

Press Release

HPI expands its China Cooperation with an Innovation School in Beijing

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Potsdam/Beijing. After a two year preparation phase, teaching has begun at the School of Design Thinking located at Beijing's Communication University of China (CUC), China's largest media university. It follows in the footsteps of Europe's first innovation school for university students - the HPI School of Design Thinking at Hasso Plattner Institute in Potsdam. The corresponding program at CUC has begun with 60 students and 20 teachers from the various faculties of the Beijing communication university. Design Thinking experts from Potsdam had previously trained a total of 25 Chinese coaches in special workshops.

The new facility will initially be part of the Animation School of CUC, where Prof. Ulrich Weinberg, the director of the HPI School of Design Thinking has been active as a guest professor since 2004. It will, however, be open to students and professors from all faculties to offer an education to interested parties from as many fields of study as possible. "There are already plans to expand Design Thinking activities to other Beijing universities in the coming years," Weinberg said. To establish a profound innovation program that not only focuses on media-related topics in the future, the team at the HPI School of Design Thinking in Potsdam will continue to hold regular workshops in China.

Prof. Christoph Meinel, director of the Hasso Plattner Institute, is pleased with the expansion of HPI's engagement in China: "Since 2002 we have been involved with the Beijing University of Technology (BJUT) in the field of information technology and we have had a branch of our research college, the HPI Research School, in Nanjing since 2010. We continue to work closely with computer science researchers from the Shanghai University in cloud computing. The CUC School of Design Thinking is now a further important cooperation partner in China," said Meinel. In his words, the CUC is "the cradle of Chinese radio and television." It is therefore the fitting institution to make the innovation method of Design Thinking known in China," said the scientist, who also heads the HPI specialized area of Internet Technologies and Systems.

From the start, cooperation with industrial enterprises will be a pillar of the Design Thinking curriculum of CUC, which was founded 50 years ago and is considered the largest media university in the world. The innovation projects carried out by Chinese students can be realized with both Asian as well as European industrial partners. "This allows the client to benefit from different cultural perspectives," Weinberg says. According to his data, companies such as Panasonic, Hewlett Packard, Siemens and SAP have already expressed their interest.

The next new member of the innovation school family will be the School of Design Thinking in Malaysia. It is scheduled to open in February 2013 in Kuala Lumpur at a ceremony attended by the Malaysian prime minister.

Five Years of HPI School of Design Thinking – a Success Story

The Potsdam HPI School of Design Thinking, or D-School as it is known internally, is the first innovation school European-wide for university students and is modeled on the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford University (California) – which became famous as the "d.school". The D-School in Potsdam is celebrating its five year anniversary. The postgraduate course "Design Thinking," which is unique in Germany, has been offered since the winter semester 2007/2008. The D-School has developed rapidly in the five years since its founding.

What started as an innovation school in the greater Berlin/Potsdam area has in the meantime developed into a European center for innovation where students from 22 nations and 75 disciplines work out innovative solutions for all areas of life based on Design Thinking. As a result of high demand and success, HPI increased the capacity of its innovation school in 2010 from 40 to 120 places.

From Palo Alto and Potsdam, Design Thinking has spread out all over the globe in the last five years. Whether in Sydney, Tokyo, Beijing, Bangalore, Singapore, Moscow, Paris, Madrid or Sao Paolo - in the last years workshops, seminar programs, university majors or entire training centers have emerged worldwide with Design Thinking as their focus. With multiple partners in the world the Hasso Plattner Institute is currently conducting talks about cooperation in Design Thinking training.

Project partners of the HPI School of Design Thinking in Potsdam include renowned brands, public institutions and interest groups. For example, Potsdam Design Thinking students were involved in the development of a shopping service for the retail group Metro that operates on the drive-in principle and gives customers a faster and more comfortable shopping experience.

In the last five years there have been projects with more than 70 different partners, among them Deutsche Bahn, Deutsche Post, Deutsche Telekom,

Otto, Janssen-Cilag and several foundations. In the meantime, 10 of the 20 largest companies in German have already had contact with the HPI School of Design Thinking.

There have been more than 500 graduates of the Potsdam innovation school. They are - just to name a few examples - active as Senior User Experience Designer at Nokia, Innovation Researcher at HYVE AG, Head of Innovation & eBusiness at Francotyp-Postalia GmbH or as a design thinker in Innovation Management at the SAP lab in Palo Alto, California.

Design Thinking is a multidisciplinary approach used to develop forward-looking products, services and concepts. It combines creative thinking and working processes from design with methods from technology and business. The needs of the user are the central focus. Design Thinking is an innovation method that can solve complex problems in a creative and user-friendly way, while taking into account economic viability and technical feasibility.

Students in the final phase of their university studies - whether Master, "Diplom" or "Magister" - can apply twice a year for a one year supplementary training in "Design Thinking." The working method of the HPI D-School is revolutionary in that not only the four to five students per working group come from different disciplines, but their professors and teachers as well. Next to computer scientists could be usability experts, designers, economists, lawyers, all types of engineers, physicians, biologists, psychologists and social scientists all working together in teams on innovation solutions and prototypes.

Founder Prof. Hasso Plattner made the decision in 2008 to supplement the Design Thinking training program in Potsdam and Palo Alto with a joint, multi-year innovation research program. Over 30 scientists at HPI and Stanford University have since then been conducting project research on the factors that ultimately make Design Thinking so successful. The third scientific publication addressing this topic is due for release shortly. The Potsdam Institute opened the HPI Academy (www.hpi-academy.de) in 2009, making Design Thinking offers also available to managers.

Facts and Figures on the HPI School of Design Thinking in Potsdam

- Founded in May 2007
- Part of the Hasso Plattner Institute for Software Systems Engineering at the University of Potsdam
- One-year supplementary study program with certificate upon completion
- No tuition fee
- Focus: Innovation
- 36 professors and coaches from various disciplines
- More than 500 students from 2007 until today
- 120 students per year
- Participants from 22 nations and 75 disciplines

- Open to all subject areas
- Language of instruction: English

More than 50 facilities in Europe have purchased the specially-designed D-School work furniture for their companies

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