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Integrated Project
Information Society Technologies

D9.7 Final Report on AMIDA Training Activities

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D9.7 FINAL REPORT ON AMIDA TRAINING ACTIVITIES

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Abstract:

The aim of WP9 was to spread excellence by providing training for young researchers within the main AMIDA programme. The main activity was in supporting extended visits by researchers to AMI DA labs to work within the project's research scope. 47 such placements took place in Amida, following about 40 in the precursor project AMI.. In addition the AMI training programme supported the Euromasters scheme in language and speech , the MLMI conference and several workshops. We organized a Training Day in June 2007.

Content

1   Introduction

The aim of the AMIDA training programme was to spread excellence by providing training for young researchers within the main AMIDA programme. The major training activity was to support placements for researchers to work in AMIDA labs on projects which are AMIDA-related. In addition, the AMI DA training programme arranged network-wide tutorials for the trainees, provided support to the Euromasters Scheme in Language and Speech and sponsors young researchers from AMI labs to attend the MLMI conference and several other AMIDA-related workshops

The AMIDA training programme was managed by Professor Phil Green of USFD. Prof Green chaired the AMI DA training panel, whose 5 members directed the programme, with part-time help of an administrator at USFD, Gillian Callaghan. The home page for the training programme is

http://www.amiproject.org/ami-scientific-portal/education/description-of-program/overview

2   The placement programme

The AMIDA placement programme was available to researchers at all levels, from undergraduates to post-docs. It paid travel costs and living expenses, not salary: applicants were expected to be studying or employed at a 'home' institution. Living expenses were €1,250/month for European hosts and €2,000/month for ICSI placements. Travel costs were allowed on the basis of the cheapest available flights or trains.

The placement programme was open to researchers outside the AMIDA labs, and to researchers outside Europe. There were no restrictions on placement length, 6 months – 1 year was typical and less than 3 months unusual.

The application process was as follows
- Applicants applied using a form downloadable from the web site,
- They had to describe the project they want to do and why,
- They required statements of support from their home lab & their prospective host lab, together with an academic reference and CV,
- Applications were considered by the training panel on (at least) a quarterly basis,
- A budget was negotiated for each successful applicant on an individual basis,
- At this point a formal offer was made and payments set up.

Researchers on placement were allocated supervisors at their host lab and required to produce reports at the end of the placement, and to fill in a feedback questionnaire. Abstracts of the work in each placement, and photographs, were required early in the placement and posted on the AMI web site. At the end of a placement researchers received an AMI Training Certificate signed by the training manager and the host institution.

Placement statistics

Table 1 overleaf details the placements which took place. Note that some placements overlapped between AMIDA and its processor AMI.
In summary,
- 51 students applied and 47 took up placements.
- Of these 47,
  - IDIAP hosted 15 placements, ICSI 13, UEDIN 6, USFD 7, BRNO 2, UT and DFKI 3 each, TNO and TUM 1 each,
  - There were 5 postdocs, 14 PhD students, 17 masters students, 8 undergraduates and 7 on the ICSI Scheme.
  - 12 researchers on placement came from other from AMIDA labs and 39 from outside.
  - 21 nationalities were represented. There were 29 European trainees and 18 non-European. The highest number of trainees from a single country was 9, from India, followed by 5 from Germany and 4 from Holland and China.

3   Other Activities

We supported the Euromasters scheme in Language and Speech(*http://www.cstr.ed.ac.uk/emasters/*), which allows students in participating institutes to gain an additional qualification, signed by professional bodies. To do this, they must spend at least 1 semester outside their home institution, engaged on a language/speech project. In addition, they must attend a Summer School which was organised annually. AMIDA gave €5K to support this Summer School in 2007 and 2008. The Summer School was also available to AMIDA trainees.

We organized an Amida training day, on 30 June 2007, for the benefit of AMIDA trainees and other interested researchers. This took place in Brno, between the MLMI workshop and the Euromasters Summer School. The programme consisted of a series of overview tutorials covering the different aspects of AMIDA – the technical work packages and knowledge transfer activities. The attendance was around 30.

4   Budget

The AMIDA training budget was increased to €550K (€458k without overhead). The expenditure is likely to exceed this, and will be covered by USFD's RTD budget. (Figures to be confirmed after Y3 audit).

An approximate summary of spending on the training programme is as follows:

Placements: €466,298 (this includes committed travel costs that may not be claimed)
Other Activities: € 12,000
Overhead: € 95,660
Total: **€573,958**

Table 1: AMIDA Training Placements

Name	Home Institution	Host	Level	Dates	Cost
Junichi Yamagishi	Tokyo Institute of Technology	UEDIN	Postdoc	01/04/06 - 31/03/07	€3,750
Marijn Huijbregts	UT	ICSI	PhD	01/10/06 - 30/04/07	€8,000
Joan Isaac Biel Tres	UPC Technical Uni of Catalonia	ICSI	Masters	01/03/07 - 31/12/07	€20,754
Beatriz Trueba Hornero	UPC Technical Uni of Catalonia	ICSI	Masters	01/03/07 - 31/12/07	€20,000
Matej Konecny	BRNO	TNO	Masters	01/10/06 - 31/03/07	€3,750
Ivan Himawan	Queensland University of Technology	UEDIN	PhD	23/04/07 - 22/04/07	€16,650
Zacharie Degreve	Faculte Polytechnique de Mons (Belgium)	IDIAP	Masters	02/02/07 - 20/06/07	€6,499
Muhammad Muneeb Ullah	Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden	IDIAP	Masters	01/05/07 - 31/01/08	€11,574
Oriol Vinyals	UPC Technical Uni of Catalonia	ICSI	Masters	02/04/07 - 30/09/07	€12,000
Thomas Kleinbauer	DFKI	ICSI	ICSI Scheme	01/06/07 - 31/05/08	€25,200
Ramandeep Singh	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT, Kanpur)	USFD	Undergrad	08/05/07 - 25/07/07	€4,550
Lukas Matena	BRNO	IDIAP	Masters	16/08/07 - 30/07/08	€14,000
Suyog Deshpande	Indian Institute of Technology (IIT, Guwahatii)	USFD	Undergrad	11/05/07 - 23/07/07	€4,850
Jochen Ehnes	University of Tokyo	UEDIN	Postdoc	15/04/07 - 14/07/08	€19,337
Leucio Antonio Cutillo	Eurecom, Univ Nice & Polytechnic Turin	IDIAP	Masters	01/04/07 - 14/09/07	€7,618
Santhosh Kumar Chellappan Pillai	ECE Dept. Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, Ettimadai	BRNO	PhD	28/05/07 - 31/08/07	€7,500
Weina Ge	The Pennsylvania State University	IDIAP	PhD	01/06/07 - 31/08/07	€4,700
Korbinian Riedhammer	University of Erlangen-Nuremburg	ICSI	ICSI Scheme	02/01/08 - 31/12/08	€24,670
Kenichi Kumatani	University of Karlsruhe	IDIAP	PhD	01/07/07 - 30/06/08	€15,000
Anh Thu Nguyen	EPFL	IDIAP	Masters	01/09/07 - 29/02/08	€7,500
David Van Leeuwen	TNO	ICSI	ICSI Scheme	02/01/08 - 30/06/08	€12,000
Rosemary Orr	University College Utrecht	ICSI	ICSI Scheme	01/01/08 - 30/06/08	€12,000
Hua Zhang	South East University	UT	Masters	01/09/08 - 28/02/09	€8,800
Harm op den Akker	UT	DFKI	Masters	17/09/07 - 14/12/07	€3,947
Bogdan Raducanu	Computer Vision Center, Barcelona	IDIAP	Postdoc	01/02/08 - 31/07/08	€7,800
Anand		USFD	Masters	21/01/08 -	€15,000

Ramamoorthy				20/07/08	
Javier Tejedor	University Autonoma of Madrid	UEDIN	PhD	15/02/08 - 31/07/08	€7,650
Roxanne Raine	University of Louisiana at Lafayette	UT	Postdoc	01/01/09 - 30/06/09	€9,117
Lina Dib	Rice University	USFD	PhD	01/06/08 - 30/11/08	€8,200
Quoc Anh Le	University of Namur	IDIAP	Masters	01/08/08 - 31/01/09	€7,882
Marianna Pronobis	Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), Stockholm, Sweden	IDIAP	Masters	01/04/08 - 31/08/08	€6,450
Mannes Poel	University of Twente	IDIAP	Postdoc	15/09/08 - 14/12/08	€4,100
Carl Ek	University of Manchester	ICSI	ICSI Scheme	01/02/09 - 30/09/09	€22,000
Vincent Bozzo	EPFL	IDIAP	Masters	15/09/08 - 13/03/09	€7,515
Jozef Milch	BRNO	TUM	PhD	02/02/09 - 30/06/09	€6,320
Shasha Xie	The University of Texas at Dallas	ICSI	PhD	15/02/09 - 14/08/09	€12,470
Alessandro Valitutti	University of Trento	University of Twente	PhD	13/11/08 - 14/05/09	€5,300
Benjamin Picart	Faculte Polytechnique de Mons (Belgium)	IDIAP	Masters	02/02/09 - 15/06/09	€6,700
Sebastian Germesin	DFKI	UEDIN	PhD	01/02/09 - 30/04/09	€3,900
Carolin Mende	Ruprecht Karls University	ICSI	ICSI Scheme	01/04/09 - 31/07/09	€12,700
Gokul Chittaranjan	University of Florida	IDIAP	Masters	01/05/09 - 31/12/09	€10,820
Simon Schwingenschuh	HTL- Steyr, Austria	USFD	UG	06/07/09 - 15/08/09	€2,175
Lukas Hartung	HTL- Steyr, Austria	USFD	UG	06/07/09 - 15/08/09	€2,175
Usman Ghani	USFD	UEDIN	PhD	01/09/09 - 30/11/09	€4,050
Vishal Juneja	Deli College, India	DFKI	UG	01/08/09 - 31/12/09	€6,850
Dhaval Vyas	UT	DFKI	PhD	01/09/09 - 31/12/09	€5,400

5 Difficulties

The introduction of a new financial management system by the University of Sheffield caused delays in getting some payments out to AMIDA trainees, particularly in Summer 2007.

6 Questionnaire

We asked each researcher to complete the following questionnaire at the end of her/his placement:

AMIDA Placement Questionnaire

Key

1. I disagree strongly
2. I disagree
3. I am not sure
4. I agree
5. I agree strongly

A: The AMIDA training placement provided me with valuable research experience.

B: In the AMIDA training programme I learned about topics which will be important for me.

C: The AMIDA training programme provided me with experience I would otherwise not have been able to obtain.

D: The AMIDA training placement will assist me in my future career.

E: The financial support provided by AMIDA was sufficient.

F: The administration of my placement application was well-organised.

G: The host lab provided a good working environment.

H: My host lab provided me with sufficient direction in my work.

I: I was given sufficient freedom to pursue my goals.

J: I would recommend an AMIDA placement to a close friend.

24 researchers completed the questionnaire. The responses are given as histograms overleaf. We also asked researchers to comment on the training programme & received only positive answers:

'This programme is really good for young researchers. It need will be more extended.'

'I enjoyed my time as an AMIDA trainee and consider it a very valuable experience for my future work and life. I would like to thank everyone who made this possible.'

'I had a great time on the AMIDA programme thanks to my supervisors and the programme co-ordinator Ms.Gillian Callaghan. It has been helpful in many ways and has given my my first publication. Thanks'

'I learned a great deal about conversation work, information retrieval, and sound practices in general. Thank you.'

'Thanks to AMIDA training programme, I worked in a high level scientific environment, with top researchers. Even if I have decided not to continue my career in the area of human-machine interaction, I think that the training programme gave me taste for research, and greatly influenced my choice to prepare a PhD in my home country in another field.'

'I wish there are more researchers can receive AMIDA training in the future.'

'I was very pleased with the AMIDA training position, and very much appreciate my experience and placement. It was a wonderful experience and very valuable to my career as a scientist.'

'AMIDA training programme has provided me with valuable experience to research at an outstanding institutions. The experience gives me confidence and encourage me to secure job in such world-class research environment.'

'It was a terrific experience - great to get the time to devote to research - excellently organised by ICSI - great working environment - good connections made - positive evaluation all round.'

RESPONSES TO THE AMIDA TRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE

The AMIDA training placement provided me with valuable research experience.

In the AMIDA training programme I learned about topics which will be important for me.

The AMIDA training programme provided me with experience I would otherwise not have been able to obtain.

The AMIDA training placement will assist me in my future career.

The financial support provided by AMIDA was sufficient.

The administration of my placement application was well-organised.

The host lab provided a good working environment.

My host lab provided me with sufficient direction in my work.

I was given sufficient freedom to pursue my goals.

I would recommend an AMIDA placement to a close friend.