First Social Hackathon Vechta

ENHANCING CITIZENS' CREATIVE THINKING AND PREFERENCE TOWARDS SOCIAL AND PUBLIC PROJECTS

To ensure the success of innovative projects and ideas, values such as diversity and cooperation are essential strengths. That is why the First Social Hackathon Vechta, organised by the chair of Management Social Services of the University Vechta, was held on the 31st of May and 1st of June 2019. A hackathon is an event in which different persons are joining and forming teams competing against each other to develop digital projects[1]. We used this concept and adapted it to solve issues focussing on social services. 12 participants with different profiles joined the challenge and formed three groups which competed against each other across 12 hours of work.

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1   Briscoe, G. (2014). Digital innovation: The hackathon phenomenon.

About LIKE!

Local governments, citizens, universities and SMEs come together to co-create smarter, more efficient and more innovative services through 9 transnational pilots that cover 3 core themes:

Innovation Culture Approach

Smart Services

Digital Dashboards

Relations to Workpackages

The outcomes of this research project are in line with the Pilot new forms of engagement, as we used and disseminated the concept of "hackathon" among students and citizens of Vechta to enhance innovative projects.

Local partners

Vivien Breitrück   Research Associate, University of Vechta (Chair of Management of Social Services)

Romain Herault   Research Associate, University of Vechta (Chair of Management of Social Services)

Preparing the First Social Hackathon Vechta: "Guerrilla Marketing Campaign"

As the aim of the First Social Hackathon Vechta was to find creative solutions for digitalisation challenges of selected local social service providers, participants that appeared promising had to be recruited from respective academic disciplines and within the citizen pool of Vechta. Hence, students of the University of Vechta were researching on effective and authentic communication to put in place before the hackathon. Besides the launch of the social hackathon on the University's social media, the students promoted the hackaton through a "Guerilla Marketing Campaign" that consisted in disseminating the hashtag "#socialhackathon" on social media (Instagram). In order to do so, the hashtag "#socialhackathon" was sticked and therefore displayed on the floor of one of the main building of the university, so that students passing would notify and immediately search for it online. This hashtag was redirecting to a Xing Event page on which individuals could register as participants of the First Social Hackathon Vechta. In addition, the "Guerrilla Marketing Campaign" included a spontaneous slide pop-up integrated by lecturers in their regular PowerPoint script while teaching seminars.

Slide displayed in seminars, Uni Vechta, Juchem

Hacking and Challenges:

After a short presentation of the rules and of the concept of hackathon, participants discovered which challenge they had to solve and started to brainstorm. The following challenges, representing current societal issues, were distributed:

Hackers hacking on their challenge, Uni Vechta, Breitrück

1.　　**The use of digital tools for the integration of treated drug-addicted persons: This challenge required to analyse the problems of treated** drug-addicted persons to integrate the labour market before suggesting a digital solution that allows them to find a job linked with their skills.

2.　　**Developing a marketing campaign for the LIKE! green mapper „Raum-für-vechta.de":** For this task participants had to find the best way to promote the kick-off meeting for the citizen engagement digital tool "Raum-Für-Vechta" run by the city of Vechta and to encourage citizens to get involved in public policies.

3.　　**Developing a marketing campaign to promote the chairs' alumni speed dating:** Participants tackling this challenge had to develop a communication plan and citizen's engagement strategies to attract as many students and people as possible to the professional vocation day of the chair's study programme.

Presentation

Once the hacking time on the second day was over, all groups got together in a conference room where they enjoyed a deserved break and had a breakfast pitch all together. During this time, one participant of each hacking team had to do a two-minute presentation in front of a jury and other hackers.

Presentation Hackathon, Uni Vechta, Breitrück

Results and winners:

Once all groups presented their project, the jury nominated the team that had to solve the challenge number one "The use of digital tool for the integration of treated drug-addicted persons" as the winner of the competition. This group developed a recruiting app which gives treated drug-addicted persons the chance to be directly and efficiently put in contact with employers, open to those who've had run-ins with drugs from finding a job. Moreover, the app offered different features ensuring that treated drug- addicted persons receiving social help when they would need it. Another interesting feature was an incentive grading system motivating users to be active on the app to gain more points and thus have more chances to find a position. The app is easy to use, has an attractive lay out and is an adapted solution to unemployment affecting treated drug-addicted persons in Germany. Nevertheless, the two other projects presented relevant and promising ideas as well in order to promote their respective events. The members of the group working in challenge 2 have for instance developed a marketing concept using online dissemination tools as well as public events, such as a public puzzle game on Vechta's Europaplatz. This action has the potential to attract non internet users to participate in the kick-off meeting of the digital tool "Raum-Für-Vechta". All that was developed during the hackathon is used to develop the digital culture in Vechta.

Relevance to "Like!"

By planning yearly social hackathons with a variety of themes the chair is backing the aims of the Like! Project on two perspectives. First, this action contributed to the development of a digital culture in Vechta and its surrounding as we are engaging students in the recruitment process of the Hackathon through digital tools and the considered challenges are linked to the digitalisation of social services. Thereby, participants have the opportunity to increase their digital knowledge and to develop digital tools for their fellow citizens. Moreover, the University of Vechta is creating the conditions for enhancing cooperation between students and citizens to tackle societal challenges. Consequently, we are raising and strengthening innovative citizen participation forms in the area of Vechta on the long term.