WOMEN IN TECHNOLOGY - GMIT MAYO GRADUATES

Barbara Hopkins: BSc in IT Administration, 2016
Prior to applying for the ITS course I drifted between jobs and at the time of application I was a single mother living on social welfare. My sister convinced me to go to the open day in the GMIT Castlebar campus, as she had recently graduated as a mature student from there. I was always interested in technology but had very little experience or knowledge on how it works.
On the day, Mark Frain gave a brief presentation about the course which really appealed to me. So, with nothing to lose, I signed up.
Fast forward a few years I now have a job that suits my lifestyle with a wage I could only have dreamed of. I am now an IT Engineer currently working for a fantastic company called Typetec, I work full time from home which allows me flexibility and security.
There is a perception that IT is predominantly a male orientated career, however it is evolving and I would advise any woman with interest or passion for IT to pursue it. It is an extremely rewarding and enjoyable career, where every day is different.

Sarah Mulroe: BSc (Hons) in Digital Media & Society, 2017
I graduated with a first class honours degree in Digital Media & Society from GMIT Mayo Campus. At the time it was the first of its kind course in Ireland and it is spectacularly relevant in today's online society.
I love all things Digital and am always on the lookout for new and interesting apps to help create relevant and engaging content. I'm often out and about with my camera looking for content to engage audiences. I love Wordpress and the problem solving and workarounds that comes with it.
I am a co-founder/CEO of WeeveMedia, a young dynamic digital marketing company that has recently started business in Mayo. I help businesses set up and run their social media pages so they can build, nurture, engage and manage online communities to grow their business. I handle all event promotions ensuring there is lots of content for audiences to engage with to ensure maximum exposure for the business.
I am also Marketing Manager for Westnet Broadband which has substantially grown its online following in a short few months, which in turn has led to a significant increase in sales for the company. I am also the Social Media Manager for DMiMayo and looking forward to the fantastic journey that is in store to make Mayo a digital hub that they have planned over the next few years.

Kathie Nally: BSc (Hons) in Computer Service Management, 2008
My professional life began in the equestrian industry. When I finished my Leaving Cert in Ireland I went to Belgium, aged 17, and basically spent the next 20 years working with horses all over Europe. Often I was the IT support service in the bigger more modern yards that had computers as I had taken the computer class in school.
I decided to return to Ireland in 2004 just before the Tiger arrived. I was struggling to find a job when my mother heard on the radio that there was an IT course starting in GMIT Castlebar the following year. Knowing that I was actively interested in computers she advised me to apply and I went on to study the B.Sc (Hons) in Computer Services Management, graduating in 2008.
I applied last-minute for the Masters course in NUIG shortly after finishing in GMIT and was accepted, graduating in 2010. For my Masters project and thesis I found an internship at the EPFL in Lausanne Switzerland (Ecole polytechnique fédérale de Lausanne) and eventually moved back to live and work.
I work mainly on small missions for short term contracts, I work for several small NGOs on a voluntary basis. Here in Switzerland there exists a huge gap between the amount of women working in IT and their male counterparts. Around 300 new IT jobs appear in the main Swiss Government search engine every day. There

are not enough graduates in Switzerland to meet the demand. Most jobs are in Finance or large multi-nationals, 90% require English and one of the national languages, and just over 60% require a Masters in a relevant field. I find it sad to see that in the past 12 years or so the amount of women taking up IT has not grown. It is a very interesting field to be in with all the amazing changes happening all the time and GMIT Castlebar is the perfect place to start that amazing journey

Laura Murphy: BSc (Hons) in IT Service Management, 2015
My journey in the IT industry started when I was given the role of LAN Administrator in a company. That role was dissolved when the company outsourced its IT solutions. After a career of over 12 years with that organisation, looking back I realised it was my most enjoyable role so I decided to return to third-level, joining GMIT Mayo.
Going back to college was tough at times but very worthwhile. I got great support from my classmates and from my lecturers, which went a long way. The topics we covered and the practical assignments were really engaging and satisfying.
Initially I worked as a SAP Support Analyst for two years before moving to a software company that specialises in Network Security Monitoring, where I am a Technical Support Engineer. The move for me was to try a different avenue of IT. That is what's great about the course in GMIT Mayo. The subjects are diverse and you will find your favourite.
There was only one other female in my class however, which is something I hope will change in the future. This type of work is very fulfilling but we don't see the same number of females in college courses or IT roles.
When you see a tech role advertised but don't see any women come in for interview, you realise the gap. I look forward to a time when the percentage of female applicants is close to, if not equal to, the number of male applicants. Diversity and gender diversity are being proven to have huge advantages to business and innovation. When women are great users of technology, why shouldn't they be involved in the creation of great technology?

Michelle Ferguson: BSc (Hons) in IT Service Management, 2014
As a mature student, it was very daunting applying for the ITS Course in GMIT Mayo. Not just being out of school for over 10 years, but also being a female in a technology environment. It was the best decision I have ever made, and as far as colleges go I couldn't have picked a better course in a better Institution.
I was helped throughout my course by all my lecturers who treated everyone equally. The college provided so much support throughout my journey and for that I am eternally grateful.
The ITS course pushed me to my limits but has helped me advance so much, built up my confidence in technology and even helped me secure work experience in a large cloud computing MNC in London.
I feel it also showed technology companies that women in IT are equal to men and that's exactly how I was treated and felt, both in college and at work.
Only for participating in this course, I wouldn't have had the opportunity of the valuable work experience in London which in turn led to the offer of a permanent position.
I can't recommend the ITS course enough. The advancements in technology are outstanding and this course provides you with the skills and knowledge to be part of this ever-changing world of technology, and the possibilities and potential for advancing from ITS into Computer Services Management, all in the one college is fantastic. If I had my time over and had to go back to college, I wouldn't change a thing.

Olivia Kelly, Galway, graduate of the Higher Cert in IT Support 2004 and BSc 2009.
Currently Operations Manager at PostPoint

When I finished my leaving certificate in Galway I didn't really know what I wanted to do in college. I had a keen interest in sports so decided to do outdoor education and leisure in GMIT Mayo. After a year I realized this was more of a hobby for me than a career ambition. I felt lost with regards to what I should pursue. My bestie friend's Dad gave me some great advice and researched courses with me and suggested the ITS course in GMIT Mayo. This course had everything from the theory, practical and work experience. The lecturers were all very supportive and helpful the whole way through.

On graduating I worked in tech support, then as a field service engineer before moving into management. My first management role was in an EPOS company as their installations' project manager and also as a customer support manager. I spent some time working with Smyths Toys as their service desk manager during a time when there was a lot of growth in the company and found it very exciting. I then moved to Dublin and for the last four years I have been working as an operations manager for a subsidiary of An Post. No two days are the same in this role and I have a heavy involvement in technical projects. At 37, my career ambition is still alive and well and I am looking forward to the next challenge whenever that presents itself.

For anyone considering a career in IT, the ITS course in GMIT Mayo is a great choice as you are not limited to choosing the area of IT you want to get into. It's only as you progress through the course you will have a flavor for everything and get to know what it is you would excel in.

Sheila Kelleghan: BSc in IT Administration (2016)

I finally made the decision to join GMIT in January 2013. I was a mother of three small children and the recession had a negative impact on our family, and it was by far the best decision I could ever have made for my family.

On presentation day I was met by lecturer Mark Frain who explained everything to me about the course. It was a fantastic course and it has set me up 100% for working in the IT industry.

After completing the course I worked for nine months as an IT support engineer for Cloudstrong. I then moved on from Cloudstrong and now work as a major incident manager for HP/DXC and I absolutely love my job.

Going back to education in GMIT was by far the best decision I have ever made, I feel I am now financially and professionally stable for the future.