◼ No age limits in IT education

Calling grandchildren via the internet, reading the daily news, chatting with old friends from school or watching a missed soap opera episode online. Senior citizens from Košice and the surrounding area are eager to learn all these things and a lot more.

To address the needs of senior citizens, T-Systems Slovakia, together with Secondary Electro-Technical School in Košice, has started a new pilot project "AjTy Senior". The idea of the "Third Age University" has been on its way to fruition for a long time in Košice. The first semester of the project "AjTy Senior" began in September 2013. Because senior citizens have many questions and want to know almost everything, a one-on-one approach was chosen. There really is a teacher sitting next to each student.

"Senior students always surprise me with their enthusiasm and ability to learn everything. And, this is the best reward for a job on this project for me," says one of the teachers, Daniel Bača, Senior System Administrator from T-Systems Slovakia. Eight of his colleagues volunteer as teachers on this project as well. Tomáš Ronec, Junior Network Administrator, was motivated to join the project. He explains: "My parents are interested in Internet functionality and the options which it offers but they have issues with understanding how a PC should be used and managed. I'm glad that I can also help other people to improve

their life quality by teaching them how to use a PC and the Internet. That's why I have volunteered."

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"For some, it might seem weird, but seniors give me this energy, especially because they have found determination and stepped on the road of learning to work with computers. Their will to learn new things in an unknown area motivates me a lot. I truly believe that they perceive it in the same way and the "AjTy Senior" course will bring them a lot of positive impressions," says Denisa

Neumannová, Teamleader. It is not just about T-Systems Slovakia volunteers, the students from Secondary Electro-Technical School in Košice come to teach at the courses too.

Sixteen seniors were split into two groups – beginners and intermediate. They are learning the basics of using a PC, how to use Internet, how to create and use their own e-mail account and they are getting to know more about Word or Excel too. "It is a wonderful opportunity for seniors to learn about the new information systems and make them work in everyday life. It offers also a great opportunity to connect with friends from all over the world," says one of the senior citizens Tibor Barč. "It is an interesting course for me and it is good to have the possibility to educate ourselves and get to know these modern technologies," adds another senior citizen, Mária Medvecová. Several seniors are already enrolled for the summer semester and that is why the courses will be continued in the future and support education in IT with no regard for age. Teachers are looking forward to stay in the project as well. "I enjoy teaching

seniors; they are wonderful students to teach working with computers. Most of them also hope that the project will continue in the future," says Martina Tvrdoňová, System Operator. "In the end, seniors are not the only ones learning, as we have a lot to learn from them too," adds Tvrdoňová.

The focus is on IT education for all age groups. For the fourth year there are IT courses for eighth and ninth-graders led by volunteering IT specialist in several grammar schools in Košice . Moreover, for the first time in Slovakia a special project for high school graduates called "Dual Education" was launched by T-Systems Slovakia this year. By joining this education project, students learn a lot more about IT in a hands-on environment and receive a certificate that is also valid abroad. The project was realized in cooperation with the Secondary Electro-Technical School in Košice.

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