

INTERVIEW WITH THE CEO OF SOCIAL THINGUM FRANCESCO EPIFANIA



Social Thingum is an innovative SME founded by Francesco Epifania in 2015.

Francesco Epifania, PhD – CEO, Socio & Co-founder

Since 2015 he is CEO & Co-Founder of Social Thingum, growing innovative SME in the Italian AI and Human-Computer Interaction (HCI) landscape. He has many-year experience in AI, HCI both in the academic and industrial fields, and he attended several training opportunities for startups such as MIP Start-up program, London Startupbootcamp and Accelerate in Israele. He was a research fellow at the Department of Computer Science of the University of Milan and holds a PhD in Computer Science from the University of Milano-Bicocca, together with three degrees in the Computer Science field: a bachelor degree in Digital Communication, a master degree in Information Technology and a master degree in Computer Science. He produced numerous publications for national and international conferences and journals. His research interests

are in the field of Human Computer Interaction and particularly in the creation of intelligent, multi-channel interactive systems for knowledge enrichment. His work is also related to the evaluation of Recommender Systems in heterogeneous domains.

Who is Social Thingum ?

Social Thingum is a innovative SME founded on a high-profile team, combining skills and experience in academia and industry. We develop innovative ICT technologies and algorithms to connect people and objects through Smart Social Networks. Our Social & Smart paradigm combines potential for learning and interaction through the synergy between Artificial Intelligence and Social Networks. We exploit a young and dynamic work team, consisting of resources largely from academia, and numerous strategic contacts with several universities in Milan. In particular, the start-up main product is a Social Intelligent

Learning Management System (WhoTeach) capable of fostering the development of skills of students, professionals and managers by aggregating and disseminating knowledge created by experts. In addition, we are currently developing the EaSY 4.0 project, with the aim of creating a technological infrastructure that revolutionizes human-machine interaction in the use of household appliances, through an intelligent social network that learns their usage habits and provides recommendations for optimizing them in a totally personalized and user-centered manner. We work in some cutting-edge computing fields, proposing original and tailored technological solutions, especially through the use of approaches such as cognitive knowledge representation systems and artificial and computational intelligence. The team is particularly involved in R&D and consulting projects in the areas of Machine Learning, Big Data Analytics, Internet of Things, Smart Living, Recommender System and WEB 4.0. The startup also carries out exploitation of 3 European projects: NETT, which is the case study in which the realized platform was tested, and SandS and Elliot, in the area of IoT.

What is Social Thingum's Mission?

Social Thingum develops innovative ICT technologies and algorithms to connect people and objects through intelligent Social Networks. The company proposes an innovative paradigm of integration between Artificial Intelligence techniques and Social Networks: this synergy between cognitive and social aspects proves to be a distinctive and characterizing element of the company's value proposition. In particular, the specific objectives are:

- The realization and commercialization of innovative technological solutions and advanced consulting in the IT field, in particular Internet, web and mobile applications, Social Network, Recommendation System, E-learning, User Experience, Advanced Analytics, Internet of Things, Big Data and Cloud Computing;
- The continuous improvement of the WhoTeach platform, our "Social Intelligent

Learning Management System" and its application in multiple organizations, entities and institutions in the educational field;

- The development of an intelligent and social infrastructure for applications in Internet of Things and Smart Living (EaSy 4.0).
- The maintenance of the NETT platform generated by the European project EE-74- NETT; exploitation of the European projects NETT, SandS and Elliot;
- Research, development and innovation in the ICT field and all related fields including human-computer interaction, "Internet of things," advanced analytics, "Big Data," and in the evaluation, design and development of multimedia and multichannel intelligent interactive systems for knowledge enrichment.

What is Social Thingum's Vision?

Nowadays, the technological and social scenario faces a crossroads: you have to choose whether to ride the long wave of new paradigms of innovation or whether to create them yourself. It is necessary to merge networks and communities of practice in all the innovative fields, to share experiences and ideas, to make visible the methodologies that can be successful and especially to connect technology and society with a holistic and international perspective.

The ambition of Social Thingum is to contribute to this process through our wide structured offer of advanced technological activities, in which a fundamental aspect stands out: a computational intelligence, enhanced and completed by social network, which uses cognitive algorithms and the knowledge base and behaviors provided by users to produce optimal and customized suggestions and insights.

Through this paradigm Social Thingum aims at providing advanced architectures and services that represent instances of WEB 4.0, thus reviewing and improving the usual scenarios of human-machine interaction and providing effective tools for knowledge enrichment.