SINFO Dev-Team and the Informatics Week

Duarte Mendes Paiva

Learnings Report

Abstract—This year SINFO organized the 22nd edition of the Informatics Week at IST, this happened last February and continuing the work from previous years we had company presentations, a tech expo and talks with international speakers. This event was a tremendous success with full conference rooms, amphitheatre and the tech expo's stands flourishing with people.

During this week not everything was dreamy and it implied lots of effort from the organization's members with everyone continuing their usual yearly work topped with the event, in the case of the development team this implied being able to do everything everyone was doing and keeping up the website working and our sponsors happy with it.

This report covers how this activity affected me as a person, what I learned, and what changed as everything that went around me went well or awry.

Index Terms—SINFO, speakers, companies, presentations, talks, Informatics Week, teamwork, soft-skills, team, coordination, entertainment

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do NOT use contractions!

1 INTRODUCTION

After enrolling on SINFO past October and working on the tools for the organization February came, and with it our main event of the year, the Informatics Week. And while the last report focused on the activites done as a member of SINFO's Dev-Team, this report will focus on the learning experience I went through that week and a half.

As mentioned on the activites report this week was marked by talks, workshops, several kinds of presentations and the tech expo, there wasn't an idle moment for any member of the SINFO organization. With classes, representatives to take care of and speakers that we wouldn't want to displease it was a challenge to juggle everything for the regular member, and even more for the members of the Dev-Team that had the extra responsibility of ensuring that our technological infrastructure was up to the challenge of displaying the correct information in real time.

- *Duarte Mendes Paiva, nr. 70751,*
  E-mail: duarte.paiva@ist.utl.pt, Instituto Superior Técnico, Universidade de Lisboa.

So for this report I will be describing the learning experience and how that week affected me as a person and a professional.

2 THE INFORMATICS WEEK

SINFO's main event of the year is the Informatics week, it happens every year at the end of February and as stated on the introduction it is marked with many activities throughout the day, starting with company presentations, then talks during the afternoon and at the end of the day to close we had some workshops. We also had a tech expo open all day at the Central Pavilion and at the Civil Engineering Pavilion in which our sponsors had stands there.

In this section I will be describing how I dealt with each kind of activity, the problems and issues I faced. And most importantly the good things I picked up from this week.

2.1 The Tech Expo

One of the most important things on the Informatics week is the presence of the tech expo, this required constant attention from SINFO members trying to have at all times 3 members on each stand, I got assigned to these stands for 3 of the 4 days of the expo.

(1.0) Excellent	LEARNINGS						DOCUMENT				
(0.8) Very Good	Context×2	Skills×1	Reflect×4	Summ×.5	Concl×.5	SCORE	Struct ×.25	Ortog×.25	Exec×4	Form ×.25	Titles ×.5	File ×.5	SCORE
(0.6) Good												
(0.4) Fair	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.8		0.6	0.6	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.0	
(0.2) Weak												

For the members assigned to these stations there were both times of the day where things were idle, specially during class times, as there were times where we were swarmed with visitors, requests from the representatives of the companies and even requests from SINFO's coordination team.

As for the companies their requests usually were made regarding tech support as some required help connecting to the wifi infrastructure, sometimes they asked for directions for places where they could grab a snack, with these being the simple requests, in one instance the representatives of two companies came to me at the same time complaining that they didn't want to be side by side. They were direct competitors and their companies didn't complain at the time when we sent the mapping of the companies day by day so they could request to be put on a different spot. This required for, first of all, to find a solution that would make both happy, and to talk gently and professionally with two slightly angered professionals from the human resources of competitive companies. The solution found with the coordination team from SINFO was a last minute change between 3 companies so they would be more spaced and not side by side, with everything ending well.

As for visitors, on the most idle times we could make idle chat with them before inviting them to visit the companies stands and sell merchandise. But when lunch time came visitors came swarming, as they were making time between classes or even were waiting for our talks to start. Once around lunch time, there were only two of us at our stand, and the visitors came swarming wanting to buy merchandise and company representatives wanted attention with something so badly that me and the colleague there found difficult to juggle everything, but once everything calmed down we kinda high-fived ourselves and went on. After all to make everything all right it takes team effort.

2.2 Company Presentations and Workshops

As it was described in the activities report there were also Company Presentations, and I was assigned to these presentations during 1 of the mornings.

This required a special kind of attention to the company representatives as these weren't from their HR departments, but team leaders presenting wither the technological aspect of their company or the environment in their workplace. Dealing with these representatives was far easier than with their HR counterparts, since they don't look at people as a mathematician would look at numbers, they dealt with me as a prospective future co-worker with an informal speech most of the times and without any issues arising for the morning I was assigned to this station. Seeing how a professional deals with people and an audience made me see things differently, because during a presentation it's not about what you're presenting, but how you're transmitting the presentation to the audience and how to capture their attention to transmit the right message.

As for workshops I was assigned to these for 2 days, Monday and Wednesday. Much like company presentations, these were given by professionals on a technology or team leaders showing how to get things done. The needs of these professionals for the workshops were much like the company presentations, and what they transmitted to me was much like what was transmitted on the presentation, where it's not about the content, but how it's transmitted to the audience.

These workshops went smoothly and were easy to get going with everybody happy at the end of it.

2.3 Talks

The most interesting part of the week, one of the afternoons I was assigned to the talks, where I kept company to the speakers and ensured they had everything they needed, be it snacks or water. Even helping them with internet access so they could keep their work up to date even though they were at Lisbon.

Ensuring that they were calm and ready for their talks was a crucial point, so getting to know them and being able to make idle chat from the get go was hard at first, but really fun to do, as every one of the speakers I met were

do NOT use colloquial language!

interesting. Be it because of their origins, be it because of their lifes up to now, or even where they work and what they work with. Every single second of it was worth it, interesting and fun because I got to know people from overseas and how they live and work.

But on that afternoon not everything was a sea of roses. Right before our the biggest presentation, with many people wanting to enter the amphitheatre, there were much more than the amphitheatre could have, there were 3 attendees from the previous talk that refused to leave. Even after talking to them, they wouldn't go outside and wait like everyone else, so in the end we called the security and banned them from attending any other of our events, since you know, nobody likes unruly people.

2.4 Startup Rush

After going through the tiring rush from Monday to Thursday of the stands, company presentations, talks and workshops we had for Friday and Saturday the Startup Rush, a more relaxing part of the event where Startup representatives, speakers, attendees, journalists and every member of SINFO were on an informal setting. Something a lot different of the rest of week.

The main point of these two days was so that everyone could do some networking, getting to know people and getting rid of an invisible cliff between students, speakers, and the Startups of the Lisbon area. This networking was made through the informal talks from guest speakers from foreign startups, such as docker, Sound-Cloud and PayPal, coffee breaks throughout Friday and Saturday and there were also the challenges proposed by the startups.

This setting was challenging because transitioning from the formal side of things to an informal setting can be tricky. And going from a simple sir/mister speech to a more simple you speech isn't a simple thing to do with strangers, not total strangers though. In this case I let them take the first step most of the times so I could know how to handle with the situation in the best way. This approach made everything go smoothly and with the end of the main event at the start of Saturday's afternoon came

the moment where the members of SINFO had to say goodbye to everyone. The attendees, the startup representatives and finally the guest speakers. This was sadly the hardest part of all week, this made all the other days seem like piece of cake, because having to say goodbye is never easy. And there is always next year, in which we'll try to bring a bigger and better event for everyone to see and enjoy.

3 CONCLUSION

Concluding, this was a very tiring week, filled with laughter and worries, with certainties and uncertainties. Not only with great speakers, but great people, be it the speakers themselves or the team I worked with. Everyone was great, everything was awesome. I learned a lot more than I had on the previous months. Dealing with people from different countries and cultures, be it Canada, Vietnam or Sweden, with professionals from consultant companies and startups, with journalists, and attendees, that were mostly students from Instituto Superior Técnico.

I learned how to deal with critic situations were professionals from concurrent companies were displeased. I learned how to work as a team to get out of tight spots where there's not enough people for what had got to be done. Dealing with important guests was one of the most challenging learning experiences and none of this could be possible if it weren't for the wonderful team SINFO has.