

## PUBLICITY

### MUNSTER PROGRAMMING TRAINING

This year's Outreach Programme via Munster Programming Training (MPT) course commenced on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2011 with an intake of 105 secondary school students from 37 schools within the Munster region. It is now year eight, having started back in 2004 with 35 students from 12 different secondary schools spanning the Cork area. Selected students are required to show a genuine interest in computers and mathematics as well as ability for problem solving. It is expected that these students will also represent their school in the All Ireland Schools Programming Competition.

#### AIM of MUNSTER PROGRAMMING TRAINING

To offer special training in computer programming as preparation for participation in the "All Ireland Schools Programming Competition" taking place in May each year.

The programme aids in achieving the following:

- Giving a short and basic introduction to computer programming:

- Fostering interest in computers by encouraging young students to learn about programming at an early age;

- Preparing MPT students for programming competitions

#### HISTORY

MPT originated in an attempt to engage secondary school students to work competently with IT. Given the lack of IT training provided by secondary schools, Computer Science at UCC decided to offer a significant introduction into the field in educating students about what really happens in IT-related work and understand better the skills needed to become part of the good talent that is attracted into the field. MPT has and continues to provide an important stepping-stone for students who wish to pursue IT in university or as a profession. In addition, it can aid students develop IT skills that will be helpful whatever their future career.

#### IMPORTANCE OF COMPUTING

IT has become pervasive throughout every aspect of society. Computer chips are present in cars, mobile phones, heating and cooling systems, home electronics and much more. Computer Science offers value in a very wide range of careers including science-based, industry, information and communications technology and financial services.

IT schools can assist any school-leaver, whatever their intended profession. At present there is no Leaving Certificate subject available in IT and as a consequence students do not have adequate IT training at secondary school, nor a clear understanding of that entailed in the study of IT or the IT career path.

### **COURSE DELIVERY**

Students attend classes at Western Gateway Building, UCC for 24 consecutive Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. – 1.00 p.m. The course consists of formal lectures and practical classes in Computer Programming, Algorithms, Web Design and Video Animation. All classes are delivered principally by Dr Sabin Tabirca, a Computer Science staff member. He is assisted by some postgraduates and past pupils of MPT on a volunteer basis.

### **COMPETITION**

Towards the end of January each year MPT students participate in the All Ireland School Programming Competition, hosted by Dublin City University (DCU). Students sit a 5-hour test which consists of solving a number of very challenging programming problems. We are proud to mention that some of our MPT students have won Gold, Silver and Bronze medals at both the Junior and Senior sections over the last few years.

### **INTERNATIONAL OLYMPIAD IN INFORMATICS**

As a result of the outstanding achievements by some of our MPT students, they were selected as Irish Panel participants at International Olympiads in Informatics. Some of our best achievers have been the following:

<b>Name of Student</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Name of School</b>
Barry Hurley	2006, 2007	Gaelcholaiste Colaim, Ballincollig
Katie O'Mahony	2007	St Aloysius School, Cork
Brian Walsh	2008, 2009	St Colman's College, Fermoy
Jared Auty	2009, 2010	St Colman's College, Fermoy
David McCarthy	2009, 2010	Christian Brothers School, Midleton
Shane Walsh	2011	St Colman's College, Fermoy

The panel came to UCC for a series of specialised classes in Algorithms and Problem Solving as preparation for the international competition.

## **COURSE GRADUATION CEREMONY**

During May each year a special ceremony is held to present all our students of MPT with their certificate of graduation. It is usually attended by the MPT students, their parents, school principals and career guidance teachers as well as a guest speaker, Computer Science Department Head and Head of College of Science, Engineering and Food Science at University College Cork. The ceremony is a custom opportunity to congratulate students' great effort and achievements. Guest speakers often mention that typical computer scientist working in industry is part of a "problem-solving" team rather than working in isolation. The Head of College of SEFS at UCC has repeatedly aided in encouraging the participants of the MPT course to consider studying Computer Science at UCC as a pathway to a highly rewarding career.

## **MPT GRADUATES SUMMER CAMP**

A summer camp for MPT graduates takes place in early June each year. It gives students additional skills e.g. 3D Animation for Game Development and Video Production. Students also visit companies to avail of industry talks regarding Cork's information technology industry.

## **2011 YEAR PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS AT MPT**

Ashton School, Cork  
Ballincollig Community School, Cork  
Bantry Community College, Bantry  
Bishopstown Community School, Cork  
Carrigaline Community School, Cork  
Christian Brothers College, Cork  
Clonakilty Community School, Clonakilty  
Colaiste an Chraoibhin, Fermoy  
Colaiste an Chroi Naofa, Carraignavar  
Colaiste an Spioraid Naoimh, Cork  
Colaiste Christ Ri, Cork  
Colaiste Daibheid, Cork  
Colaiste Ghobnatan, Co. Cork  
Colaiste Muire Realt na Mara, Crosshaven  
Colaiste Muire, Cobh  
Colaiste na Toirbhirte, Bandon  
Community College, Cobh  
De La Salle, Macroom  
Douglas Community School, Cork  
Gaelcholaiste Mhuire A.G., An Mhainistir Thuaidh, Corcaigh  
Hamilton High School, Cork  
Intermediate School, Killorglin, Co. Kerry  
Midleton College, Midleton  
Millstreet Community College, Millstreet

Mount Mercy College, Cork  
Pobalscoil an Trionoide, Youghal  
Presentation College, Cork  
Regina Mundi College, Cork  
St Aloysius School, Carrigtwohill  
St Aloysius Secondary School, St Maries of the Isle, Cork  
St Brogan's College, Bandon  
St Colman's College, Fermoy  
St Mary's High School, Midleton  
St Mary's Secondary School, Macroom  
St Peter's Community School, Passage West  
Ursuline Secondary School, Cork

### CONTACT DETAILS

Dr Sabin Tabirca, Senior Lecturer, Department of Computer Science, University College Cork

Ann O'Brien, MPT Administrator, Department of Computer Science, University College Cork

**Website:** <http://www.cs.ucc.ie/training>      **Phone:** 021-420-5915



*Photo shows Munster Programming Training Class 2011 with Dr Sabin Tabirca*