

Erasmus + report

From:

KEA - Copenhagen

To:

HVA - Amsterdam

I went to Amsterdam from September 2016 to end of January 2017. At KEA I was enrolled in Software development. In holland I took a minor in Internet of Things, as suggested by the KEA exchange coordinator. Hva was very helpful in sending me all the information I needed to have before starting. They even organised an intro week for exchange students to meet each other and show them the facilities.



Product presentation in January

Classes

I had five courses that were split in two different subjects. I will list them here:

Visualization

Viz was a class about how to turn raw data in nice and effective visualization. Don't think about infographics. The main purpose of it it's to represent the data in a honest way, not to make it look cool.

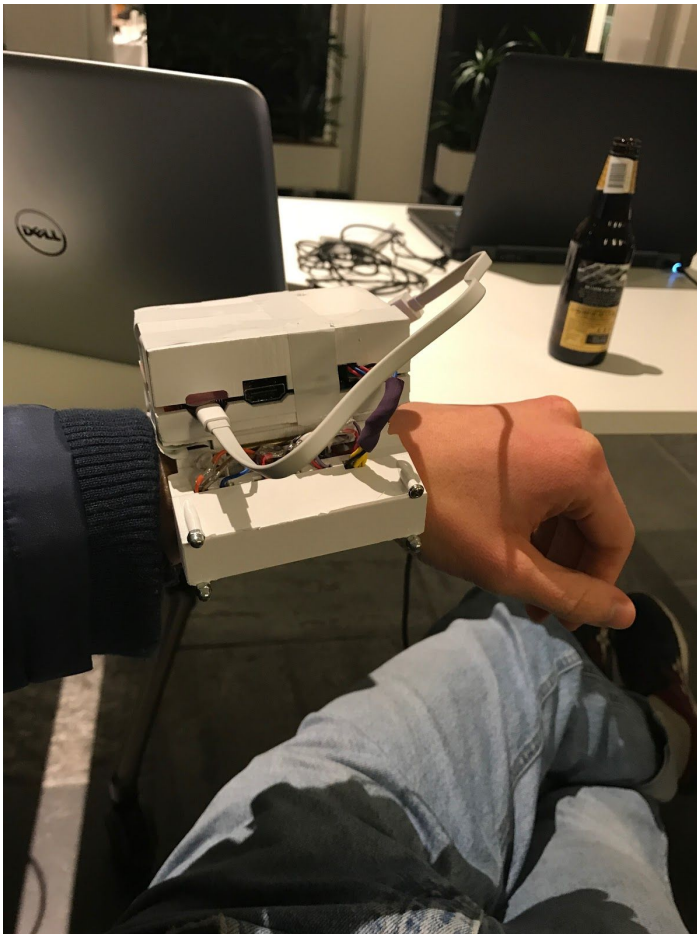
Application

During application we were learning basics about web development. From client side coding to server side scripting. The goal is to connect your IoT device with a web application, mandatory hand-in at the end of the course. Quite easy.

Platform Sensors and Communication

Platform and sensor with Mr. Jan Derricks was about the different microprocessor and sensor kinds available in the market. We didn't do that much in class (attendance is mandatory but not worth in my honest opinion). I created a very simple drum machine with Arduino and some accelerometers.

Communication was about the different technologies connected to IoT. We had to develop an iBeacon that would send out data to low-energy bluetooth sniffers.



Creation and design

This class was with the same two teachers for the whole semester, they taught us the different phases of the creation process. We had to upload mandatory VLOGS where we talked about our project situation and how it reflected those theoretical processes.

Human Business and Ethics

Human Buz. was with Mr. Wilco who was probably the best teacher of my exchange. He is a very nice teacher, good talking skills, very inclusive lessons. Had to hand-in a portfolio with all the weekly assignments. Ethics was about privacy and ethical issues related to IoT devices.

Final product from Info.nl team



Intercultural Communication

Extra course I had to follow since the ECTS from this minor were only 28 (I needed 30).

Again with Mr. Wilco. Talked about different issues connected with people from different places thinking about specific problems.

Project internet of Things

Main class of the semester, i.e. more ECTS, we had an external client which commissioned our group to develop a running wristband with bluetooth that would let you communicate with other runners. Final exam was a team presentation of the project + individual evaluation.

Glue gun used at the Life Lab

Something I liked

The city is pretty full of places to see, and go to. I believe there is not much I can say about it that people do not already expect from Amsterdam. I really love movies so I suggest you guys to check out the Kriterion independent cinema close to UvA, Cinecenter in Leidseplein and I really liked the EYE film museum. It's a modern building in the northern part of the city. You have to take a free 5-minute ferry to get there which is also nice. Other than a permanent exhibition, they have a programme with nice vintage movies.

Amsterdam is a very neat place for art lovers, all the museums that I visited were well-kept and had always interesting and edgy collections. Make sure to visit at least the Rijksmuseum and the Stedelijk which are next to each other.

For food, HVA has very good canteens, the best one is in the Wbh building. Every day there are freshly home-made soups for around 1.50 euros, so you can get a good deal. Other than that, there is every cuisine you would like to try, but the most famous and also affordable is the surinamense one which comes from the former dutch colony.

My favourite food place was the ethiopisch restaurant in Utrechtsedwarstraat, they serve big plates of soft bread with vegetables and meat or chicken, you eat with your hand sharing the dish with your friends. Together with an ethiopian wine bottle and coffee you pay around 20 euros. Go there and try it yourself.

Going out is quite expensive so make sure you get to meet up with your friends in the dorm and have something to drink before heading to a bar or club. Beer is quite cheap overall, but drinks get up to 8 euros.

De School is a very nice autonomous techno club, where they also host art exhibitions, a bit far out in the north west, but it is worth checking it out.

If you like playing football try to join a club at WV down south close to the Science Park metro station, they have many fields and over 40 teams Two training per week and a sunday game. Otherwise Hva offers gym facilities for small money.



Amsterdam Arena, a temple for who loves football

Application Process

The application process was fairly easy, mostly thanks to the exchange coordinator from both sides who were very helpful. I had to write a motivation letter and submit my grades to KEA exchange coordinator. Once she approved those papers I was also accepted by the Hva institute; I received an email with my registration in the school system, my credentials to login into the school dashboard and some info about the first welcome week.

Housing

Housing in Amsterdam is probably more of a crowded market than what Copenhagen is, Luckily there are some agencies that help exchange students get a dorm room. The most famous one is DUWO. You have to pay a starting quota of around 200 euros in order to get into the waiting list, and once you have done that you should receive an offer in about a month or so.

You have to pay the whole semester in advance for the accommodation, usually the price varies from 400 to 600 euros a month.

Cost of life

As I stated earlier, the city is not cheap, the cost of living is pretty much the same as my hometown Milan, I would say it is a bit cheaper than Copenhagen, but still watch your pocket!