

EU-Canada Student Mobility Program Personal Experience

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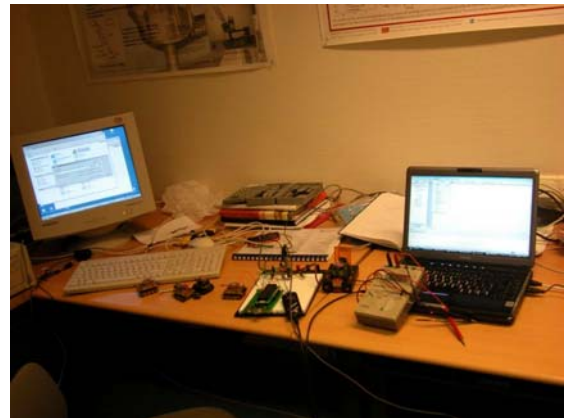
I am very pleased to have the opportunity to join the EU-Canada Student Mobility Program. The EU-Canada Student Mobility Program enabled two students from Simon Fraser University to work at the research lab of Budapest University of Technology and Economic (BME) in the fall semester of 2008. I am one of the lucky students.



The program can be treated as a coop work term, and I received \$7500 salary as travel advance. I worked at the lab of BME at the week days and travelled at the weekends. During the work term, I also enrolled in ENSC494 (a special project course), ENSC498 (undergraduate thesis proposal) and The Introduction to Hungary Culture course as required. The program can fill full four wishes: one coop work term, a chance to travel in EU, money, and credits for courses. Why not join?

The Work:

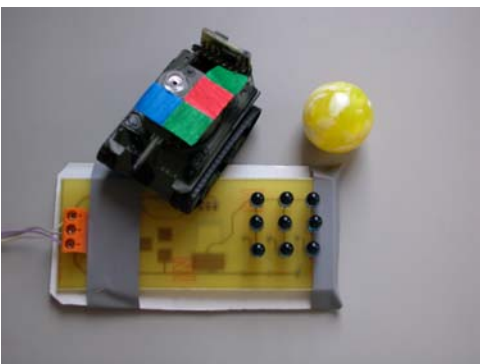
During the last four months in Budapest, I arrived the lab around 9 am and leave around 5 pm in every working days. Working hours was very flexible. Sometime I arrived the lab late and worked late.



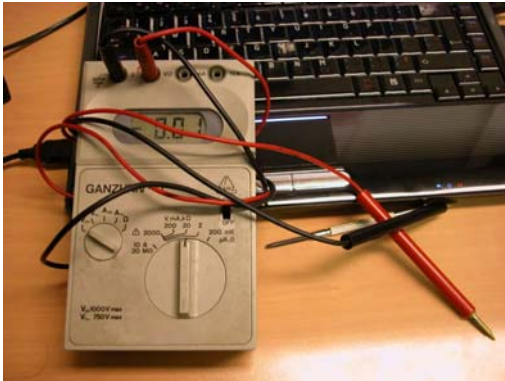
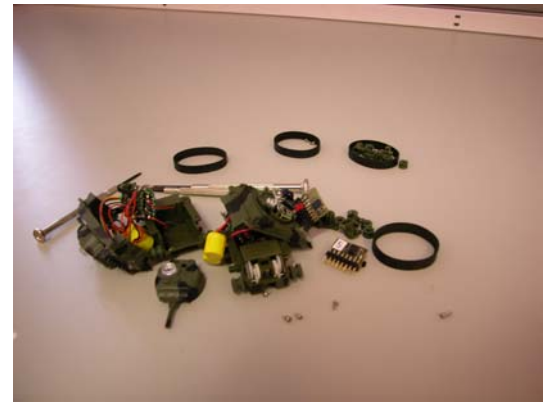
When people ask what you are doing in the lab, you can answer I teach the robots to play soccer. The tasks were considerable challenging and interesting.



My main task was to redesign the IR communication protocol because the old one encountered some timing issues. What I need to do was program the micro-controller on the transmitter PCB to control the IR LED to generate the IR signal. The transmitter PCB was a new



design; therefore, I also needed to hardware debug the transmitter PCB to ensure all the functions were working properly. For example, toggled the GPIO and monitored the pin output. Moreover, I also reprogrammed the micro-controllers in the robots. I enjoyed what I was doing in the Lab. I had learn how to program two micro-controllers (PIC18F4550 and ATtiny45), and gained the knowledge of IR hardware design and IR communication protocol software programming.



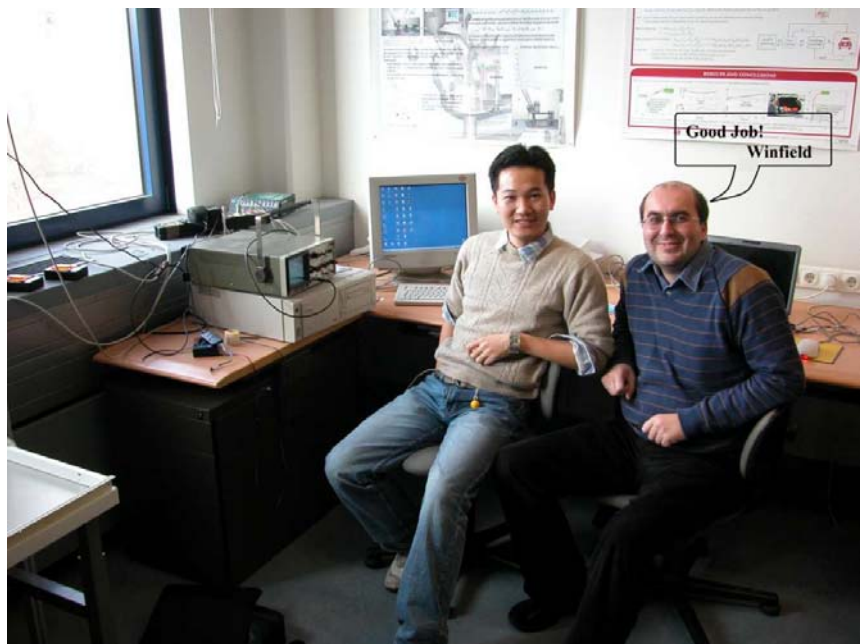
The lab I was working in was an informatics Technology Lab. It did not contain a lot of hardware equipments. The equipments in the lab are very old and out of day. The DMM in the lab is shown in the left hand side. I am sure it was made before I was born. I got a new one later. It is shown



in the right hand side. When I wanted to use a digit scope, I had to go a long way to another lab.

The People:

Dr. Istvan Harmati is my supervisor in BME. He is a very nice person as shown in the right hand side. The first time we met was in the train station. The train station is on his way home. He picked me up in the train station and showed me the direction to the hotel when I arrived Budapest. I felt some warm and I am very welcome. The people working in the lab are very nice too. They offered me some wine and food when they had graduation party.





Most Hungarian showed the sad face when I first met them. I felt strange at first. The teacher of The Introduction to Hungary Culture told me that if you smile to people and say “how are you”, they will think you are drugged. That is their culture.

The local people speak Hungarian; and some previous work reports were written in Hungarian. I had

encountered some communication problems in work or living. Most of the young generation knows how to speak English; therefore, I asked help easily. In the work place, I could always ask help from the co-worker for some translation of



some work reports which were written in Hungarian. In everyday life, I could ask the young people around for help. The young Hungarian is very nice to the foreigners. They are very willing to help you.



The Living:

The school gave us help to find the flat. During the last four month in Budapest, I was living beside the city center of Budapest with a very cheap price because I shared the flat with 4 other people. One was the other SFU student who also joined the EU-Canada Student Mobility Program. There were two



Spanish and one Dutch. They were international students in Budapest. Living with them in the same flat in Budapest, I was not only experiencing the Hungarian culture, but also Spanish and Dutch culture. I had also experienced different style food. Sometime, we invited some Hungarian friends home for Spanish, Dutch and Russian food. We kept a very good relationship. We had parties at home, hung



out and traveled together.

There are a lot of things needed to be deal with while living outside of Canada. For example, I needed to



apply a permit if I stayed in Hungary for over 3 months. However, if I leaved the country and had a stamp in the passport with in 3 months, I did not need to apply for the permit.



Traveling in EU Countries:

The EU-Canada Student Mobility Program provides a very good opportunity to travel in any EU countries. I had travelled a lot in the last four months when I was in this program. It is very convenient to travel by trains to all the EU countries.



Moreover, some local flights are very cheap too. With the Canadian Passport, I did not need any visa to enter all the EU countries. I had been Hungary (Budapest, Szeged,

Bekescsaba, Balaton Lake), United Kingdom (London), Ireland (Dublin), France (Paris, Nice), Switzerland (Bern), Germany (Munich, Cologne, Berlin), Austria (Vienna), Romania (Bucharest), Serbia (Novi Sad, Belgrade), Italy (Venice, Milan, Roma, Florence, Genova, Ventimiglia, Pisa).



The End:

I am glad I had applied to the EU-Canada Student Mobility Program, and thank Dr. Shahram Payandeh gave me the opportunity.