



PRESS RELEASE

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Training surgeons with a game console

The “Life Science Meets IT Hackathon”, which took place from 20 to 22 May 2016, brought together 80 people from the fields of IT, science, medicine, and business to work on challenges in the health sector and transformed Heidelberg’s Marsilius Arcades into an interdisciplinary development centre for fifty-four hours. Minister Theresia Bauer praised the participants’ dedication to tackling the challenges of digitalisation.

Heidelberg. A business student wearing smart glasses sits at a table full of 3D printers; next to her is a surgeon using an endoscope, surrounded by laptops, cables, and the hectic buzz of a development team. Just one of the many unusual sights that awaited guests to the “Life Science meets IT Hackathon”. The participants’ common goal was to come up with technical solutions to medical problems within the space of fifty-four hours.

“Today’s challenges call for new forms of cooperation and new ways of developing ideas”, said Theresia Bauer, Baden-Württemberg’s Minister of Science, Research and the Arts. “Baden-Württemberg is dedicated to exploring the opportunities offered by digitalisation. This Hackathon is the perfect setting for doing so.” Bauer took the time personally to open the final celebration attended by all participants and by guests from the political and business sectors.

At a Hackathon – a neologism coined from the words “hacking” and “marathon” – participants are given a tight timeframe in which to develop prototypes and matching business models. A total of thirteen teams rose to the challenge of tackling health-related problems. One of the winning teams developed a learning system for trainee surgeons using parts of a game console. The surgeon’s movements were digitised and linked with image material from real operations. This method may enable aspiring surgeons to practise endoscopic interventions under realistic conditions in the near future.

The Hackathon was organised jointly by German EIT Health, Heidelberg Startup Partners, the University of Heidelberg, and Hackerstolz. The organisers were delighted with the outcome: “From our point of view, the Hackathon was a complete success. The spirit of this Hackathon is highly motivating, thanks to the boundless enthusiasm of young talents who managed to develop prototypes for health solutions in only two days,” said Armin Pscherer, CEO of the German EIT Health GmbH.

The University of Heidelberg’s Marsilius Arcades provided a suitable setting for the creative weekend. In his welcoming speech, Thomas Rausch, director of the Marsilius College, stressed the innovation potential of the university and the hospital for promoting a healthy lifestyle and an active old age. The open architecture and the close proximity of a surgical department offer enhanced opportunities for exchanging ideas about medical conundrums and developing and testing possible solutions, products and services. Promising ideas can then serve as cornerstones

for startups. “Heidelberg offers an ideal setting for connecting life sciences with IT”, explains Thomas Prexl, managing director of Heidelberg Startup Partners and head of the Startup Bureau at Heidelberg Technology Park. “The city is home not only to excellent research institutions but also to important software companies like SAP that are closely involved in the health sciences. A good mix for innovation.”

Eighty participants – from other European countries and the United States as well as Germany – came to Heidelberg to address health issues intensively, asking questions like: How can IT be used to improve doctor-patient communication? Can digital solutions allow early detection of dementia? How can patients’ hospital stays and treatment be made more pleasant, but also more efficient, using technical means?

A six-person jury comprising representatives from the science, health, and IT sectors as well as investors awarded prizes in three categories: “best technical solution/best hack”, “best business case”, and the “most patient-centric solution”. An audience prize was also awarded. Each of the winning teams will receive 10,000 euros as startup funding to found a company. The winners of the audience prize will also be eligible to take part in the German EIT Health Business Plan Contest.

The event was supported financially by the sponsors Merck and SAP and by Heidelberg Technology Park. Other companies contributed by presenting unsolved medical problems and by supplying materials and equipment. Companies like Janssen and Microsoft identified health-related issues for hacking, while Roche gave access to its 3D printing equipment. A number of experts were present to advise the participants.

For further information on the event, please go to

<http://www.lifesciencemeetsit.eu>

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The winning teams in the different categories:

Best Business Case and Audience Award:

iSurgeon – digitally assisted learning in surgery

Best technical solution/best hack:

Habilitas – Augmenting Brain Functionality

Most patient-centric solution:

Transparency in doctor-patient communication (Med.INION) – Enhancing information exchange between doctor and patient

Microsoft Award:

LifeSense – Measuring data for healthier lifestyles

Heidelberg Startup Partners e.V.

The Heidelberg Startup Partners are a joint initiative of Heidelberg's research and educational institutes together with the Heidelberg Technology Park and the IHK Rhein-Neckar. The aim of the organisation are the promotion of scientific, technological and knowledge-based foundations. In addition to the organization of a variety of events, a five-headed, interdisciplinary team supports founders, entrepreneurs and people who are interested in founding an organisation in Heidelberg in finding financial support, laboratories and offices.

<http://www.heidelberg-startup-partners.de>

EIT Health

With more than 140 organizations in 14 countries and a total budget of 2 billion Euro, EIT Health is one of the largest healthcare initiatives worldwide. EIT Health promotes entrepreneurship and innovates in healthy living and active ageing, with the aim to improve quality of life and healthcare across Europe. The German Co-Location Center (German EIT Health GmbH) supports 11 Core Partners and 15 Associate Partners spanning key areas of healthcare including pharma, medTech, BioTech, DigiHealth, etc

<https://eithealth.eu/>

Hackerstolz e.V.

Hackerstolz is a young association in the metropolitan area Rhine-Neckar. It organizes hackathons, facilitates digital culture and aims at increasing the rate of women in the IT sector. According to the culture of hacking, we understand hacking not as the criminal invasion in the computer systems of others, but as a creative examination of technology.

<http://www.hackerstolz.de>

The following pictures can be made publicly available:

You can receive high-resolution files by sending an email request or by downloading them here:
<http://www.lifesciencemeetsit.eu/documentation/>



Theresia Bauer, Baden-Württemberg's Minister of Science, Research and the Arts opened the Pitch & Award Ceremony



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Group picture of the „health hackers“ in the courtyard of the Marsilius Arcades



Winning team iSurgeon – could convince the jury and the audience.



Impression in the Marsilius Arcades.



The 3 winning teams: Habilitas – Augmenting Brain Functionality („best technical solution/best hack“), Med.INION („most patient-centric solution“), iSurgeon („best business case and audience award“).



The popular trophies: Designed by 3D-designer Ciaran Behan und created with 3D-printing by Roche.