HPI Hasso Plattner Institut
IT Systems Engineering | Universität Potsdam

Press release

# Westerwelle Patron of the Germany-China Internet Bridge
October 25, 2012

Potsdam/Beijing. The German Federal Government praised the collaborative work that has existed between Germany and China during the last ten years in the area of Tele-Teaching. The so called "Internet Bridge" is an expression of the aspiration to shape the future with partners like China, said Viktor Elbling, Director General for Economic Affairs and Sustainable Development in the Foreign Ministry, at the celebration event in Potsdam at the Hasso Plattner Institute.

Since October 29th 2012, HPI's director Christoph Meinel has been holding English-language lectures for Chinese students as a German professor on themes related to Internet security. At that time, the People's Republic of China first made it possible for their students to take part in live online lectures at a foreign university.

Foreign minister Guido Westerwelle, who was not able to attend the ceremony in Potsdam due to a pressing political engagement, ensured that he will be taking over the patronage of this unique form of scientific cooperation. The HPI and the Beijing University of Technology (BJUT) have agreed to continue and deepen their collaborative work. Envisaged are, for example, collaborative research in semantic analysis and search of multimedia contents, a mutual e-learning platform as well as a scholarship and exchange program. HPI director Meinel was honored for his contributions to the Internet education of Chinese students by the president of BJUT, Prof. Dr. Guangsheng GUO. The Brandenburg state government and the University of Potsdam also offered their congratulations.

The president of the Internet Society of China, Qiheng HU, additionally sent her congratulations by email. She recalled how exactly 25 years ago China became connected to the Internet with German assistance. The first email message on September 20th 1987 from Beijing via Karlsruhe into the wide world read: "Across the Great Wall we can reach every corner in the world."

Werner Zorn played a decisive role at that time in „pulling the strings" just as had three years before in getting Germany connected to the Internet precursor CSNET. The 70-year-old Zorn held the Chair of Communication Systems at the Hasso Plattner Institute from 2001 until his retirement in 2007. As one of the fathers of the German Internet, he was awarded the Federal Order of Merit in 2006.

Prof. Baocai YIN was also present at the Potsdam celebration to commemorate the 10 year anniversary of the Internet Bridge to the "Middle Kingdom". In 2002, as the dean of the computer science department at TU Beijing, he began the teleteaching collaborative work with his colleague Prof. Christoph Meinel, who  at that time was at the University of Trier. In 2008, YIN led the information and communication technology team of the Olympics in Beijing.

Further guests at the ceremony were the director of the SAP Labs in China, Xiaoqun Clever, as well as participants in the Chinese-German workshop for cloud computing and high-performance computing techniques, which has been taking place since Monday. On the Chinese side, 15 scientists from universities in Shanghai, Beijing, Nanjing, Wuhan, Hangzhou and Hefei have been featured speakers and on the German side researchers from Aachen, Bayreuth, Berlin, Chemnitz, Cottbus, Dresden, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart, Paderborn and Potsdam have been presenting their results.

**Significant Expansion in Collaborative Work between HPI and China**

In the meantime, the HPI, which Prof. Meinel has led since 2004 as well as the Department of Internet Technologies and Systems, has significantly expanded its collaboration with China. In November 2011, a branch of the HPI Research School, in the research college, could begin its work at Nanjing University. Currently five Chinese PhD students under the joint supervision of their professors are contributing research to the topic of "Mass Data Analytics and Knowledge Discovery" at the 50 member HPI Research School. Regularly, the HPI conducts German-Chinese workshops on the topic of cloud computing together with Shanghai University. The Communication University of China (CUC) is also working with the Potsdam Institute - who operates Europe's first innovation school for university students - on the creation of a "Design Thinking" program.

A piece of scientific history had already been written in 2002 with the "Internet Bridge" in German-Chinese collaborative e-learning when the HPI set another milestone at the beginning of September 2012. It was then that the Hasso Plattner Institute began a new era in knowledge transfer offering open and free of charge online courses on information technology topics. Since then more than 15,000 interested participants have been using the contents presented on the interactive Internet educational platform www.openhpi.de . The first on course, led by founder Prof. Hasso Plattner, co-founder and chairman of the supervisory board of the software company SAP, led participants two months long through the topic of a revolutionary main memory database technology. Starting on November 5th HPI director Meinel will be offering a German online course on the technical foundation of the Internet.

**Profile of the Hasso-Plattner-Institute**

The Hasso Plattner Institute for Software Systems Engineering GmbH (HPI) in Potsdam is Germany's university excellence center for IT Systems Engineering. It is the only university institution in Germany offering bachelor and master programs in "IT Systems Engineering" – a practical and engineering-oriented course of studies in computer science, in which currently 460 students are enrolled. The HPI School of Design Thinking is Europe's first innovation school for university students and is based on the Stanford d.school model. It offers 120 places for a supplementary study. There are a total of ten HPI professors and a further 50 guest professors, lecturers and contract teachers at the Institute. HPI carries out research noted for its standard of excellence in its nine topic areas, as well as in the HPI Research School for PhD candidates, with its further research branches in Cape Town, Haifa and Nanjing. HPI teaching and research focuses on the foundation and application of large-scale, highly complex and interconnected IT systems. The development and exploration of user-driven innovations for every part of life is an additional area of emphasis. HPI always achieves the highest positions in the CHE university ranking. Since the beginning of September 2012, the Institute has offered openHPI - an interactive Internet educational network that is open to everyone.

**For more about the Germany-China „Internet Bridge" please see:**
http://www.hpi.uni-potsdam.de/meinel/projekte/internet_bridge.html

http://www.hpi.uni-potsdam.de/presse/mitteilung/beitrag/globales-e-learning-internet-bruecke-deutschland-china-wird-zehn-jahre-alt.html

**For more information about the China-German workshops please see:**
http://www.hpi.uni-potsdam.de/meinel/lehrstuhl/symposia/sino_german_c_hpc_ws_2012.html

http://www.hpi.uni-potsdam.de/presse/mitteilung/beitrag/hochleistungsrechnen-in-der-cloud-deutsch-chinesisches-symposium.html

Press contact HPI: presse@hpi.uni-potsdam.de
Hans-Joachim Allgaier, M.A., Spokesman, Tel.: +49 331 55 09-119,
Mobile: +49 179 267 54 66, e-mail allgaier@hpi.uni-potsdam.de;
Rosina Geiger, Press and Public Relations Officer, Tel.: +49 331 55 09-175,
e-mail: rosina.geiger@hpi.uni-potsdam.de