

European Digital Print Media (EDPM) Intensive Program at Budapest Tech

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From August 22nd to September 9th 2009, the European Digital Print Media (EDPM) Intensive Program was hosted by Budapest Tech, Hungary. The intensive program supported by the European LLL/Erasmus program was organized in co-operation with nine partner institutions from all over Europe.

1. Background and goals of the EDPM Intensive Program

Printing and graphic media face their biggest challenges since Gutenberg. They meet strong competition with digital media and other developments in the publishing world. In this context the sector also has to compete for its labor force and students. It has to find ways to make the field attractive in the eyes of young internet and mobile-heavy users. Professionals in the field also have to be more and more aware of restrictive environmental regulations. They have to be able to apply sustainable technologies in printing processes.

On the other hand, graphic media have been quite innovative in developing new technologies and processes to meet these challenges. Digital printing is one example. Digital workflow systems have also been applied in traditional processes to make them more efficient and also more environmentally friendly. New publishing platforms have been developed. These digital and printed media are integrated in a new innovative way. We talk about hybrid media technologies, functional printing and intelligent printed products. New technologies e.g., digital printing also enable new approaches to product development. Variable data printing and personalized printed products are examples of this.

Besides the internet, digital TV and 3rd generation mobile communication, the role of digital printing is less emphasized. There is a considerable demand for creative printed media products and personalized documents. Today at least a quarter of printed products contain personalized or variable data. These products can be produced using digital printing technologies which caused revolutionary changes about 30 years ago. Production times tend to decrease; it is expected in the near future that customers will demand their products within 24 hours.

In Hungary digital technologies are spreading more intensively than on average in Europe, because of smaller production runs. Novel print technologies put an easier load on the environment and support sustainable development; on the other hand, they create new challenges in the field of handling and management of environmental impacts. These technologies increase the effectiveness of information transfer, allow for innovation and individual initiatives. Evolving niche markets are important opportunities for medium and small size enterprises. Today's globalized environment increases the demand for experts with reliable knowledge of foreign languages and international experience.

The European Digital Print Media (EDPM) Intensive Program is aimed at these challenges. The goal of the program is to improve the competences of students and to emphasize the environmental approach to production methods in order to enable them to meet the demands of the labour market.

Another aim of this course is to bring together students and teachers from different specialization areas (printing, digital media, publishing, visual design) to communicate, change views and ideas about new products, applications and print media innovations.

2. Content of the EDPM Intensive Programs

The 19 days' program is organized by 9 well-known European higher educational institutions which support the print and media industry. The collaboration of the partner institutions has been going on for several years (elaboration of the International Print and Media MSc Program 2002, the European Digital Media Management Intensive Program). The international context of the program is based on their successful co-operation

during the previous 3-weeks intensive program organized by Budapest Tech in 2006 and 2007. Students from the fields of media engineering, management and arts can participate in the EDPM IP. The multidisciplinary program includes the following 3 courses:

- Digital Printing (DP) (2 ECTS)
- Creative Surface design (SD) (2 ECTS)
- International media and environmental management (PMEM) (2 ECTS)

The program brings together the strengths of the partners, assuring mutual benefits for all participants. It fits the vocational program of the partner institutions, and provides a high level innovative international aspect. Six ECTS credit points are given to students who take part in the above courses and pass the relevant exams.

The EDPM program is shorter than the EDMM, with contextual changes. Preparatory work at the students' home institutions became part of the program; at the beginning of the EDPM IP the students should contribute a written essay and introduce the media industry of their home country in the form of a presentation.

Contact courses take place for two and a half weeks (7-8 hours/day). Training is composed of lectures, computer and other lab work, project works and presentations. It is a real challenge, that the project work has to be prepared in a short time frame, in small multicultural groups, and the students have to arrange an exhibition of their results. During the courses they are introduced to environmentally friendly digital printing technologies and future trends of the European print media market. Students have to prepare prepress tasks in creative team work using novel computer aided workflows, application software and digital printing presses.

An outstanding value of the IP is the one day company visit during the preparation of the project work. The program includes practical work at companies and field work, where participants will visit environmental investment projects. The organizers also offer an opportunity to study the applicability of sustainable energy sources in an industrial environment and as a part of the city infrastructure.

3. Results of the 1st EDPM intensive programs

The intensive program at Budapest Tech was organized in the form of a Summer University at the end of the summer 2009. A total of 62 students and teachers from Germany, Finland, Belgium, England, Slovenia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Russia participated in the project. A lot of effort went into the elaborate schedule, balancing lectures, workshops and a company visit while also featuring cultural events such as a sight-seeing tour around Budapest and a trip to Lake Balaton.

The teaching materials, results and impressions of the almost three-week-long summer university have been made available online on the EDPM website (<http://www.rkk.bmf.hu/edmm>).

The lecturers were:

- Toni Spännäri from Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Science (SF);
- Dr. Michael Reiche and Dr. Holger Zellmer from Leipzig University of Applied Science (D);
- Prof. Wolfgang Faigl, Dr. Günter Hübner and Dr. Bernd-Jürgen Matt from Stuttgart Media University (HdM) (D);
- Prof. Dr. Jan Venselaar from Avans University of Applied Science (NL);
- Prof. Dr. Harmann Liebethuth from University of Wuppertal (D);
- Aida Hagshenas, from London College of Communication (UK);
- Inge Sintobin and Gudrun Hermann from Arteveldehogeschool (B);
- Matthew Strauss, Dr. Akos Borbely and Dr. Laszlo Koltai from Budapest Tech (HU);
- Alan Rosenfeld from Apple Ltd (UK);
- Dr. Laszlo Krassay and Krisztian Köles from the city Gödöllő, Mayor's office;
- and the managers of two companies: STI Petőfi Nyomda and Axel Springer in Kecskemét (HU)

The exhibition at the end of the EDPM intensive program showed how creative and productive students can be in such a short time. The international jury had a difficult job to decide which work was the best. Three prizes and an extra award were given for 6 teams, for their printed advertising materials. The exhibited collection includes digitally printed posters, leaflets, but also t-shirts, cups, mugs, ceramic plates and different creative good.

A further outcome will be a booklet to be published by Budapest Tech about the EDPM Intensive Program. This will include the preparatory essays and the most interesting student project work..

Referring to the feedback, the project has been very successful so far, and we really hope that this success will continue in the future, with further events organized in any of the other towns in which partner institutions are located.

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In addition to Dr. Livia Kokas-Palicska's text, we received the following impressions of the event described in the main article, written by two Belgian student participants, Joris Boone and Jens Braet. — Ed.

EDPM students' impressions

On Saturday the 22nd of August 2009, more than forty students from eight different European countries gathered in Budapest for the third edition of the Intensive Programme. During 19 days, they would immerse themselves in three different graphical - related subjects during the European Digital Print Media Summer University, hosted by Budapest Tech.

Welcoming

During the first day of the EDPM, students from all over Europe came by train or plane to the by the Danube divided capital of Hungary, Budapest. Amongst whom were we, two Belgian students from the Arteveldehogeschool. In the evening, we were welcomed by a warm applause under the supervision of organiser Livia Kokas Palicska. She would be very supportive throughout the whole summer university.

From the second day onwards, the students got to know each other. The whole group was invited onto a sightseeing tour along the most interesting places to visit in Budapest. There was also time for one of the many group photo moments ...

In about two hours we saw the Heroes' Square with its impressive statues, and the new Opera House along the Danube. We climbed the stairs to the Castle District, which is famous for its beautiful narrow streets, and Buda Castle. At Fishermen's Bastion, we got an extraordinary view of the Pest side of Budapest city, with the Parliament building and the Danube with its bridges as the biggest eye catchers. We ended our tour at Margaret Bridge, where we were all treated to a very nice dinner in a grill house. Soon the first conversations started. Especially Marie Claire Fogas Braun made an impression, because she was the only student that spoke Hungarian.

First lecture

On Monday morning Matthew Strauss, an English teacher who has lived in Budapest for some years, gave the first lecture. He had made it his personal quest to get the students to know each other.

We were divided in groups according to our day of birth. It seemed not to be evident to find five similarities or differences between as many people. Let alone trying to describe or depict what culture is.

Digital publishing

During the first week, we had many different lectures about digital publishing by many different lecturers. Toni Spännäri of the Finnish university Metropolia got the honour to give the first theoretical lecture about nonimpact printing. His lessons were a good mix of theory and examples that were to illustrate what he tried to explain. It was nice to be able to deepen the knowledge we already got from our own lessons back in Belgium.

Budapest by night

On Wednesday evening, we were all invited by Peter Kovacsics, one of the pedagogues from Budapest Tech, to a boat trip along the Danube. While sitting in the boat, we got an unparalleled view of the city, which is even more astonishing at night, when the beautifully lit buildings and bridges along the river create a very romantic setting. As the boat sailed down the Danube, we were also served a tiny glass of Pálinka, Hungary's most famous alcoholic beverage.

Company visit

After only a few hours of sleep, the group left Budapest for a field trip. The purpose of this excursion was to visit a graphical company. Early that morning we drove by bus to Kecskemét, where we first stopped in the city centre for a visit to the famous Flower House. Afterwards, one half of the group got to visit a packaging factory, while the other half got the chance to visit a newspaper printing plant. In the afternoon, we drove to the Pusta, a part of Hungary where wild horses roam the grassland. For lunch, we ate a traditional Hungarian dinner with goulash soup and pancakes with apricot jam for dessert. Next, we explored a peaceful Hungarian Pusta by horse and carriage, and later that afternoon we witnessed a magnificent horse show.

"Vista that, baby!"

One of the most memorable moments in Budapest Tech itself was most definitely the visit of Allen Rosenfeld of Apple UK. For one and a half hour he

showed us the beauty of the Apple product line and also explained that his company opens a lot of opportunities for other businesses to use the Apple platforms (iPhone App's, ...) for their own benefit. A lot of students were looking forward to his presentation and that reflected in a very pleasant and open atmosphere during the whole of the presentation. Everybody was paying much attention to this informative, yet funny, (Keynote) presentation.

Swimming ... not

A trip to Lake Balaton was planned on Saturday during the second weekend. The giant Balaton lake and the surrounding cities form some sort of Hungarian version of the Spanish island of Ibiza, perfect for sun, sea and fun. Unfortunately, the weather was rainy that day, so instead of going to the beach we went to the village of Tihany, which is well known for its abbey. At noon, we were yet again treated to traditional Hungarian food for lunch. The rest of the day, we drove around the lake stopping here and there to do some sightseeing, and on our way back we also stopped at an ancient water mill.