

Thematic Network Project

CN 2009-2204/001-001



Round Table Meetings

Internet-related Jobs

**“Needs of the Internet Industry
Making Offer and Demand meet in Training and
Education”**

Country: Germany

Venue: FOM - Schulung- und Hörsaalzentrum SHZ II, Sigsfeldstr. 5, 45141 Essen

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Author: Michael Negri

Partner: FOM

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1. Description/General Information

The Roundtable meeting took place on Monday, 21/03/2011 in FOM`s facilities in Sigsfeldstr.5 from 10:30 a.m. until 2:30 p.m.. After the Prof. Dr. Burghard Hermeier`s (Chancellor) welcoming words, the participants introduced themselves in order to get to know each other. Michael Negri then introduced the PIN project, the background and aims of the Leonardo network. After this presentation, the participants had a break in which they were offered soft drinks and various snacks.

After the break, Michael Negri introduced the e-Jobs Observatory (www.e-jobs-observatory.eu) which shall serve as the central platform for information, exchange and participation. Michael Negri also encouraged the participants to actively contribute to this platform in order to enhance the European exchange of information and know how.

After having set the basis by introducing the project and the Observatory, the participants had a fruitful discussion on the current and future needs of companies and VET institutions, but also the consortium`s definition of the internet industry and the relevant jobs. Mr. Hohoff took over the position of the moderator and successfully managed to make everyone participate in the discussion. Michael Negri took notes of the major results.

After the discussion, Christoph Hohoff thanked the participants for attending the RT and again encouraged them to contribute to the Observatory and become a member of the network.

2. Main Topics discussed

Please, mention the key topics held during your RT.

1. Discussion on the consortium`s definition of the internet industry
2. Discussion on the consortium`s definition of internet-related jobs
3. Current situation and problems of vocational schools
4. Current situation and problems of secondary schools
5. Current situation and problems of SMEs

3. Definition of "Internet Industry"

Consortium`s definition:

"The Internet Industry deals with the commercial and non-commercial production and distribution of its content and services through the internet infrastructure"

The consortium's definition was not fully accepted by the participants of the RT. The following remarks were made by the participants:

- Internet Industry comprises more than the production and distribution
- "Industry" should also comprise the producer of the infrastructure (networks, server, hosted services, etc.)
- "Industry" in Germany rather refers to the producing sector. However, this seems to be rather a language issue as the meaning of "industry" differs in Germany and the UK

4. Describe the situation regarding current/prospective needs and job requirements related to e-jobs in your country, considering the point of view of the IT sector and VET institutions.

SMEs: Companies criticise that there are no adequate candidates for vacancies. One example was mentioned when a company was looking for a Web Designer for a long period of time without being successful. It was acknowledged that we have to distinguish between "normal" employees who do everyday business and "genius" people who are expected to bring in extraordinary competencies. Local SMEs recruit staff from the local job market. They do not feel that there is a need for international recruitment. SMEs additionally wish to have applicants/employees with more assertiveness and criticise the rigid structure of the educational system in Germany.

Secondary Schools: The major problem is that pupils do not exactly know, which job to choose and how to get there. They rather have inconcrete wishes such as: "I'd like to do something with IT later on." What they lack is a clear idea of which jobs exist, which tasks the jobs comprise, and which requirements they have to fulfil to take over such a job. The representative of a local secondary school therefore uttered the wish to enhance the cooperation with local SMEs in order to offer the pupils the chance to directly get to know interesting job profiles and to interact with apprentices at their age. Furthermore, the representative admitted that he lacks the know how to offer the pupils an adequate advice.

Vocational Schools: Vocational Schools feel that their work is adequate to prepare the pupils/apprentices for the work life. They agree that the technical skills seem to be fulfilled, but do not feel that it is their task to create curiosity, develop soft skills, etc.

They admit that those characteristics are important, but rather expect the secondary schools to take over those tasks. However, they apply teamwork tasks at school as they are well aware of the needs in terms of project management. They also criticise the rigid structure of the educational system in Germany.

Institute for Economic Promotion, Essen: The institute confirms the SME's view in regard to missing qualified workers. The representative feels that most companies recruit rather locally. Only the big players extend their angle onto the international job market. However, those companies are not the target group of PIN.

5. What is the most important/current problem faced by the sector regarding e-jobs?

During the discussion, it became obvious that the basic requirements on terms of education are fulfilled. However, soft skills such as curiosity, teamwork ability, and willingness to learn are not yet fostered systematically. The basic problem is that the vocational schools expect the secondary schools to develop those competencies at an early stage. The secondary schools however lack the experts to do so as they focus on general education. Focussing on specific job profiles therefore is impossible.

This problem, in return, leads to the fact that SMEs have trouble in finding appropriate candidates for their vacancies. Even if the requirements are rather basic, and the payment is good, those problems remain.

6. What can/should be done to improve the situation on the job market for e-jobs?

Current measures have not been taken yet. What seems to be promising is the enhancement of the cooperation between companies and secondary schools. It might offer the pupils the opportunity, which job to choose. At the same time, this would serve as a guideline as pupils exactly know what to expect from a certain job and what to do to get there. Furthermore, focussing on soft skills during the secondary school seems to be effective. More teamwork and projects could be applied to do so. This would also foster the pupils' assertiveness.

7. Who of the target groups should do what to improve the situation?

See above!

**8. www.e-Jobs-observatory.eu
Please describe the general opinion of the audience about the platform.**

After having presented the functions of the platform, the participants were invited to actively contribute to it. However, no one has definitely confirmed that he/she will join the platform yet. Still, we are optimistic that at least a few participants will become a member. When asked for criticism, the participants were reserved. A representative of a SME was sceptic about the question of how this platform will remain updated and growing. FOM described the idea of a growing network of contributors and consequently a "living" platform.

9. What is the opinion of the participant towards labelisation, certification and normalization in the field of e-jobs in general?

A representative of a vocational school remarked that the educational systems in Germany and the rest of Europe differ. This may lead to problems. It was additionally remarked that the majority of local apprentices do not see the need for international employment. They rather focus on local SMEs. However, the apprentices of big, international players rather see the option of working abroad.

10. What do they think about the process in general?/ Would the participants express interest in participating in the piloting of this process?

Some of the participants seem to be interested in being a part of the pilot. However, concrete commitment has not been promised yet.

11. Conclusions:

The representative from the industry is highly interested in this project and hopes that it will not "die" once the project itself is at its end. He has heard of numerous other projects where exactly this happened. Additionally, the schools seem to be interested in contributing to the project's success as they also see the need for action and improvement! Especially a better cooperation with the industry is important in order to foster employability and prepare the people for their jobs in the industry. The institutions agree on the findings from the Synthesis Report which states that the soft skills need to be improved.

However, this is currently difficult as the secondary school do not focus on specific jobs profiles, but rather the general education. Even though they apply teamwork and project management in their curriculum, there is no systematic approach to this problem. An international component does not seem to play an important role at the moment. Apprentices and companies have a rather local focus and only hardly look for international employment. Concluding, it can be said that the RT was a success from FOM's point of view, as we invited participants from different institutions with different view who seem to have a real interest in the project. We therefore can be optimistic to have encouraged the participants to remain in the PIN network and actively contribute to it.

12. Attendees:

1. Marina Heuermann, EWG mbh
2. Wolfgang Meyer, Heinz-Nixdorf Berufskolleg
3. Jörg Gleißner, Heinz-Nixdorf Berufskolleg
4. Ed Mahood, DEKRA Akademie GmbH
5. Christoph Hohoff, FOM
6. Prof. Dr. Uwe Kern, FOM
7. Klaus Martens, Kompetenzteam Essen/ Gesamtschule Bockmühle
8. Prof. Dr. Stefan Heinemann, FOM/ zdi-Zentrum MINT-Netzwerk Essen
9. Petra Neuwirth, Akademie für Informations- und Telekommunikationstechnik
10. Michael Negri, FOM

13. Picture:



The Participants of the Roundtable