Aktuelle Meldung

clean-IT Forum: Ideas sought for more energy-efficient digitization

31. März 2021

The Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI) has created a virtual "clean-IT Forum." Sustainability experts from all over the world can exchange solution approaches for digitalization with lower energy consumption in the new channel of the openHPI platform. The forum launches March 31, 2021 at https://open.hpi.de/channels/clean-it-forum/.

"While digital technologies are indispensable for reducing climate-damaging carbon emissions and achieving global sustainability goals, information technology itself currently still requires too much energy," says HPI Director Prof. Christoph Meinel. Therefore, he adds, ever-increasing digitization must be prevented from negatively impacting the climate.

"Science and politics should set strategic priorities so that, for example, more efficient algorithms are developed and used. This is how our planet can be protected, recover and thrive," the computer scientist says. According to Meinel, "Sustainability by Design" in digital technology must become the most important development principle for IT systems worldwide.

Platform for international exchange of sustainability experts

In the future, the forum set up by HPI will be used as an international exchange platform for research institutions, the IT industry, politicians and interest groups to discuss issues of sustainable digitization. "The goal is to raise the awareness of the global energy footprint of IT systems," says Meinel. The Potsdam-based scientist is calling on international experts from the field of digital engineering to propose solutions and discuss how the ever-growing energy requirements of data centers and applications, such as cloud computing, media streaming, artificial intelligence and blockchain technology, can be managed.

In doing so, the "clean-IT Forum" is intended to be open to all interested reference groups who are concerned with reducing the energy needs of digital technologies, and developing guidelines, algorithms and procedures for this purpose, and putting them up for discussion. "Everyone is invited to our platform to continuously present and share new insights, suggestions and techniques via video or web link," says Meinel. The director of HPI is certain that the global community of sustainability experts will spark exciting discussions at the clean-IT Forum.

Already, a good dozen HPI scientists are presenting their own solution approaches and ideas in the clean-IT Forum. Researchers from other universities and associations such as eco-Association of the Internet Industry and experts from companies such as SAP and the Otto Group Solution Provider will also be making contributions. Even the HPI student club "Sustainability" will be offering suggestions on how to save energy in everyday digital computing.

Background to the interactive platform openHPI

The Hasso Plattner Institute launched its interactive educational offerings as a pioneer among European scientific institutions on September 5, 2012 - on the platform https://open.hpi.de. Since then, it has offered free access to current university knowledge from the rapidly changing fields of information technology and innovation. So far, this has mainly been done in German, English and Chinese. In the fall of 2017, however, openHPI also offered online translation and subtitling of a course in eleven world languages for the first time. More than 927,000 course enrollments have now been registered on openHPI. More than 266,000 people from 180 countries belong to the platform's permanent user base. It is currently growing rapidly. For particularly successful participants in its "Massive Open Online Courses," or MOOCs for short, the institute has issued a good 100,000 certificates to date. The openHPI annual program includes numerous offerings for IT beginners and experts. The 80 or so courses offered in the past can still be used for self-study - also free of charge. Students can now also receive credit at their university for completing openHPI courses. Those who want to watch video lessons from the courses while on the move, even if no Internet connection is guaranteed (for example, on an airplane), can also use the openHPI app for Android mobile devices, iPhones or iPads. Partner platforms that work with the same learning technology are openSAP and OpenWHO. In addition, the HPI platform is used at the KI Campus. This project, funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research, aims to strengthen competencies on the topic of artificial intelligence among the general population.