

UT Austin | Portugal INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATORY FOR EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES, CoLAB



Animation Course Concludes



UT Austin animation instructor Geoff Marslett concluded a semester-long class conducted in Lisbon this spring. During the course of the semester, he met with eight students from a variety of professional and academic backgrounds including computer science, biology, and physics, as well as design and storytelling. To accommodate the students' diverse experiences and interests, Geoff structured the class to give participants a broad overview of media making modalities and techniques. During the semester, they studied video editing and production, basic sound design, flash animation, and motion graphics with After Effects.

The course was project-based, first challenging the participants to create basic animated avatars using photographic images and flash. Each member of the class then created a short non-fiction piece based upon a family story. At the conclusion of the class, the students employed their newly acquired skills to produce projects that specifically addressed their areas of interest. The range of final projects reflected the students' great diversity, ranging from a story promoting children's fire safety to an augmented reality application for a scientific exhibit on bones.

Digital Media doctoral student Luís Frias expressed appreciation for the course's scope and utility, calling the learning experience "the quickest way to become a Skilled Transmedia Storyteller." Frias explained, "Geoff's a natural communicator and a very skilled filmmaker. From digital animation to cinematography, from digital effects to post-production, we had time to go through different techniques and tools in class, always with a natural flow that made much of the difficult technical aspects seem easy."

While Geoff has taught various classes with the UTA-P program in the past, he particularly enjoyed the extended nature of this course. "I have had a wonderful time here in Lisbon getting to spend a little longer with the students. In the past I have had to do shorter workshops here, but I feel like I got better sense of both the students and Lisbon in this full semester format."

■ Stuart Kelban Conducts Scriptwriting Course at RTP

UT Austin faculty member Stuart Kelban led a course on scriptwriting at the Academy RTP, a Rádio e Televisão de Portugal transmedia program that gives young interns and professionals the opportunity to develop and distribute their projects with their peers and take workshops conducted by a range of media experts.

In Stuart's course, "Writing the Short Script," thirteen students explored the fundamentals of narrative storytelling and developed their own original short screenplays. They left with short scripts ready for production, and with the storytelling skills to help them write many more. This emphasis on storytelling hopefully will not only make them better screenwriters, but also better directors, editors, cinematographers, telling stories on a variety of platforms.

The students came from a range of academic backgrounds—from film and marketing, to communication science and engineering and quickly absorbed the course concepts during the intensive session. Stuart, who was recently honored with the Texas Excellence Award for Teaching, commented, "While my American students tend to learn on a slow, steady incline over the course of a long semester, my Portuguese students have always progressed at a much quicker pace, and at a steeper rate—almost 'overnight', so to speak. This not only speaks to their intelligence and open-mindedness, but also to their eagerness to help evolve media development in Portugal."

■ UT Austin Portugal Faculty Participate in Major Communications Conference

Several members of the UTA-P Digital Media program faculty traveled to Phoenix, Arizona in May for an annual conference of the International Communication Association, a leading academic, international organization of communication scholars. The conference's divisions and interest groups encompass a broad range of specializations including communication law and policy, global communication and social change, and information systems. UTA-P Director Sharon Strover and program faculty Joe Straubhaar, Laura Stein, and Karin Wilkins participated in several aspects of the conference, chairing panels, serving as respondents, and presenting emerging research in a variety of areas.

Strover's presentation, "Immersive Television and the On-Demand Audience," presented with Radio-TV-Film graduate student William Moner, introduced research from the FCT-funded ImTV project. The project addresses emerging dynamics in entertainment media and observes how viewers actively engage with contemporary television and related visual

media, sometimes creating their own content. Straubhaar presented a number of research projects, addressing topics including identity construction and media use among families in Austin, Texas, co-authored with UT Austin doctoral student Laura Dixon; Brazil's media exports and cultural presence; children's influence on their parents' media adoption patterns; and the use of media in the construction of cultural geography in Texas. Wilkins' contributions to the conference included participation in a panel that re-examined the concept of cultural imperialism in the context of social change. Stein also presented research on law and policy conflicts and activist media. Additionally, Stein and a faculty alumna of the UTA-P program's International School on Digital Transformation, Tanya Notley, presented a paper on transnational communication activism among rights advocates, co-authored with UT Austin doctoral student Stuart Davis. Portuguese doctoral student Cláudia Silva, whose interests include digital media and journalism, also attended the conference to participate in a special pre-conference devoted to mobile communications.

■ Summer Institute Students Study Entrepreneurial Journalism

UT Austin professor Rosental Alves led an intensive two-week course on Entrepreneurial Journalism earlier this month at the New University of Lisbon. The class examined how digital technologies impact news content production and consumption, looking at case studies of real-world enterprises. The nine enrolled students were given the opportunity to analyze leading-edge journalistic initiatives utilizing digital media as well as work on their own projects.

Alves, a veteran journalist with extensive professional experience

in online journalism, is the founder and Director of the Knight Center for Journalism in the Americas at UT Austin. In April of this year, he organized the 12th Annual International Symposium on Online Journalism, which hosted a gathering of industry professionals and scholars from around the world. The Symposium addressed a variety of rapidly evolving issues in the field including design, social media and community engagement, and economic models.

■ UTEN CORNER

UTEN PORTUGAL SUPPORTS “3 DAY STARTUP PORTO”

The Federação Académica do Porto – FAP (the student federation of the University of Porto), with the support of StartUp BUZZ, U.Porto and UTEN Portugal, has organized the “3 Day Startup Porto”, which took place between 1st – 3rd June at the Faculdade de Farmácia da Universidade do Porto (Faculty of Pharmacy of the University of Porto). After the success of the first edition of this entrepreneurship education program in Portugal in the city of Coimbra, UTEN Portugal has actively supported this second edition of 3 Day Startup (“3DS”) in Portugal following its mission to promote the development of a globally competitive and sustainable infrastructure to commercialize Portuguese technology.

As the 3 Day Startup CEO, Cam Houser, explains the concept of this program aimed at university students is simple: “start tech companies over the course of three days, under the philosophy of learning by doing”. The students are randomly divided into work groups and, after three days of hard work supervised by a mentor, each group was able to pitch a business idea. A total of eight mentors participated in this event: **Leonor Gomes (CEO at Easy Bus), Gonçalo Cruz (Chief Visionary Officer at Jump Willy), Henrique Pereira (Managing Director – Energy & Utilities at ISA), João Machado (Creative and Executive Director at the Miyuki Studio and Miyuki Concept Store), Miguel Fernandes (CEO of FoodinTech), Luís Oliveira (CEO da Viral Dynamics), Pedro Pardinhas (20|21) and Tiago Ferreira.** On the final day of the 3DS Porto, six groups pitched six business ideas: AKEETY, CHEAPSHOP, DAR, SEREI AS CHAVES, UNPLUGG and 3DS IMPACT. Each presentation was followed by the feedback of five renowned panelists – **Ana Rosas Almeida, Carlos Brito, Filipe Castro, Marco Bravo e Sara Medina.**

“This was the best entrepreneurship event that I have participated in, since it was well organized and based on hands-on activity”, states Tiago Fernandes (3D IMPACT). This participant also considers the concept of the event to be “very well designed”. “Over the course of these three days, we have learned how to start a business, step by step”, says Lino Gonçalves (CHEAPSHOP), adding that although the experience was very intense, it was very much worthwhile. After learning about the relevance of job creation in Portugal’s current economic context, Cam Houser decided that this event could be “a good fit for Portugal”. Indeed, Houser is pleased with the outcome of the 3DS edition in Porto. “Not only were the students aware of the value of this opportunity, but they also benefited from very motivated and experienced mentoring every day and often very late at night! ”, he explains, adding that “this is the most effective way of mentoring because the relationship between the students and the mentors will carry on after the event”. Indeed, one of the mentors, Luís Oliveira has already started reconnecting with some of the groups in order to help them put their projects into action. Luís feels that the event was a success and recommends that it is organized again next year.

The significance of the mentor’s role is highlighted by several participants. Marcos Domingues (AKEETY) states that the mentor’s feedback helped participants turn ideas into realistic products as the mentors pointed out various financial, legal and viability implications of the



Cam Houser, the 3 Day Startup CEO



The “3D IMPACT” pitch



The “CHEAPSHOP” pitch

original idea. Rafael Jegundo (UNPLUGG) is another participant who considers that the presence of mentors encourages participants to explore new perspectives and to test different strategies, leading to “the creation of a stronger final product”. This opinion is shared by Marco Bravo of the IC2 Institute. He feels that the outcome of this event was “extremely positive at every level” due to the participants’ creativity. Marco Bravo, (who was also present at the 3 Day Startup Coimbra) describes the evolution of the ideas as being “remarkable”, comparing it to “polishing a rough diamond”.

Another key aspect of the 3DS concept is the market validation stage. The 3DS initiative offers participants “a perspective of the real market which requires solutions”, states the participant Ricardo Moreira (DAR). Indeed, the Porto students were encouraged to get out of the Faculdade de Farmácia’s building and determine the potential of their business idea with target clients. This stage is key as “being passionate about one business is not enough if the target customer of that business idea is not passionate about it as well; the final word is always up to the customer”, states Cam Houser.

The 3 Day Startup CEO is excited about the energy and momentum present for Portugal to build a bigger technology base. The idea is to serve the global market and 3DS, as well other similar programs, which should “get the ball rolling in this field”.

Sara Medina, the CEO at SPI Ventures, considers that 3 Day Startup initiatives are, for many young people, "the first opportunity to contact with the entrepreneurial world and should, therefore, be promoted". Filipe Castro, who evaluated the final pitches, feels that 3DS, as well as other similar events, should prioritize the projects' continuity and performance by enabling access to mentors, capital, incubation and foreign markets. All in all, he stresses that "more days are required in order to create a successful company".

Ana Rosas from IAPMEI (Portuguese institute that supports small and medium enterprises), stresses the participants' commitment, joy, motivation and hard work. This positive attitude is very much present in André Barbosa's (SEREI AS CHAVES) testimony. This participant considers that 3DS Porto gave him the opportunity to meet and work with a group of people filled with creativity and will to change the world. Mentor Henrique Pereira, Managing Director – Energy & Utilities at ISA, considers that the 3DS Porto edition showed that future perspectives in the field of entrepreneurship in Portugal are excellent as long as entrepreneurs are given the proper conditions to move their ideas forward.

The University of Porto supported the 3 Day Startup edition in Porto as part of its tradition of supporting entrepreneurship through institutions such as UPIN (University of Porto Innovation) and UPTec (Science and Technology Park of University of Porto). Carlos Brito, the university pro-rector for entrepreneurship and the Director of UPTec, congratulated the initiative and stated that Portugal needs people who "think big", stressing that successful entrepreneurship requires not only innovative projects, but also resilience and strength to implement them. According to Carlos Brito, entrepreneurship is 1% inspiration and 99% hard work.

FINAL PITCHES

AKEETY: This is a Web platform that facilitates the creation of start-up companies. The platform comprises methodologies to develop entrepreneurial projects (for instance, companies in early stages emerging from 3 Day Startup), mentor follow-up and connection with other investment platforms for these types of projects. One of AKEETY's assets is the fact that the platform registers all the project's development stages, thus making it easier to identify potential investors.

CHEAPSHOP: This is a Smartphone app which sends a notification to shoppers, while they are at the mall, indicating which shops have discounts. These notifications are personalized and adapted to each person's profile and preferences. For instance, men would receive only receive notifications on shops for men.

DAR: It is possible to combine two distant areas such as agriculture and technology. How can we take profit from that? I believe that a new cycle has come to agriculture and new cycles will come, which are not simply based on producing. Only with 'field work' and dedication is it possible to grow the fruits of agriculture in the digital era.

[créditos das fotos: FAP/João Pedro Rocha]

SEREI AS CHAVES: This business idea intends to revolutionize the betting world with a new concept, the crowd betting. The proposal consists of a web platform that mediates crowd betting and promises to increase the chances of success.

UNPLUGG: <http://unplu.gg> is a Web service that allows users to reduce energy costs with to 20% by monitoring, analyzing and promoting challenges to maximize savings. The service is based on an open and hardware agnostic platform which promotes the integration of systems and an ubiquitous use.

3D IMPACT: "The idea behind 3DImpact is to use a professional motion capture suit that is portable and doesn't require a big studio and calibration, to analyze and improve the performance of players in sports such as golf and tennis. This analysis will be made through specialized software that receives data from the suit, displays it in a 3D model and computes several indicators such as posture, balance, weight distribution and movement. This information will be used to enhance sports training, improve athlete performance and avoid injuries."



The "AKEETY" pitch



The "UNPLUGG" pitch



The "SEREI AS CHAVES" pitch



The "DAR" pitch

IC2 Institute Researcher Visits Portugal to Investigate Incubation Practices

Rosemary French, a researcher from the IC2 Institute at the University of Texas at Austin, spent six weeks in Porto this past spring as part of a work abroad initiative through the University Technology Enterprise Network (UTEN) program. During her visit, Ms. French performed a research study on incubation practices across Portugal, and additionally provided support to the technology transfer office at the University of Porto.

During her recent visit to Portugal, Ms. French conducted an interview series with the directors of 10 university-affiliated research technology parks and business incubators across the country in order to analyze incubation best practices for the region and the ways in which regional policy, culture and funding mechanisms are tied to start-up company creation in Portugal. The findings from this study are expected to be published in an academic research publication, with the aim to highlight incubation best practices and policy developments that can enhance the success of technology-based start-up company creation in Portugal, which can lead to the growth of jobs and wealth.

In addition to her research efforts, Ms. French collaborated with the University of Porto Innovation (UPIN) Knowledge Transfer Office to support the international commercialization of early-stage technologies developed by UPorto researchers. Ms. French worked with the UPIN team to provide support to UPorto faculty members by assisting them with finding the necessary research, industry and business partners located

in the United States as well as from other international regions to turn their laboratory prototypes into marketable products.

Ms. French, a UT Austin graduate, has four years of experience in working with university-based researchers to assist them with the commercialization of ideas that are developed in the laboratory setting. Through her work at the University of Texas at Austin, Ms. French has collaborated with international researchers from Portugal, Colombia, Mexico and other sites which conduct research in a variety of fields, ranging from biomedical to clean energy to software technologies.



Events

- **Mathematics Summer School and Workshop 2012**
July 2-13, 2012, UNL, Lisbon

The CoLab Mathematics Summer School and Workshop is a yearly event that aims at bringing together Ph.D. students and junior faculty with well-known experts in several areas of mathematics.

More information at:
<http://math.utaustinportugal.org/summer2012/index.phtml>

Ongoing Opportunities

- **Fraunhofer Portugal Challenge 2012**

The 3rd edition of the Fraunhofer Portugal Challenge has just kicked-off! Fraunhofer is looking for ideas of "Practical Utility", based on MSc or PhD thesis in the areas of ICT, Multimedia and other related sciences.

Deadline: 31st July.

More information at:
http://www.challenge.fraunhofer.pt/en/the_challenge.html

- **Advanced Digital Media Mobility Awards**

Awards for Digital Media faculty and student travel to UT Austin.

For more information please visit:
<http://utaustinportugal.org/calls/dm-travel>

Useful links

www.utaustinportugal.org

www.fct.mctes.pt

www.utexas.edu

www.ic2.org

www.ati.utexas.edu

www.austin-chamber.org

<http://colab.ic2.utexas.edu/dm/>

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