Member Society News

Croatian ICT Association – CITA

by Marijan Frković

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The Croatian Information Technology Association (CITA) (www.hiz.hr), is the umbrella organisation of Croatian ICT experts. It was founded in 1975 with the objectives to create the conditions for faster and more efficient introduction and application of ICT by

- Advocating the status and the quality of profession
- Initiating and implementing projects of mutual interest
- Promoting and using open systems
- Encouraging and organising the participation of young people in ICT
- Exchanging skills and experiences in using ICT
- Organising professional gatherings

CITA participates in the work of international ICT associations of informatics experts – IT STAR at a regional level, CEPIS at European, and IFIP at a worldwide level. ECDL Croatia and EUCIP Croatia are active within CITA.
CITA holds the licence for certification of users of personal computers according to ECDL standards (www.ecdl.com) and (www.ecdl.hr), and the certification of professional ICT experts (www.eucip.com) and (www.eucip.hr) in Croatia. It participates in programs of the European Union.

The members of CITA are included in the implementation of the National ICT strategy, especially the strategy for electronic business in the Republic of Croatia for the period 2007 – 2010.

There are more than 200 legal entities and a few thousand individuals active in CITA.

This year, CITA celebrates its 35th anniversary of continuous activity and there will be several manifestations and conferences organised on the level of the umbrella organisation and its associations to mark the anniversary. One of the more significant ones is the international gathering of the member countries of IT STAR within the frame of which there will be a regional conference on electronically conducted business, to be held in Zagreb on 12 November, where it will be possible to exchange experiences in achieved levels of applications and with problems referring to the introduction of electronically conducted business in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (http://www.starbus.org/ws5/ws5.htm).

There are several organisations, experts and users of ICT active within the scope of CITA aiming to introduce and apply ICT technology more quickly and more effectively, and to open opportunities for the exchange of skills and experiences, such as:

- Open computer systems and Internet
- Oracle technologies
- Young informaticians
- Linux technologies
- GIS technologies
- SAP solutions
- ECDL test centres

The Croatian Society for Open Systems and Internet (HrOpen) was founded in 1992 with the intention to promote the development and advancement in applying these systems in the Republic of Croatia. This is being implemented by organising seminars, lectures and workshops, by establishing the collaboration with experts and associations for open systems and Internet in Croatia and abroad, by encouraging the usage of program support in the field of Open Source and Free Software.

One of the most important activities of the Society is the annual conference «Open Systems Days» (DORS) organised for the purpose of informing people about open systems, their usage, the experiences of users and problems in application. It should also be added that HrOpen participates in training activities for teachers of primary and secondary schools to use open systems, and it is also very active in technical committees of the Croatian Institute for Standardisation in the field of open systems, introducing and applying international standards.

The Croatian ORACLE User Group (HrOUG) has been active ever since 1995, working on the exchange of skills and experiences of users in the application of ORACLE technologies, and on the improvement of the relationship between the users and ORACLE Corporation.

The annual conference of Oracle users needs to be specially singled. It gathers several hundred participants with the objective to make people acquainted with the new Oracle products and present new solutions, existing problems, presentations of Oracle representatives, etc.

The Croatian Society of Young Informaticians (HrSIN) was founded in 1985 with the intention to involve young informaticians, to carry out programs and to provide help to members, organise district and state competitions, winter schools and summer camps for informaticians, preparations and participations of young informaticians at international competitions, information schools and manifestations, and to organise competitions for software projects of young informaticians and their presentation. There are several thousand young people being active in HrSIN and the best of them participate successfully at state, regional, European and world Olympiads in informatics for young people, in which they have won more than 100 medals. HrSIN organised successfully in 2007 the International

Olympiad in Informatics (IOI) in Zagreb, and this year they won one gold and three silver IOI medals in Canada.

The Croatian Linux Users Group (HULK) was founded in 1966 to promote the operational system Linux, to advise and inform the members about new achievements in open standards and technologies, to help those who are interested how to use Linux, to organise the program of translating well-known open programs and systems, to collaborate with other societies, such as HrOpen and other. HULK maintains the Central Linux portal in Croatia (www.linux.hr), organises central Linux conference (cluc.linux.hr), adjusts Linux to the users in Croatia, and generates open code programs.

The Croatian Society of Geographic IS (HrGIS) was founded in 1994 in order to make GIS technologies popular and organise education in GIS, to promote the production of national GIS standards, to participate at European projects and programs, to organise professional presentations at Croatian and international gatherings, to raise the level of skills in the field of GIS technologies at the faculties and vocational schools, to collect and distribute publications and professional works in GIS. HrGIS organises successfully annual conferences titled „GIS Odyssey" where GIS works are presented and professional exhibitions and manifestations held. In collaboration with the embassy of the Republic of Poland in Zagreb the exhibition «New and Old Polish Maps» was held in Zagreb this year. An exhibition under the same topic will be held in Poland in 2011, this time with Croatian maps. In collaboration with the State Geodetic Agency from Zagreb and the one from Warsaw, the work on the project of producing maps and plans for blind and low vision people is being continued.

The Croatian Society of SAP users (HrUSKO) organises the communication of users with the firm SAP and helps in exchanging information among the members. It organises professional conferences for the users of SAP tool and databases, represents the interest of the members by publishing information on of their new products, organises a demo centre of new program products, as well as the teams for testing beta versions, organises the participation at Croatian and international fairs, exhibitions and conferences.

The Croatian Society of ECDL test centres (HrECDL) unites the activity of test centres in Croatia dealing with the problems of introducing and applying ECDL, the introduction of new versions of ECDL programs, publishing literature, ECDL marketing, and delivering the conclusions and suggestions to ECDL Croatia.

CITA has been working successfully on the ECDL program in Croatia since 2003. More than 50,000 employees, citizens, unemployed, persons with special needs and others have been working so far within the scope of some of the programs, with 40,000 of them having certificates to do so. The government of the Republic of Croatia has accepted ECDL as a standard in schools and state administration. So far, more than 20,000 teachers in primary and secondary schools and more than 2,000 employees in state administration have been certified.

In 2006, the 10th World Conference was held in Dubrovnik with the participation of representatives of 140 countries in which ECDL is applied. This gave full credit to CITA for its successful application of ECDL in Croatia.

In order to provide conditions for a faster development of electronic business in the region (with the information literacy being one of essential presumption), CITA organised in 2007 the first annual ECDL conference. The following conferences were held in Slovenia and Serbia. Bosnia and Herzegovina will play host this year.

CITA became a member of IT STAR in 2002. This was followed by membership in CEPIS and IFIP. It hosted the IT STAR Business meeting in 2003. These first initiatives present the beginning of CITA being active in international ICT organisations, which has significantly contributed to the acquisition and transfer of new skills in Croatia and the exchange of experiences, and has made Croatia more prepared for the transition to an information society.