

Hanze - Visit to Twitter and Google

By Jelle de Boer

From 12 – 15 January 2014 a group of 8 staff and 29 students from the School of Communication, Media and IT of Hanze University of Applied Sciences made a study trip to Dublin (Ireland). The groups comprised of staff and students from students of Communication Systems and Information Management.

The visit was to Twitter, Google, University College Dublin and Trinity

College Dublin.



Figure 1 Hanze visitors at Google

The study trip was organised to explore the future job possibilities at the big information giants Twitter and Google and to explore cooperation with two Dublin Universities Trinity college and University college.

Students uploaded their cv's to Twitter and Google and received comments. At Trinity College Dublin the options on possible cooperation as students and staff exchange and entrepreneurship were discussed. Currently many investments are made in facilities for start-ups. Research cooperation options were discussed for the work of professor Wouter van der Hoogen on User Experience/User Centred Design. After visiting the University College Dublin it was agreed student and staff exchange is possible as well as sharing information on developments in education.

Google and Twitter are two of the major players when it comes to open data. 255 million active users send 500 million tweets a day making it a formidable source for sharing news and opinion. Twitter employs 3000 people and is expanding. Google has become synonymous with information and employs now 50.000 people. And developments continue. One of the latest update to the search algorithm, called Hummingbird, shows Google takes steps in learning the nuances of communication. Interpreting a search as 'restaurant neighbourhood' as 'present restaurants in the neighbourhood of your device'. It also shows the development from a search engine presenting links towards an answering machine giving you the answer, understanding human communication. Virtual assistants like Samantha from the film Her are closer than some might think.

All good reasons to explore the world of working for these two giants of information. In their search for new products both companies are searching for new employees and they present their approach in doing so. The capacity for innovative thinking and proven ambition is key.

All participants had to sign non-disclosure agreements about the information that was shared. It shows these giants of information are very careful. To put it in a metaphor: you will not hear the commands from the bridge to know where the vessel is going to, but you can tell from a distance. Universities do well in working together and keeping closely connected to the developments in the field, to prepare their students for the world out there.