

Press Release

openHPI: Already 3,000 registrations for open online course "Semantic Web"

Januar 28, 2013

Potsdam. Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) reports high interest worldwide in the latest online course at its new open online Internet educational platform www.openhpi.de. Already more than 3,000 have signed up for the third course starting on February 4th. The course, which will guide participants through the Semantic Web, is free of charge. Registration is still possible. Those who successfully complete the course will be rewarded with a certificate from HPI.

"The conventional Internet search reaches the limits of its power when the computer is expected to correctly interpret the meaning of information and not simply a character string. How the information expressed in natural language is extended in the so-called Semantic Web to enable a machine-readable interpretation of its meaning – semantics – is what we would like to show course participants", said course instructor Dr. Harald Sack, senior researcher in the HPI research group Internet Technologies and Systems.

"Semantic web technologies enable the retrieval of information and the search for it in a more precise and comprehensive way," Sack added. "Previously scattered and heterogeneous data can be mapped based on formal common knowledge – ontologies – and thus combined together," said the Potsdam scientist.

The course will initially deal with the basic architecture of the Semantic Web and then focus on the representation of knowledge and logic. Subsequently, the fundamentals of description logics and the Web Ontology Language (OWL) based on it are examined. Finally, applications in the "Web of Data" will be treated. Key terms include: ontological engineering, knowledge discovery, linked data and semantic search. According to HPI, for successful participation it is necessary to have a basic knowledge of the principles of logic, an understanding of Internet technologies and a fundamental knowledge of database technologies.

The Institute launched www.openhpi.de in September 2012 with a course conducted by HPI founder Prof. Hasso Plattner in English. A total of 13,000 enrolled in the course on the new In-Memory database technology. 2,132 participants received a certificate upon successfully passing the final exam at the end of October. The second online course, taught by HPI director Prof.

Christoph Meinel, was offered in German and covered the technological functionality of the Internet. There were 10,000 who signed up for the course. At the beginning of the year, 1,662 participants received a certificate attesting to their successful completion.

openHPI: Modeled on Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC)

The new Internet educational platform www.openhpi.de at Hasso Plattner Institute for Software Systems Engineering at the University of Potsdam (HPI) offers free, open-access online courses to many participants. Course content focuses on issues concerning information technology and computer science. openHPI follows the model of “Massive Open Online Courses” as they were first offered at Stanford University and then later at other elite universities in the United States. In contrast to traditional lecture portals, courses at www.openhpi.de follow a fixed two month time frame. A course is composed of a defined range of offers such as teaching videos, self-tests, regular homework and exam questions. These offers are combined with a social platform where participants can exchange experience with other participants as well as with course supervisors. Here, they can also clarify questions and discuss further topics. The participants themselves decide on the nature and scope of their activities. They can make their own contributions to the course, for example in blog posts or tweets, which they can refer to in the forum. Other learners then have the chance to make a comment, discuss or expand on what has been said.

In this way, learners, teachers and content become linked with each other in a social learning network.

Profile of 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 450 students are enrolled. The HPI School of Design Thinking is Europe’s first innovation school and is based on the Stanford model of the d.school. 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 at the HPI Research School for PhD candidates, with its 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 all areas of life is an additional area of importance. HPI always earns the highest positions in the CHE university ranking.

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