Interview with the Best Team in Asia & Malaysia

'Go n Gone' – 1st Runner Up of the ATOS Global IT Challenge 2016

Q: Let's talk about your idea for the competition. How did this idea come about?

Gamma: Our team leader gave us inspirations on the idea. One day, we were sitting together at the 'mamak' and we came out with several ideas. The idea that stood out the most was proposed by our team leader on how we should promote the awareness of anti-cyber bullying by erasing offensive contents on the web. From there onwards, we followed the idea and started our development.

Abdulhamid: The 'Go n Gone' application is a third-party application that includes authentication and filtering of offensive content on the internet. As we know, nowadays there are a lot of cyber-bullying cases. There are a lot of inappropriate words and images on the internet. We included three features in the application, which are:

- Bad word deletion – Delete inappropriate words on your account
- Anti-Cyber bully – Users are restricted from posting inappropriate words and content
- Anti-nudity images – Nudity images from profiles are automatically deleted

Gamma: We developed our concept according to theme of the competition, "the right to be forgotten". This application benefits parents, students and companies in various areas. Parents can prevent their children to be victims of cyber-bullies or prevent them to become bullies. It also provides a second chance for people who want to delete immature remarks and comments made previously. Big companies such as ATOS which have their own social media platform can make use of this application to ensure a healthy and bully-free environment among staff as well.

Q: The team went through a lot of trainings, brainstorming and development sessions of the application. What is the most difficult challenge along the way?

Gamma: The most difficult part was the development stage of the application. Although we had a clear starting point of the idea, it becomes difficult when we had to translate the idea into an app, technically. 4 of us are Level 2 students, thus our technical skills were not mature enough as there are many areas

which we have not explored yet. We had to do a lot of research on the internet and consult our lecturers along the way. We are glad that they helped us a lot.

On the other hand, we were also required to compete in the Social media challenge by engaging active conversations among our followers. We tried very hard to post materials and updates on our social media platforms; at last our hard work paid off. We managed to win the Social Media Award.

Syahmi: I agree with Gamma. Throughout our journey, lack of technical skills was the main challenge. I'm glad that we stood together to go through them, with the help of our mentor.

Abdulhamid: For me, time management was a challenge. Managing our time in assignment, classes and the preparation for this competition was quite difficult. We had a hard time at the beginning; however we made it through as we backup each other when either one of our team members was absent.

Q: On average, how many hours per day do you allocate for the application ideation & development processes?

Syahmi: It depends on our classes schedule and assignment submissions. When some of our members went for classes or were involved in assignment submissions, we took turns to assist each other in completing the several stages in application development. On weekends, all 4 of us spend our time in the room to work on the project; in fact, we stayed in the campus for the longest time – 36 hours!

Abdulhamid: Yeah, I remember those 36 hours. It was one day before the submission date, unfortunately, our system had some bugs. We stayed in APU for 36 hours to debug and repair the application before submission.

Q: What are the things that you value the most throughout the 8 months of preparation for the competition? What were the most unforgettable things that happened?

Syahmi: We value our friendship built over those 8 months. Teamwork was the priceless motivation for us to go through all the challenges that we faced. We supported each other during the difficult times and we were glad that we made it through.

Abdulhamid: Yes agreed. I still remember the times when we managed to get the codes right, we danced and jumped up and down the room. It was a great way to celebrate and to relieve our stress!

Q: Do you have the plans to commercialize the application?

Syahmi: Yes, we have. Right now we only have the concept and the prototype. We are working hard on commercializing the application; the development process is the application is still ongoing, despite the competition has already ended.

Q: What did you value the most in this trip to Paris?

Syahmi: I loved the experience! This is my first time going overseas and experiencing something so different than Malaysia. I truly understood the meaning of diversity, as I tried to experience other cultures while maintaining my own practices. For example, despite enjoying the food in Paris, I also seeked for halal food options, or go for the pork & no alcohol diet. I enjoyed the cool weather there too!

Abdulhamid: I valued everything there. The food was delicious, and the people whom we met were very friendly.

Gamma: I valued the golden experience. It was a great opportunity for me to experience something different from my routine. I appreciated meeting new friends and making new connections with people who came from different countries. I have seen for myself, how different is the Western culture as compared to the Asian culture and I value this experience a lot.

Q: Before the results were announced, how did you feel?

Abdulhamid: Once we arrived at Paris, the hosts gave us a lot of attention and treated us so exclusively – even the ATOS CEO came to talk to us personally! At that point of time, we were very confident and thought that we will win the competition. At last we got 2nd place; although we were a bit disappointed, but we were still very happy to clinch the Global 1st Runner Up position. Now that we looked back, maybe we got the attention from the organisers because we were the only team from Asia to be a Finalist.

Q: How do you think that this experience will help you in your future career?

Team: We learnt the importance of time management and teamwork. As all of us are in the middle of our Level 2 Degree, the 8 months preparation for the competition often coincides with our classes and assignments. This has trained us to multitask and be able to focus in many areas at the same time. In work, this is unavoidable and we are happy that we can manage it well.

The competition has given us a chance to make practical use of our skills that we have learnt. We understand that the world of IT does not only appear in textbooks and lecture slides, but we can also use them wisely to improve our daily lives.