Green (IT) Is The New Black

Gender Diversity

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By Julie Chenadec, Project Manager, Green IT Amsterdam

The month of May marks the 4 years anniversary of my arrival in the Netherlands when I started my first internship at Green IT Amsterdam.

Upon my arrival, I discovered a, new for me, booming industry: Information and Technology. Digging into that world, I discovered new concepts and technologies such as distributed data centres, smart grids, cloud technology, server virtualisation and so on and so forth. Just like every layman, I knew how to use the Internet on my phone and laptop, but I knew nothing about what is behind the curtain. As my work evolved, I also came across another related industry challenge: the sense of urgency. Data grows so fast nowadays that sustainability is a necessity. Not only to scale-up but also as an enabler towards sustained IT critical infrastructures.

Take for example IT on its own: as data centres are the backbone of our digital economy, our use of digital services generates huge amount of data traffic every year and its rising every year. In Europe, data centres energy consumption is expected to reach 104 TWh by 2020, despite the use of more virtualisation and

cloudification, (or even perhaps because of it?). Therefore, we need to think how to turn data centres into flexible multi-energy hubs, which can sustain investments in renewable energy sources and energy efficiency, which is the primary goal of the CATALYST project.

"Data centres can and should offer energy flexibility services to their smart grid and district heating networks", CATALYST project.

As a young professional woman at age 23, showing up in a world traditionally dominated by men was quite a stepping stone for me. Nevertheless, I've never doubted my choice to pursue a career on this sector. On the contrary it gave me the opportunity to bring in a fresh, and perhaps in some cases much needed, viewpoint.

4 years later, I can proudly say that "I work in green IT"! Although most of the people outside of this sector barely know it, my colleagues and I have a lot of ambition and vision because we all think that a need for cooperation and knowledge building is by far the most important element to support innovation and breakthrough technologies.

When it comes to Green IT, all stakeholders need to be innovative, technology-savvy, coming up with novel business model, and always find a revolutionary solution (take Asperitas who are in a quest to disrupt the data centre industry with their cleantech solution). IT is a sector that can adapt really fast and actually has the power to change and disrupt itself at its core.

In 4 years, the knowledge and responsibility I gathered is impressive. From analysing the transfer of IT good practices from different European regions, to now being the project leader of a European project, EV ENERGY where we aim to combine clean energy & electric mobility in cities, providing analysis to a number of regional and EU wide projects and launching with 3 other organisations a European multi-country alliance for Green IT (GRIG), I have accumulated both skills and experience.

One that I'm particularly proud of is sustainable leadership and awareness raising. I am confident enough to say I'm a positive and optimistic person in general, while always keen on sharing my vision, explaining the reasons of necessary changes in our society: I solely believe sustainable leadership is the key. It is not enough that we are working towards more energy efficiency with less greenhouse gases emissions, if we cannot reach the society, share our thoughts and take action, we won't succeed in tackling climate change. Ask yourself: "Is my activity providing a positive impact for the society?"

"No smart future without green clouds" Anwar Osseyran

Nevertheless, I envision myself only working in IT. Why? The impact with IT is tremendous. We have the opportunity to work on many different aspects of IT: electric vehicles, smart grids, data centres, energy flexibility, policy-making, etc. as

well as working with a lot of different stakeholders. Something that I learned over the past 4 years, is that we need to engage with everyone. Everyone is of importance when we green the IT sector, collaboration is key.

For all these reasons, I particularly want to thank Jaak Vlasveld, Esther van Bergen, Vasiliki Georgiadou and Maikel Bouricious who gave me the opportunity in the first place and trusted me along this wonderful journey. But also to every single person I came across and still meet today, thank you too!

Green IT Amsterdam is a non-profit organization that supports the wider Amsterdam region in realizing its energy transition goals. Our mission is to scout, test and showcase innovative IT solutions for increasing energy efficiency and decreasing carbon emissions. We share knowledge, expertise and ambitions, for achieving these sustainability targets with our public and private Green IT Leaders. Follow us on twitter @GreenItAms; visit our website http://www.greenitamsterdam.nl/.