

Community Talk with:

# Çiğdem Çavdaroğlu

Çiğdem Çavdaroğlu may be familiar to the ITEA Community as a technical reviewer, someone who evaluates Project Outlines and Full Project Proposals as well as monitors progress during project reviews, and all the other aspects that help create the conditions for projects to be successful. Her credo that “innovation has no purpose unless it results in exploitation” stands her in good stead to help steer the direction of projects and ensure that they maintain their focus on exploiting their innovation. In fact, she has more or less the perfect portfolio to add value to the Community.

#### **Straddling two worlds**

Çiğdem straddles the two worlds of academia and business. She graduated in Mathematics Engineering at Yıldız Technical University in Istanbul, where she also later gained her Master's degree in Remote Sensing and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) before successfully completing her doctorate in 2016 on the subject of Face Recognition by Feature Detectors and Virtual Reality. In 2016 she became assistant professor in the Department of Information Systems, Management Information Systems at Işık University. During the period from 2013 until very recently (June 2018) she worked as R&D manager at

KoçSistem, which she left very recently to begin her own company, together with a colleague from KoçSistem. The start-up, Sense4B, is based in Istanbul and was launched to give Çiğdem and her co-founder a vehicle to turn their concepts into products with real customer value.

#### **Advanced technology sensor network solutions**

“Sense4B moves in the fields of Wireless Sensor Networks (WSN), Environmental Security Systems, IoT, Factory Automation, Intelligent Cities, M2M, Predictive Maintenance, Machine Learning, Signal Processing and GIS,” Çiğdem explains. “We want to develop advanced



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technology sensor network solutions that are targeted to the requirements of specific customers.” Among the products that her company delivers are Sense4B Fence Watch, Sense4B Pyton, Sense4B Octopus and Sense4B Enki, all of which currently focus on security and automation “but we want to take the technology further,” she explains, “and develop new products in different fields that add value to industry and the economy.”

#### **Hands-on**

Being hands-on in this way and also being engaged with the academic community, Çiğdem is able to pass on her knowledge and experience of business and industry to her students so that they are better prepared to dovetail their learning with the real demands of the world in which they will later become the engineers of the future. And it is this same approach and conviction that makes Çiğdem so

well suited to her task in the ITEA Community to which she was first introduced through her former employer, KoçSistem. “I was asked to take over responsibility from a colleague for the ITEA contacts concerning the project proposals. I must say that this was one of the most important and positive steps I have taken in my professional life. Before I started the Steering Group reviews, I had not had any prior experience of doing this but given my background and focus on transforming knowledge into products, I soon realised that I could help others maintain this essential focus. As I’ve already said, if your customer cannot get value from your product, what good is the innovation you are developing?”

#### **The root of the need**

“When I look at the various initiatives and events organised by ITEA for its Community, I can only but admire the work it is doing. Like the customer workshops. They really do try to get to the pain points, as Philippe Letellier likes to put it. But that’s vital, because only by doing that we can get to the root of the need. And that really ties in with what I am trying to do in business – find out what the real need is among my potential customers and develop a solution for it. I want to use my knowledge to create something new for industry. In other words, exploit the innovation. So, in that respect I am on the same page as ITEA.”

#### **Broader, fuller perspective**

Being involved in the ITEA Community has clearly enriched Çiğdem’s life, from both a professional and personal viewpoint. “I think all the ITEA projects are wonderful projects. I like the fact that they are multi: multicultural, multidisciplinary, multi-perspective. Not always easy to manage when you think of all the different people from different companies and countries coming together to achieve a set of goals. But that is also the big plus. Collaboration and cooperation, sharing and networking. I have taken the opportunity to mix and engage with all these different people and companies from around Europe, and that’s a really positive benefit. Contact with project participants and with the different ITEA teams has also helped to broaden my vision. I think I have become a fuller, rounder person, and that would make anyone happy!”