

# Mobile Application for Android

## Técnico Lisboa

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## Learning Report

**Abstract**—The main objective of this activity was to develop an Android application for Instituto Superior Técnico (IST). For that, I've joined a new team that is part of Direção de Serviços de Informática (DSI) - FenixEdu. Along the development I've encountered challenges that required cooperation between the elements and that couldn't happen if we didn't have a good work-flow and communication. I can say that I've vastly improved my communication skills and didn't have any problem transmitting my ideas. With the help of the team and everyone involved we delivered something that we believe that will improve the ease of curricular information access.

**Index Terms**—FenixEdu, IST, Communication, Cooperation, Difficulties

## 1 INTRODUCTION

IN the middle of my progress through college I already knew that real world problems were much different than what we'd would encounter throughout our degree. My father who is working in the information technologies field many times gave me a glimpse of what are some of those problems. This activity not only allowed me to experience some of that but allowed me to develop skills needed to lead with a real world problem, with a real world team.

## 2 THE REAL WORLD TEAM

## 2.1 Communication

No project could ever be done without coordination and, for that to happen, it is required communication between all team members.

My team, the mobile development team, was composed by two elements (me and Ricardo Barata). The team was small but it required coordination between other IST groups. For

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instance, in order to advertise the mobile application we needed to enter in contact with the groups that managed the news that appeared as headline on the institution's website. The design team also needed details about the concept of the application in order to make fliers and posters that were in sync with the core of the application. All these management required pre-established dates so along the development process of the application we needed to define the date of conclusion of our project.

When discussing with other teams (and even within our team) we need to make our ideas and intentions clear. There cannot be any second guesses of what is the direction of our project. I consider this skill as the most important skill throughout our career. Communicating well and making our intentions clear can ultimately increase our capability of dealing with other people.

## 2.2 Coordination

At the end, our team needed to establish a deadline so other teams could coordinate the release of their work. Throughout our degree we also have many delivery deadlines and missing one would result as zero grade on that component. But with this project I've learned that missing our deadline would harm other

[illegible]

team's projects. Institution wise, there is also an investment in each project and a trust that the projects will be concluded in the intended deadline.

Ricardo worked full time at DSI and I had to organize my schedule in order to complete all the tasks that were assigned to me. We had a weekly meeting where we would discuss the state of the project and its direction.

Working in this project allowed me to think how overwhelming a project can be - I didn't have the time that previously I'd have taken from granted (for study or other off-class activities) and it allowed me to be more disciplined and grow a responsibility that most of the times we don't have or concern in college.

### 2.3 Difficulties

Between March and June and from beginning of September I had to attend classes and therefore couldn't dedicate all my time to the project. Because Ricardo worked full time at DSI I had to synchronize with what was being done and continue my assigned tasks. The worst period of time was in fact when I had deliveries of degree projects because they had, indeed, to be completed. This allowed me to improve even more on my time management. Now I had to partition my time to allow time to study, going to classes and working at FenixEdu. Since I don't live in Lisbon I had to manage with the limited bus schedule that was available.

Within the team, I neither had any kind of problem (besides some technical ones) nor difficulty expressing what was happening and communicating it with the rest of the team. But being part of the team and having this project, allowed me to further improve those skills and see them applied in other contexts.

### 2.4 What I've learned

Going through all the difficulties and successes I can say that it was and still is a great learning experience (as of December 2014 I continue my work at FenixEdu). Having the opportunity to join and work with a great team that would help you when you had problems and show you an all different scope of what a big project

really is, is something that I'm thankful to be part of.

It allowed to improve my communication skills with everyone and apply them in other situations thus allowing to clarify ideas and objectively transmit the concept that I wanted to illustrate. I improved my time management allowing me to avail it for every event that occurred (was it study, work, degree projects or leisure).

I could finally grasp what it was like working with a real team in a real problem - all the management that was necessary in order to provide results to the community. I know that the environment of IST can be different from other places. For instance our main target were students and that will certainly differ in other enterprises thus we'll always learn something new if we shift our perspective to other fields. Different projects require different requirements and solution and ultimately different experiences.

What I've learned is not something that it is taught to us directly. We need to actively search for those experiences and learn something from them in order to improve our soft skills and grow as individuals.

## 3 CONCLUSION

After this experience I can say that I've improved a lot my interactions with everyone and there is always room to continue improving.

It is something that you don't learn objectively in school. After this project, I can say that it is something that everyone should try while on their degree in order to not only gain some introspect on their field of study but to improve their interactions with other people and finally make that experience worthwhile!

A great cooperation between the elements of the team allowed us to deliver a product that we believe that will change how IST's information/data is accessed and delivered!

There will be challenges and they'll bring difficulties - surpassing those difficulties will contribute greatly for our growth as individuals. It is a time where we leave our "comfort zone" and tackle real world problems in order to bring new solutions because that is what society really wants - our contribution.



Figure 1. FenixEdu Team (I'm in the middle with the black t-shirt)

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I'd like to thank the FenixEdu [1] team who helped me incorporate this small project into something that is now part of IST's institution and helped conquer the mobile field that lacked until this year. Special thanks to Ricardo Barata who I've worked directly with and that without him the project would not be what it is today.

## REFERENCES

[1] <http://fenixedu.org/> (visited on 27th December 2014)

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