Europe - Mainland

August 11 - Doing IT Around the World

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Anya – Russia: IT Specialist

About My Career   About Me

Interview with Anya - IT specialist: Russia

What do you do?

I work as a Lotus Domino databases administrator and help desk. :-)

What do you enjoy the most?
To be of benefit to people

Your first day like?

The very first day at work I was installing equipment.

Yes, when we asked to send us the link to a problem document, one used at first sent a screenshot. We said "no, it's not a link, please..." and so on. Then that user printed that screenshot, scanned it and sent it by email from scanner.

What previous jobs have you had?

I studied mathematics and informatics at the University. By the way, despite that I always liked mathematics, it was quite a difficult decision for me. As I also liked physics, literature, theatre and so on. ;-)

After University I worked as a PC operator for about a year, then I studied programming in system environments and used to work as a database programmer (CA Clipper) for a very long time.

At the end I was a key specialist of the company. Then my wonderful daughter was born and for 3 years I was babysitting with her at home. So, getting to work was an issue, I had some problem: plus the firm I worked for was closing and also I didn't want to programm for MS DOS anymore.

Finally I was employed to test computer programms for trade: front office with loyalty programs, cash module, drivers for cash registers, scales, label printers and so on. Also I had to write technical documentation, user guides and to teach service engineers. It was an interesting job, I loved it. But it was exhausting all my strength, too, as day after day I had more and more work to do and got home after work later and later. Since it is very important to me to have free time to spend with my family, I accepted an offer to change my work. I like learning that is new to me.

What have been your most significant achievements?
I never aspire to any "achievements" - as I don't need it. I know by myself who I am and there is no need to win the external recognition to prove anything to myself. Oh, when I was graduating I proved a theorem of my name (I used to have a different surname then) in mathematical analysis. It's an achievements, isn't it? :-)

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About Me Interview with Anya- IT Specialist: Russia

What are 3 words that describe you?

Detailed, Friendly, Intelligent

What qualities do you have that make you good at what you do?

I like to delve into every detail and easily get carried away at the same time, I am friendly and intelligent ;-)

What studies have you done?

Mathematics (obtained a distinction),

Training courses:
- pPogramming in system environments (several directions included),
- IBM Lotus Domino System Administation
- Operating Fundamentals,
- Building the IBM Lotus Domino 7 Infrastructure,
- Managing IBM Lotus Domino 7 Servers and Users.

Do you get to travel much with your job?

No I don't.

Will you stay in technology?

I will continue to work with computers, maybe this position, maybe another. One of good things about my speciality is to have a wide field of action.

What is your advice to other women?

Mary ~ Serbia: Web Design Business Owner

About My Career   About Me

Interview with Mary – Serbia: Web Design Business Owner

What do you do?

My company is Implementek.com, a webdesign and consulting business based in Serbia, with offices in Los Angeles and Germany and clients world wide. I aquired the company (there are two other owners), and a career in the technology industry, in my fiftieth year. My main role is business development; I also focus on recruitment and problem-solving.

You are active in other areas as well?

Working with Implementek is not the only thing I do: I am also a medical doctor/international health consultant, a writer, a doctoral student (my thesis is on the use of data from a major world household survey series) and a mother of two children aged 11 and 13. Technology allows me to combine my different roles and to have a truly global career.

What is a typical day like?

My typical day at work has no set pattern, or even location. But it does revolve around my trusty 3 year old companion - an Apple Mac G4 Powerbook, which I have just upgraded to a Leopard OS. Much of my work is done online - emailing, Skyping with my business partners and staff, and using our company web-based shared workspace systems. These are: Seework Basecamp for all of our project work, Kashflow for finances and Salesforce for, well, sales… plus google docs for when we are working jointly on documents or ideas.

I dream of a seamless integrated platform for all of these functions but we have not found it yet. Web-based systems are a true liberation - I can be in management meetings, monitor finances, review project progress, recruit new talent, trouble shoot - and still spend lots of time traveling to sailing regattas.

Where are you located?

We have just moved the company headquarters into stunning heritage premises just up a cobbled lane from the river Danube, only a few kilometers from the congested centre of Belgrade. I enjoy our courtyard well, loft-like premises and the fact that we will be able to expand as planned without another move - at least for the next two years. We have a pool table in the basement, and may be the only company in the world who is basing our business expansion on the need to keep the extra space for the ongoing Implementek billiard league.

What's cool about what you do?

The coolest part of my job is working with smart, younger people. I am 20 years older than almost everyone in the company; our president is 22 and has already racked up four years in the industry.
I most enjoy learning about what makes web-based applications work and keeping up with newer technology developments, especially where they can be applied in the health sector - this has helped me a lot in all my other roles.

Continued interview with Mary – Serbia: Web Design Business Owner

How did you get started?

I aquired Implemenk almost by accident, whilst helping other Harvard alumni set up businesses during my term as President of the Harvard Club of Serbia. Implementek created an online exhibition on Serbia US relations that was so impressive I decided to invest in the company. Very quickly it became obvious I would need to be much more hands on in managing the company than I had originally planned.

This challenged me to learn a completely new industry, and I have also had to rapidly learn business planning, finance, private sector management as well as more about the nuts and bolts of technology. Not something I had originally envisaged when turning 50, but definitely something worthwhile.

Something funny happened?

We had a company outing to the Belgrade Beer festival this week. Last year's Christmas party was hilarious - we held a potluck supper at my house and everyone brought their children and a gift to share costing less than five dollars. I have never seen such a collection of trashy, witty objects in one place.

I also write an ongoing pre-technology fantasy serial about Implementek called "The Tribe" which gives everyone alter egos. Mine is, of course, Medicine Woman.

My secret fantasy is to be a Sharon Stone figure in the company and go to more cocktail parties.

What impact have you made?

The biggest impact of my role has been to create new jobs in Serbia for smart young people - this means a lot to me having seen what this region has gone through with conflict, sanctions and restriction of opportunities. I like being part of the economic boom that is showing signs of developing, and of bringing international business standards into practice. I enjoy building a company with a strong ethical core, making extra efforts to recruit women, and demonstrating that we can reach for the sky and constantly learn and develop.

Watching me do this has an important impact on my children: I know that I am widening their understanding of IT. I am also putting in their heads that they might own and run a company in the future (my own family and that of my husband have only produced farmers and professionals working for the social sector for several generations).

About Me Interview with Mary – Serbia: Web Design Business Owner

What are 3 words that describe you?
Positive, Intelligent and Creative (my children added a fourth: Fun)

Do you Travel?
Technology allows me to have a truly global career. This year, I have been working out of Belgrade, New York, Dublin, Brussels and London, and thanks to the internet can keep up with company business quite easily. My Los Angeles based business partner and I have not met in person in over a year; we use Skype, email and have adjusted to an almost virtual working relationship.

Will you continue this work?
I have had serial careers in medicine, the UN, academia and now I am doing several work related projects simultaneously - writing, international health consulting, my doctoral thesis (which I hope will soon be finished) and pro bono work - and this seems to suit me. I would like to start bringing these different roles closer together, probably by bringing Implementek more directly into the health sector.

Given my track record and the way in which technology is developing so rapidly, I fully expect to be doing something completely different when I am 60, 70 or even 80. My own mother, a retired doctor, is 83 and known as "Cybergran". She has just switched from a PC to a MAC and happily videoconferences with her grandchildren and shops and does research online. I am unlikely to retire and see my future life as wrapped up with technology, with the divide between work, family and my personal life becoming less and less distinct and more and more customized to suit me and how I want to live.

Your advice to other women?
You can start a career in IT at any age - look at me, starting aged 50. Women can find many roles in IT - from programming to design, to marketing and to management. IT is evolving so rapidly that if you chose a career in technology the only thing you can be certain of is that whatever you are doing now, you will be doing something different in five years time.
IT careers are flexible and adaptable to family life (although you need to take care that you set some boundaries or your family will be upset with your mobile or laptop intruding 24 hours a day). IT careers are also portable between countries. If you go into business with a partner, pick that person carefully - most business failures are relationship failures at heart. Make a partnership agreement in advance (like a prenuptial agreement).
Make sure that your daughters (and sons) can see the opportunities that are coming up as the world of work is being utterly transformed by information technology. We cannot avoid the amazing changes that will transform the way we live and work, so we might as well leap in and work with them; women have lots of choices right now and it makes sense to choose technology. It also makes sense to find ways to get more women into technology and IT. It is the best option we have to shape the future.

More about Mary's career

I grew up in Lambeg, a small village just outside Belfast in Northern Ireland, famous for very large drums. I trained in medicine at Trinity College Dublin in 1982 and specialized in internal medicine and public health in the UK, Ireland and at Harvard University as a Harkness fellow.

My 27 year career has included over 12 years with the World Health Organisation and UNICEF in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Croatia and other Balkan countries. Setting up the medical airlift from Sarajevo during the war and collecting human rights documentation in Eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina were two of the most challenging things I have done. Being expedition doctor to an expedition surveying the Belize barrier reef and hitchhiking across Alaska were two of the most exhilarating things I have done. I have held a foundation chair of Public Health with the University of Queensland, establishing a new medical school based in far North Queensland. A fellow of three Royal Colleges, I am an international advisor for the Royal College of Physicians in South East Europe, past President of the Harvard Club of Serbia and a member of the Serbia's American Chamber of Commerce.

My current research interests include gender equality, especially in humanitarian responses and the footprints they leave on subsequent national development, and the development and uses of global health and social indicator databases. Pro-bono work includes children's and women's literacy, business literacy and transforming discrimination. I predict that lack of access to computers and the internet will soon be an official measure of poverty, and would like to see development assistance programmes more clearly target IT skills, especially for excluded women and girls.

I write about the health and medicine, IT and raising children in number of newspapers including Ireland's Medicine Weekly, European Hospital, Profit Magazine in Belgrade, and internationally in the British Medical Journal. I have served as a school governor and on numerous education committees. My consultancy work relates to women in business and health sector reform.

After Dr Ozren Tosic saved me from pirates in the Bay of Bengal, I married him. We currently live in Belgrade with our two children.

Some links:
My company http://www.implementek.com
Association of Business Women of Serbia http://www.poslovnezene.org.yu/en
IT Girls - Great Careers for Great Women. Proceedings of the European Commission Conference_6 March 2008, Brussels
http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/activities/itgirls/conference_0308/index_en.htm

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Marion – France: Technology Researcher

About My Career   About Me

Interview with Marion – Technology Researcher: France

What do you do?

I am a researcher in Accenture Technology Labs, the technology R&D Department of Accenture, the global management consulting, technology services and outsourcing company. My role is to come up with innovative ideas on how emerging Information Technologies could be used to improve all aspects of the activities of a business. My mission is to identify and develop the next wave of technology services that my company will be able to offer its clients in the future, hopefully in a way that will make us different from our competitors.

For example, a few years ago, I developed - in collaboration with a colleague - the idea of using a network of cameras to monitor an elderly person living alone, to detect events such as a fall, and, if necessary, send an alert to an emergency center. The system could improve the level of care provided to an ageing population, and enable them to continue to live longer in their own homes. My job consists in finding the idea, investigating its feasibility (usually by developing a working prototype - in the above example we equipped a room with 4 small webcams and one of us would go into it and fall down to check whether the event was detected) and general aspects of its value: what benefits would the technology bring to the various stakeholders? How does it compare to other ways of doing the same thing? Are there barriers that would prevent its adoption?

What do you feel proud about achieving?

In this job you are forced to learn humility, because whenever you think one of your ideas is great, you soon find out that twenty other people across the world have had the same idea, and have worked on it for several years already.

More recently, I started to focus my efforts on applying sensor networks and IT in general to help people and organizations better manage their energy spending and their carbon footprints.

After 2 or 3 years spent on this topic, I am seeing some of the trends that we had identified come true - some of which had seemed farfetched at the time - and I am proud to see that the expertise that I have built along the way is useful to an increasing number of people in my organization.

I am more motivated than ever to continue working in this area because I think there is a strong and urgent drive for energy and carbon management solutions worldwide, and a real potential for Information Technologies in this domain.

What do you enjoy

I like the fact that, although we are working with emerging technologies, what we do is very much anchored in the reality of today's businesses. When we develop a new technology application, we have to have a good understanding of the industry it applies to, in order to anticipate correctly the needs of future users and convince our clients of its value.

Extent of impact?

Our research work typically has 3 types of impact: with the media - in business IT or even general public journals, academic (articles or speeches at prestigious conferences) or internal, when the research work is recognized as being of value to other groups in Accenture. A couple of years ago my team worked on a project which received incredible media cover all over the world. A friend who was travelling to India saw my picture in a local newspaper, which he did not expect!

About Me Interview with Marion - France

What are 3 words that describe you?

A mother, a wife and an IT professional.
Three hats that many women across the world juggle with on a day-to-day basis...

What qualities do you have that make you good at what you do?

Technology Innovation requires a fair amount of stubbornness and optimism - both "qualities" I think I have - because there are many occasions when your ideas are beaten up in some way.

What studies have you done?

I graduated from the Ecole Polytechnique, a French "Grande Ecole", where I received a general, high-level scientific education and post-graduated at the Ecole des Techniques Avancées, where I specialized in image processing, pattern recognition and robotics.

How did you get started?

I have been doing this job for the past 8 years and I am still enjoying it very much: there is no routine; I am working with brilliant, friendly people.

How do you spend your time?

Most of my time is spent reading, in discussions with a broad range of people, communicating my ideas in different ways (articles, patents, presentations, etc...), and some programming - although this part tends increasingly to be performed by interns who come to work at our Labs.

Any hobbies?

In my spare time I do Yoga, which has a calming and energizing effect on me.

Travel?

I have to travel - but not too much - which is good for my family.

What is your advice to other women?

Engage. Lucy Sanders, CEO and co-founder of the National Center for Women & Information Technology said: "the lack of women in IT should be a pressing concern as technology is fueling the economy. We need more diversity of thought in the creation of our technology, and I know that we don't have that today. What would women invent if they were inventing today?".
I could not agree more. IT is on its way to changing every aspect of our societies and lives. It is crucial that Women contribute to shaping the "information society" that future generations will inherit.

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Go to next role model

The site of the **Harvard Club of Serbia**, done so beautifully by Implementek that I bought part of the company. My partner Nik is a graduate in computer sciences from Harvard and we met while I was helping alumni set up businesses in Serbia. Harvard has a "needs blind" admissions policy (i.e. get admitted and they will find financing for you) and is very keen on attracting women, especially minority women. The newly appointed - and first woman - President is Drew Gilpin Faust.

Litriocht - an example of a site we are in the midst of developing. Litriocht is the market leader in online sales of Irish language books. It is run by the talented Caitlín nic Gearailt, and is one of the Bard group of companies - they utilise technology to create thriving global business in remote Irish speaking communities. Their current site is here http://www.litriocht.com/shop/index.php - you will see the new site by the end of Sept 2008.

R Point

Implementek is proud to support **R Point**. The concept is unique - use the transformational power of music and dance to challenge prejudice. Roma people in Europe face prejudice every day. In these workshops, Roma children create a unique bland of hiphop/rap using their own words and stories. Highly skilled volunteers add training in music and dance. The resulting mix is electric.

Albania	Andorra	Armenia	Austria	Azerbaijan
Belarus	Belgium	Bosnia	Bulgaria	Croatia
Cyprus	Czech Republic	Denmark	Estonia	Faroe Islands
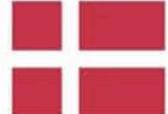
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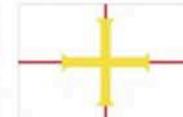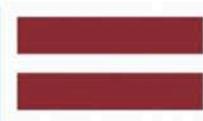
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Iceland	Ireland	Italy	Isle of Man	Jersey	Kazakhstan	Kosovo	Latvia
Liechtenstein	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Macedonia	Malta	Moldova	Monaco	Montenegro
Montenegro	Norway	Poland	Portugal	Romania	Russia	San Marino	Serbia
Slovakia	Slovenia	Spain	Sweeden	Switzerland	Turkey	Ukraine	United Kingdom