

Library PrepUP at Networked Digital Technologies 2009

PrepUP you may recall is the University's project to assist students who've been offered a place at UoP to adjust to University life. The Library has a contribution to the



Tour of a zámek

It's not often you can say you've done a tour of a castle in the Czech Republic. Not just 'done' it—but delivered it.

The NDT organizers had arranged a special tour of the chateau or stately home in Hradec nad Moravicí (Hradec on the Moravicí River). The guide didn't speak English and resorted to reading from a (poorly translated) script.

It was hard enough for those of us with English as a first language; for the Koreans, Japanese and Arabic speakers it must have been impossible and our organizer could rapidly see his carefully arranged visit becoming something of a trial for all concerned.

But the tour guide readily agreed to Timothy reading the script (translating the dodgy bits into English and simplifying some of the harder historical language when necessary) and we were able to have a lot of fun. Above is a photo from the beautiful library.

project and a write up of the work we've done was submitted to the First IEEE International Conference on Networked Digital Technologies in Ostrava (the very eastern end of the Czech Republic).

Having had the paper accepted, Timothy Collinson travelled by train (well five of them!) with a short stop in Prague on the way (see 'Prague Rooftops' below) to present it.

Vysoká škola báňská - the technical university in Ostrava -



hosted the conference in their beautiful new conference facilities called 'Aula'.

The conference went very well with Timothy kicking off one of the tracks on the first day (right) and chairing a couple of sessions as well which was an interesting challenge—particularly when the word 'nonsense' was being thrown at a presenter and it looked as if it might deteriorate into a fight at any moment.

The international flavour of the conference was evident with 70 presenters from all over the world and a great opportunity to try out fragments of language, meet new people and encounter new cultures. A conference dinner with live Czech folk music and two tours—one of a fascinating old mine and one of a stately home (see 'Tour of a zámek' left) rounded out the



conference and made it not just a technical outing, but a cultural and historical one as well.

My thanks to Ing. Jan Platoš (who also provided the photo above) and his colleagues for an excellent conference and a great introduction to Ostrava. More photos and other info at:

<http://arg.vsb.cz/ndt2009/>

VSB Library

No trip to a University would be complete without visiting the Library, and although it was mostly closed for the summer, it was just possible to sneak a very quick visit. My thanks to the staff who were so patient and answered questions and let me take pictures of the interesting and recently developed 'knihovna'!

(Part of the study room to the right).



Auschwitz—lest we forget

In addition to the conference it was possible on the Saturday following to drive into Poland and visit Oświęcim—better known by its German name Auschwitz. By starting early it was possible to see Auschwitz-Birkenau in the stillness of a summer morning with no sounds except the crunch of gravel underfoot. (The main gate is pictured below.) Auschwitz proper, by 10.30am was much busier with bustling crowds and a much more 'touristy' feel.

I didn't find the visit an easy one but it was worthwhile and an opportunity to pay our respects to all those who suffered and died. It was particularly interesting to visit in the company of a Czech for whom this was all too close and recent history—we paused at the



Czech national memorial—and a young Columbian who we discovered saw it at a much greater 'distance' as it were. The importance of remembering what took place here seems all the more relevant in the face of those who'd deny anything from the holocaust to the moon-landings.