

A Robot Ronaldo, a PC toaster: Spain's Campus Party has it all

April 18 2010, by Virginie Grogno



A woman plays a computer game at the Campus Party in Madrid, one of the world's biggest on-line electronic entertainment events, bringing together some 800 Internet enthusiasts from across Europe for four-days to share ideas, experiences and all types of activities related to computers, communications and new technology

Cristiano Ronaldo and Raul are kicking a ball about. But they're not at Real Madrid's football stadium but the Campus Party, one of the world's biggest online entertainment events, and they're not the real football stars but their robot versions.

The robots are the result of months of work for the students of Braga University in northern Portugal.

"As there is a World Cup in South Africa this summer, we thought it

would be fun to play with the Iberian rivalry," their teacher, Joao Carlos, told AFP, referring to Spain's Raul and the Portugal's Ronaldo.

Around 800 IT enthusiasts are taking part in Campus Party, which lasts until Sunday and is aimed at sharing ideas, experiences and all types of activities related to computers, communications and new technology as well as showcasing new talents.

Some of the projects are just for fun, but some are serious.

The 20 best ones are to be presented to a jury.

Seated behind their computers in a massive room of the Magic Box, an ultramodern complex that normally hosts tennis tournaments, are Matthias and Deborah, a German and a Spaniard.

Deborah is a regular at the Campus Party, which began in Spain in 1997 and was held last year in the Mediterranean port of Valencia.

For this year's event, she has spent five months transforming her computer work station into a sort of enchanted forest.

The screen is encased in a tree trunk and covered with a mesh of leaves, with birds in a little cabin on the branches and mushrooms alongside the keyboard.

Matthias said he drove 1,500 kilometres to show off his toaster-computer.

"The idea is that when I feel lazy, when I don't want to get out of bed or to go to the kitchen I can grill my toast with a touch of my PC," he explained.

Other projects are more serious, and even educational, such as that of Naima and a group of students from the Paris region.

They have built a video game aimed at children to fight bad eating habits which involves using a [joystick](#) to separate carrots or tomatoes from packets of chips or hamburgers.

Tomas, a 27-year-old Chilean, has developed a programme to find stolen computers.

Luis, a Spaniard, showed off his R4P, a "low-cost" robot with six feet.

"Our idea was to make a robot that is accessible to everyone. We therefore allow the software that we developed to be used by anyone who wants to make a similar robot," he said.

The young geniuses dream of transforming their passion into a full-time job.

For Luis, that has already happened. "Thanks to my [robot](#), I have been hired by a large Spanish company."

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Citation: A Robot Ronaldo, a PC toaster: Spain's Campus Party has it all (2010, April 18)
retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-04-robot-ronaldo-pc-toaster-spain.html>

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