

Digito Ergo Sum

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DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE

DELL'INFORMAZIONE

DIPARTIMENTO DI INFORMATICA

E COMUNICAZIONE



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Outline

- 1 The initial idea
- 2 The project
- 3 Designing the programme
- 4 Thinking about contents
- 5 On air!



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In the beginning...

- It all started during a bike ride through Ireland...
- Two computer scientists actively working in the popularization of their field (ALADDIN was moving its first steps)
- A free-lance journalist specialized in scientific disclosure



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The idea



- Why not thinking of the radio as a medium for scientific disclosure specialized in CS?
 - relatively accessible (especially at local level)
 - does not involve the use of specific resources
 - has a vast audience containing potentially interested people



The project: how things should be done

- Gather a group (not too small, not too big) of interested people
- Design the programme
- Prepare a presentation
- Set up a tentative schedule
- Find potentially interested radio stations



The project: what we managed to do

- Gather a group (not too small, not too big) of interested people (ALADDIN++)
- Design the programme
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The project: what we managed to do

- Gather a group (not too small, not too big) of interested people (ALADDIN++)
- Design the programme (that was the **real** challenge)
- Prepare a presentation
- Set up a tentative schedule
- Find potentially interested radio stations



The project: what we managed to do

- Gather a group (not too small, not too big) of interested people (ALADDIN++)
- Design the programme (that was the **real** challenge)
- Prepare a presentation (relatively easy task)
- Set up a tentative schedule
- Find potentially interested radio stations



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- Gather a group (not too small, not too big) of interested people (ALADDIN++)
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- Find potentially interested radio stations (luck us, see following slides)



The project: what we managed to do

Design the programme

- G
 - D
 - P
 - S
 - F
- Focus on scientific aspects, not on technical ones (despite the chosen name)
 - 30-minute episodes
 - each episode focusing on a given topic
 - Format: discussion among three computer scientists and a host

following slides,



Radiopopolare



- Broadcasting at national level, gathering several local radio stations
- Meeting after an informal contact (around one month)
- We tried ourselves with a *difficult* pilot: recursion!
- Agreed on ten 30-minute pre-recorded episodes broadcast on each Monday at 12:00, between May 23rd and Aug 1st.



Topics and format

We:

- agreed on a set of topics
- selected
 - three speakers (computer scientists)
 - a coordinator (having the role of an executive producer)
 - a host (a journalist specialized in scientific disclosure)
- decided to divide each episode in three parts:
 - description of a topic from a relatively abstract point of view
 - 3 min. audiodrama breaking the discussion (fictional short story involving a (she-)computer scientist, a *simpleton* and a *hairsplitting*)
 - deeper discussion of selected sub-topics



Our first season...

Episode

Audiodorama

What is CS?

Which computer science?

Artificial intelligence

A liar in Facebook

Algorithms

In the maze of algorithms

Web

The small world

Information representation

Camera

Graphs

Dinner for unpleasants

Distributed systems

Muddy children

Soft computing

The great Alessalo Svevoni

Cryptography

Keys, padlocks and bikes

Social impact of CS

Are you free for dinner?

Recursion

Cards



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Design phase

For each episode:

- find potential contents
- organize contents
- describe contents
- select contents and define outline
- last-minute group meeting
- on air!



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Design phase

For each episode:

- find potential contents (group)
- organize contents
- describe contents
- select contents and define outline
- last-minute group meeting
- on air!



Design phase

For each episode:

- find potential contents (group)
- organize contents (individual + coordinator)
- describe contents
- select contents and define outline
- last-minute group meeting
- on air!



Design phase

For each episode:

- find potential contents (group)
- organize contents (individual + coordinator)
- describe contents (individual, in parallel)
- select contents and define outline
- last-minute group meeting
- on air!



Design phase

For each episode:

- find potential contents (group)
- organize contents (individual + coordinator)
- describe contents (individual, in parallel)
- select contents and define outline (coordinator + host)
- last-minute group meeting
- on air!



Design phase

For each episode:

- find potential contents (group)
- organize contents (individual + coordinator)
- describe contents (individual, in parallel)
- select contents and define outline (coordinator + host)
- last-minute group meeting (coordinator + host + speakers)
- on air!



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Design phase

For each episode:

- find potential contents (group)
- organize contents (individual + coordinator)
- describe contents (individual, in parallel)
- select contents and define outline (coordinator + host)
- last-minute group meeting (coordinator + host + speakers)
- on air! (coordinator + host + speakers)



Find and organize contents

For a fixed topic:

- find
 - brainstorming (around 6 people, consider varying their composition)
 - don't (over)discuss the proposed topics
 - try to find links among contents
 - aim at a good mix from different fields (movies, books, real-life, ...)
- organize
 - coordinator summarizes the brainstorming results
 - use a good software tool enabling collaboration (e.g., wiki)



Find and organize contents

For a first brainstorming

- find
 Soft computing
 Shazam
 - brainstorming (around 6 people, consider varying their composition)
 - don't (over)discuss the proposed topics
 - try to find links among contents
 - aim at a good mix from different fields (movies, books, real-life, ...)
- organize
 - coordinator summarizes the brainstorming results
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Find and organize contents

For a first

- find
 - Soft computing
 - Shazam

Algorithms

Die Hard

- try to find links among contents
- aim at a good mix from different fields (movies, books, real-life, ...)
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Find and organize contents

For a first

- find
 - Soft computing
 - Shazam

Algorithms

Die Hard

Artificial intelligence

The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy

- organize
 - coordinator summarizes the brainstorming results
 - use a good software tool enabling collaboration (e.g., wiki)



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Describe contents

- Set up a common format for contents description (e.g., a couple of paragraphs followed by itemization of important concepts) and prepare a card for each topic
- Each participant pick its favorite topics (FCFS policy), writes the corresponding descriptions and uploads them
- Beware of procrastination (key role of coordinator)



Select contents and define outline

- Coordinator sketches the episode
- Discussion between coordinator and host:
 - a key step
 - host should have clear ideas about what is to be discussed
 - the outline is an outcome of this phase



last-minute meeting + on air!

- Meeting among coordinator, host and speakers
- Right before recording
- Coordinator explains outline
- Host explains how he will introduce topics, gives suggestions to speakers
- Episode recording (using outline and cards, under the supervision of coordinator)



On air!



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Postprocessing – local

- Right after each episode
- Speak about impressions and feelings about what happened



The design/implementation gap

- We designed and recorded two episodes at a time.
- Everything went smooth, except for
 - we needed some time in order to understand how to proficiently communicate with the broadcast staff
 - some initial tuning of the presentation required (an episode was recorded twice)
- We tried and abandoned other strategies:
 - brainstorming just before recording
 - involving host in brainstorming



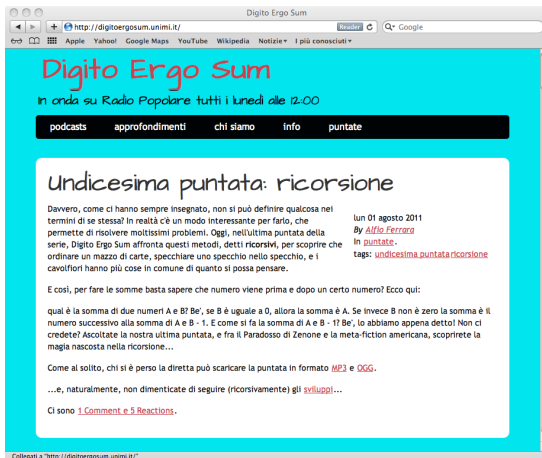
Postprocessing – global

- Publicity (web, personal contacts, institutional channels)
- Web site <http://digitoergosum.unimi.it>, containing
 - podcasts
 - description of each episode and comments on them
 - featured stories

Around 400 contacts on the first week, around 150 regular visitors afterwards.



On air!



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Are you curious?

- podcasts at <http://digitoergosum.unimi.it>
- CDs joined to INFOCULT program
- Only in italian



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What next?

- Planning rerun on the Rome station
- Rerun on the Milan station during Xmas
- Second season in 2012?
- Book?

