NEIIST: Event organization and promotion
&
Escola de Inverno

Nuno Xu

Activities Report

Abstract—This document reports 2 activities performed in the scope of Independent Studies course. Initially carrying out event organization and promotion for Núcleo Estudantil de Informática do Instituto Superior Técnico (NEIIST), I was assigned an iOS workshop that was behind schedule. The workshop was postponed to the 2nd semester and Professor Luis Marcelino agreed to be the speaker, it is now on hold until we get closer to the new date, 9th November, 2014. In late December, I joined *Escola de Inverno*, an initiative to teach programming to children between 13 and 17 years old, were I was assigned the creation of a poster design. As I had no experience in graphical design, research was done into recent designs and guidelines. The final result was received positively, with some points to correct in an upcoming version. Afterwards I participated in the planning and execution of a *Escola de Inverno* trial event, where I monitored the group of 13 to 15 year old children that participated in the event. The event was a great success, inspiring a change to *Escola de Inverno* scheduling, from a 1 week event to a monthly event, and gaining a great amount of the university's support.

Index Terms—NEIIST, CoderDojo, Tecnico, workshop, *Escola*, *Inverno*, iOS, Trial, IST, poster, design.

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1 INTRODUCTION

THIS report aims to present the activities undertaken as part of the Independent Studies course. It will cover my work done as a NEIIST Collaborator and as a *Escola de Inverno* Organizer, and as such, the document's body is divided in two major sections, each with their own introductory segment and descriptions of what was done and the purpose of the respective activity.

2 NEIIST: EVENT ORGANIZATION AND PROMOTION

NEIIST is a student organization that aims to integrate, support and stimulate all groups, communities and initiatives that impact the course of any Instituto Superior Técnico (IST) student that is interested in Information Technology (IT) [1]. I applied to NEIIST as an event organizer and promoter, whose job consisted in contacting speakers, taking care of event logistics and promoting the event in social networks and through posters/banners [2]. The events covered by the activity are those that occur independently, not belonging to a large event grouping, such as Semana Informática (SINFO) or Semana Empresarial e Tecnológica (SET). Although the application was sent 20th October, 2014 acceptance in the activity only came in 9th November, 2014. At this date all events that were covered by the activity were already being prepared and organized, which resulted in not having any work assigned to me for a week and a half.

2.1 iOS Workshop

As of 23rd November, 2014, an iOS Workshop event was not progressing in its preparations,

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(1.0) Excelent	ACTIVITY					DOCUMENT						
(0.8) Very Good	Objectives x2	Options x1	Execution x4	S+C x1	SCORE	Structure x0.25	Ortogr. x0.25	Gramm. x0,.25	Format x0.25	Title x0.5	Filename x0.5	SCORE
(0.6) Good												
(0.4) Fair	2	1	4	0.7	7.7	0.25	0.25	0.2	0.25	0.5	0.5	1.95
(0.2) Weak												

so it was reassigned to me and Diogo Lachica, another participant in the activity.

The Workshop's goal is to provide a beginner's level introduction to development in Apple's mobile platforms, which run iOS as their operating system. Furthermore it will be performed in collaboration with Núcleo de Estudantes de Engenharia de Telecomunicações e Informática (NEETI) and IEEE-IST Student Branch (IEEE-IST).

The first task was to re-schedule the event, as it was initially scheduled to be performed in the last weeks of the 1st semester, but due to its late start in preparation, there were no time slots available during this period, so we decided to postpone it to the 2nd semester between 16th March, 2015 and 20th March, 2015. This was the earliest time frame available, as the start of the 2nd semester had already major events such as SINFO and SET.

The next step consisted in finding a speaker, as it is the task that takes the longest time due to the slow nature of written communication. We sent an invitation to a previous speaker, Professor Luis Marcelino, who had performed an iOS workshop in IST 2 years ago, and an open invitation to the researchers at Instituto de Engenharia de Sistemas e Computadores - Investigação e Desenvolvimento (INESC-ID). Fortunately, Professor Luis Marcelino responded positively, expressing desire to return to IST.

The event organization is now interrupted until we arrive closer to the scheduled date, as event logistics and promotion are not steps that can be performed so soon before the event.

3 *Escola de Inverno*

An initiative created by professor Miguel Mira da Silva, *Escola de Inverno* is an event, organized and performed by IST students, that introduces children and teenagers between 8th grade and 11th grade to the world of programming. It aims to increase awareness on this useful skill and to provide insight to Information Systems and Computer Engineering courses.

3.1 State of activity at admission

Having joined the organization during late December, at a time where some members of the organization were resigning, the activity was already half-way through. An online survey had been performed and a number of meetings had been carried out, during which *Escola de Inverno* affiliated itself with CoderDojo, a global network of volunteer groups that teach programming, in order to improve image and visibility. Furthermore, in addition to the original plan of performing the event in April, it was decided to hold a trial run on 10th January, 2015, as to carry the event out, at least once, before the end of the semester (and the end of Independent Studies course). All of the tasks were also already assigned to all of the organization members, with the exception of the one assigned to me, Poster Design.

3.2 Poster design

Work started by analyzing recent posters and researching poster design guidelines, due to my inexperience in graphical design. While it inspired me to imagine various different designs, it also helped set a boundary to limits of my capabilities, as I only had about 3 days to create a ready to print draft of the design. Afterwards a series of hand drawn drafts were created, resulting in a last draft, similar to Figure 1, containing the moto: Imagine, Code, Create (Imagina, Coda, Cria, in portuguese). Finally the poster was drawn digitally using vector graphics, which makes drawing geometrical designs easier and the image scalable to any resolution, resulting in the design in Figure 1.

Opinions on the design were mainly positive, with criticism centered on the choice of colors, that may be too dark for the target audience. It is now due to a slight redesign, in order to fix the issues pointed out and have better similarity with the event's pamphlet.

3.3 Trial planning

The plan for the trial run started by separating the children in 8th and 9th grade from the teenagers in 10th and 11th grade, as their learning capacity and existing knowledge would be considerably different, in addition to the friction that the age difference may cause between them. Content planned consisted in a set of

Figure 1. Poster created

[4], a series of exercises that uses simple commands to teach scripting concepts, and App Inventor TalkToMe [5], a tutorial to create an Android application using the App Inventor platform. Original exercises were created, but were later abandoned, as they were deemed too difficult for an introductory session.

Time	8th and 9th grades	10th and 11th grades
15:00	Welcome	
15:15	PlayLab	CodeHS Hour of Code
	Robots	
16:30	Recess and Snack Time	
17:00	Course Presentation	
17:15	App Inventor TalkToMe	
	Robots	
17:45	Survey	
18:00	Ending	

Table 1
Trial Event Plan

exercises that the trainees would try to perform on their own, but at least 2 members of the organization would be readily available to help them achieve the solution. Additionally they would experiment with LEGO's programmable robots, Mindstorms, but as we only had one available, they would be limited to around 15 minutes and in groups of 3, in order make the opportunity available to everyone.

Applications for the event were gathered online using the EventBrite platform, which provided us with an easy way of counting and gathering information about the participants.

5 days before the event we had a final meeting, where we chose the location of the event and arranged for their reservation, namely the 2 large, 20 computer laboratories in Rede das Novas Licenciaturas (RNL), and obtained full support of IST's Departamento de Engenharia Informática (DEI) support for this event, giving us a budget to acquire the supplies we needed to carry out the event.

On the eve of the trial session, a schedule was created that consisted in two parallel 3 hour sessions, one for the 8th and 9th grade group and another for the 10th to 11th grade group, which is represented in Table 1. In the table can be found the resources that we used to provide the exercises, namely PlayLab [3], a collection of exercises that uses Scratch to teach programming concepts, CodeHS Hour of Code

3.4 Trial Day

Taking place at 10th January, 2015 the trial session started with a briefing an hour before starting, in order to assign people to each grade group and other miscellaneous tasks like setting up the snacks for recess. I was assigned to the 8th and 9th grade group and our work consisted in monitoring the trainees from that age group and provide support during exercise solving, while also escorting them through the computer laboratories and the space where the robots would be located. The trial event started at the programmed time, 15:00, and while the schedule went as planned in Table 1, the trainees were remarkably faster at doing the exercises as we originally thought, so additional series of exercises were searched for and given at the time.

The event received appraisal from the participants and their parents, commending the great support and availability of the monitors, and how fun attending the event was, but criticizing on the easiness of the exercises.

3.5 Aftermath

With great feedback on its trial run and the full support of IST's DEI, *Escola de Inverno* now aims to be a periodic event, occurring in

the first Saturday of every month, diverging from the initial plans of being performed during a single week in Winter. 70 children and teenagers have already applied for the session in 7th February, 2014, and an additional 26 for 7th March, 2014.

The current goal is to prepare the event for the monthly periodicity, and to reduce the work load necessary for subsequent sessions. Additionally posters, brochures and a website are still in progress, and we are working to improve this event for the months to come.

4 CONCLUSION

Initially applying to NEIIST: Event Organization and Promotion, I only gained acceptance in the activity in 9th November, 2014 and assigned work in 23rd November, 2014, organizing an iOS workshop that was behind schedule. As it was very late in the semester, the scheduled date of the workshop was already full with other events, which prompted a reschedule to the 2nd semester, between 16th March, 2015 and 20th March, 2015. Finding a speaker proved easier than anticipated, with Professor Luis Marcelino, a previous speaker, expressing desire to return to IST. With a defined schedule and a defined speaker, the event's preparations are well on its way. But it is now on hold, as the next steps should not be performed so soon before the planned date.

As the first activity was interrupted, I applied to join *Escola de Inverno* organization, in late December. The activity had suffered some changes since the start of semester, particularly its affiliation with CoderDojo, and the scheduling of a trial event occurring in 10th January, 2014. After accepting the application, the task assigned to me was to create a poster design, which final result can be seen in Figure 1. Impressions of the poster were good, with the color pattern receiving the most criticism, as it was deemed too dark for the target audience of children between 13 and 17 years old.

Afterwards, the trial event planning started, which outlined the content that would be provided to the participants and the scheduled that can be checked in Table 1. On 10th January, 2015, the trial session occurred, where

I was assigned as a monitor for the 8th and 9th graders. The event was a huge success, with great feedback from the attendees, which prompted a conversion from the original plans of a 1 week event to a monthly event, occurring in the 1st Saturday of the month. With support from IST's DEI, *Escola de Inverno* is aiming to become IST's standard in ways of introducing the next generation to engineering.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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John Doe My name in Nuno Xu, 21 years old and I'm currently attending the Master's degree in Information Systems and Computer Engineering at IST. I have a passion for video games and hope to one day pursue my dream of becoming a video game developer.

APPENDIX
STATEMENT OF EXECUTION - NEIIST: EVENT ORGANIZATION AND PROMOTION

COMPROVATIVO

Venho por este meio comprovar que os seguintes alunos participaram na actividade "Escola de Inverno" durante os meses Novembro de 2014 a Janeiro de 2015 no âmbito de Portefólio.

69984	João Miranda
69396	Francisco Ferreira
73378	Nuno Gonçalves
73092	Miguel Faria
73393	Joana Teixeira

Prof. Miguel Mira da Silva

Instituto Superior Técnico

APPENDIX
STATEMENT OF EXECUTION - ESCOLA DE INVERNO

NEIIST

Para os devidos efeitos, declara-se que o(a) aluno(a) *Nuno Xu*, número mecanográfico *73378*, no *1º* semestre do ano lectivo *2014/2015*, exerceu o cargo de *Colaborador* no NEIIST – Núcleo Estudantil de Informática do Instituto Superior Técnico, tendo realizado as actividades *Organização e divulgação de eventos*.

Lisboa, *12* de *Janeiro* de *2015*

A Direcção do NEIIST:

_____
(Vânia Mendonça - Presidente)

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(Denise Pedro - Vice-presidente)

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(Rita Gomes – Vogal)

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(Manuel Alves – Gestor Financeiro)