

Juho Karkinen: From the Heart – My EDIFY Job Placement at Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology

The trundling of the bus. The slow, mechanical unwinding of the accessible bus ramp as it screams warnings in both English and Gaeilge. The air feels almost tropical, light drizzle taking the edge off the heat wave scorching the rest of Europe.

I am greeted with the now-familiar sight of a blue cube-shaped building on the green lawn. “The Media Cube” – I come to learn the name later. Past it, a glass rectangle known as the DMB – or less casually, the Digital Media Building. The pride of the campus, built only months earlier. On the side of it, “Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology”, better known as IADT.

The screens of the DMB welcome visitors with a mix of EU news and glorious student animations. Our supervisor Emma Balfe greets us with a casual cup of coffee. The other half of “us” is Sara Cappelli, an Italian student. Emma explains our assignment: helping as assistants in their job in the – rather new – EDI office. They introduce themselves as the Respect and Dignity Officer.

In specific, our tasks include: 1) working together on a calendar for EDI related occasions, and 2) working on an individual task assigned based on our interests. For me, the individual task involved creating an accessibility guide for IADT events.



In front of the Atrium building, which includes the library on the second floor!



Testing the eye tracker in the psychology lab.



A polaroid taken by Emma of Sara and me at a local board game café!

Emma gives me a couple of examples, and both of us start the work in the university library. First, I learn about the Irish Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty; the duty of public Irish Institutions – including IADT – to work continuously on diversity

rights, even without specific incidents or prompting. I learn about the recent European Accessibility Act, and how it will change services forever – hopefully for the better.

Then, I start reading the accessibility guide examples from other Irish Public Institutions. One of them includes an accessibility checklist, so I modify it with content from other examples to create my own, hopefully more substantial checklist. Using that checklist as an outline, I start to create the first draft of an accessible event guide for IADT. I meet with the IADT event planner to bounce ideas. I get familiar with the IADT brand guide to create a document – using Canva -- that fits the branding of the institution while hopefully being accessible and easy to understand, without being boring. I learn how accessibility has a lot to do with common sense, and how easy it potentially is, if you can just remember: *remember* to have ramps of less than 1:20 incline to them, *remember* to use a large font size of 16 and over, *remember* sizable lifts and so on. Accessibility is consideration, given physical form. Meanwhile, Sara was working on a learning module on gender discrimination.

Together, we work on the EDI calendar: we learn about Black History Month and Transgender Awareness week – and about the Traveller community, a racialized minority native to Ireland, who face racial discrimination despite looking physically similar to other Irish groups. Instead of skin color or facial features, their marginalized and racialized identity is based mostly on culture and their nomadic lifestyle, which modern life hasn't been built to accommodate.

I build a quick Figma prototype of the calendar for eye tracking purposes. That data will be used to further refine the calendar. We get to test the eye tracking software, learning how it is used in psychological experiments – not only in service design, but also in investigating how much job recruiters look at CVs sent to them. Surprisingly little, it turns out.

At the end of the month, we are interviewed for the EDIFY podcast by fellow students coming after us – probably available on Spotify -- and we meet EDIFY alumni from Ireland and Italy and Germany.

Is there anything else to say? It was an eventful July 2025. I hope others join us.

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Juho Karkinen

EDIFY Alumni