getting over the loss of Argentina's team during this year's World Cup. He sees no other choice than supporting the Dutch team to the end. Who knows, he might even consider celebrating the Dutch victory by eating a "kroket"!

Jonathan

Jonathan, a shining tall guy, born in Greece and raised in the Netherlands, has a bachelor's degree in Applied Physics and a master's degree in Human-Technology Interaction. Not only the knowledge that he has mastered, but also the Greek enthusiasm and Dutch organization make him bridge the gap between technology and users, and even between professors and USIs. He's keen to ask questions and give comments, which wake people up in the low caffeine mornings or tired Friday afternoons. It's always great to work with him!

Wenxin

One of the two Asian ladies of the '09 USI group is a biomedical engineer from Guilin, Guangxi. Wenxin is a person that doesn't necessarily has to be in the spotlight, therefore always choosing her moment to speak carefully. But whenever she does, though, it is either useful or funny. She has proven to work hard with lots of dedication when she has to fulfil a task.

Wenxin has some other sides as well. For instance, she's a gamer that can stay up very late when she's into the game she's playing. Furthermore, she surprised a few USI's with her choice of drinks in a few establishments in the US of A. If you think she's just a cute little Chinese engineer who is on the down low, guess again... Like a dragon, she shows no fear when she's facing a challenge. Bottoms up!

Areti

A very friendly and easygoing person, with a good sense of humor. An admirable friend. Very empathetic and understanding. Those are the qualities of Areti.

Areti (pronounced with an accent on “i”!) was born in Greece, but as everyone knows, she is in love with Sweden where she did her masters at KTH in Stockholm. She is always there to share her every experience and do everything together (teamwork!). Very organized, hardworking and greatly concerned about the quality of research and usability testing at USI.

Despite being modest, she tries to share all her knowledge with others. Great affection exists between Areti and everything that is cute (“Hello Kitty” being on top of the list :)). I am sure that she is among the most adorable and charming people in the history of USI, and also among the most emotional and expressive ones.

Miro

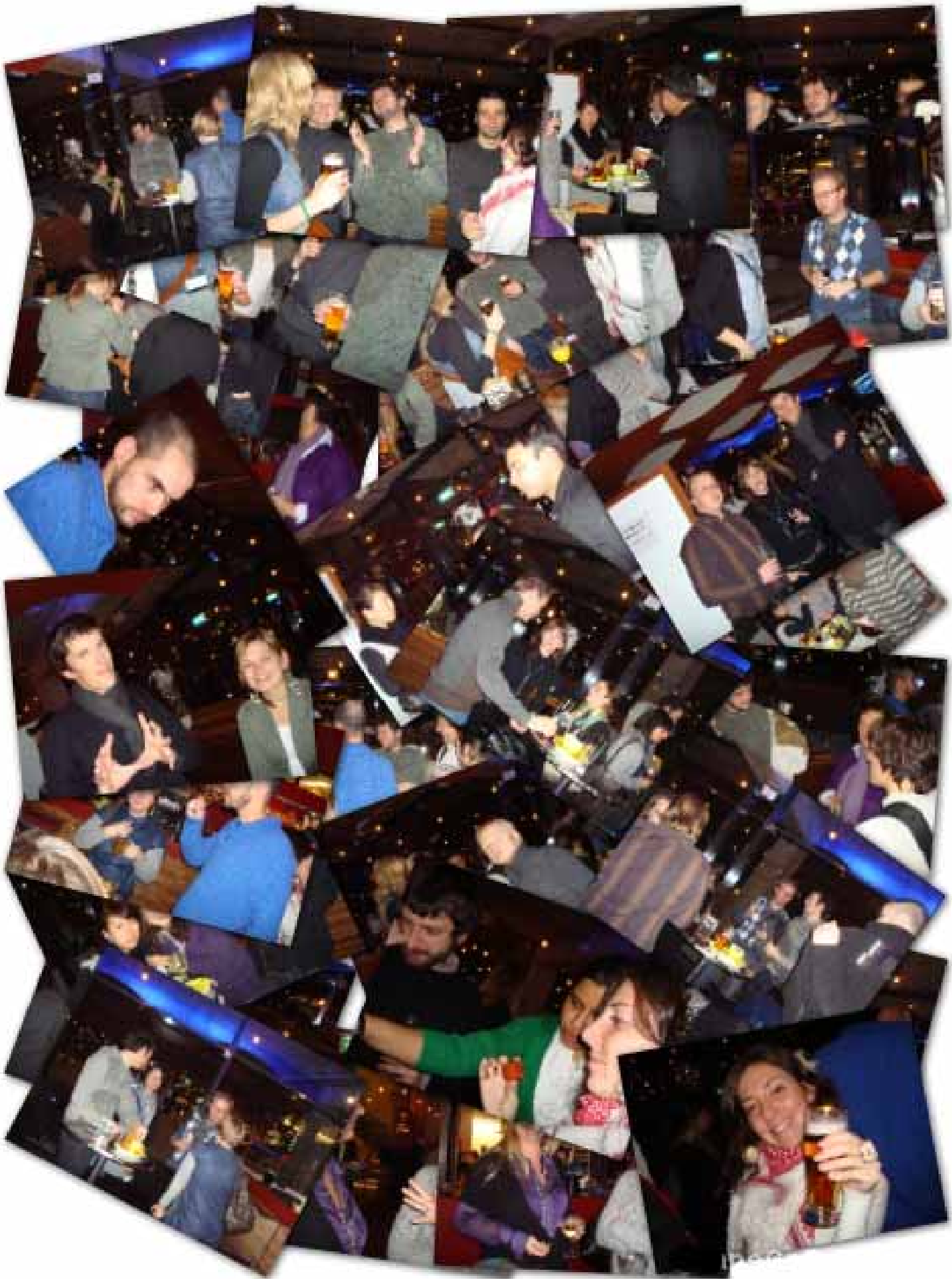
Miroslav, a.k.a. Miro, is a computer scientist with a strong background in human-computer interaction after studying in TU Delft. Miro was born in Bosnia but moved to Netherlands when he was 15. In USI, he is a nice guy to work with, always with some good ideas to add to any project. He is a really enthusiastic guy during presentations, showing that presenting like Steve Jobs is an easy thing to do! Outside USI, he is a completely different person, always active and up for some beers and whisky. Anyway, no matter what, he is a great friend and somebody you can trust. Ah! By the way, if you ever meet him, you'll find “he's OK”!

Jorge

Jorge was born and raised in the sunny country of Spain. By education, he is an interaction designer from Delft, where he has lived for a few years now, together with his girlfriend and – apparently – crazy cat. In the evenings and weekend, he plays the guitar in his juicy gipsy-klezmer-balkan-fanfare-folk-orchestra-band. Areas in which he distinguishes himself from the rest of his colleagues at USI are his well-developed drawing skills and style, his rich sense of humour, and the ease with which he is able to come up with ideas for new concepts. You will always see him carrying an orange at lunch time, and in case he has three of them, he will definitely start juggling! Shortly said: if you ever want to organise an effective brainstorm or creative session, or just will want to have a good laugh, make sure Jorge is in your team!

Peter

Peter is een aardig jong! After an Erasmus exchange in Poland to rediscover his roots and enjoy eastern drinks, Peter followed an internship in Philips to wrap up his Master degree in Work and Organization Psychology (Maastricht). His thesis dealt with Philip’s Direct Life, an activity monitoring system to persuade people to have a healthier lifestyle. Maybe it is because he is the youngest of the group, or because he comes from the cheerful Limburg area, but the fact is that his enthusiasm and dry humor always keeps the mood up, while providing valuable insight to the projects. He is driven by curiosity, which keeps him engaged with projects, and asking all the questions that others don’t dare to ask. Besides being a great colleague, Peter is a dedicated musician, playing both bass and violin in such different styles as traditional folk and pop-rock.





For partnership conditions and proposal, please, contact us at info@usinet.nl