

The best of both worlds!

Consultancy the Comsof-way: consulting and coding!

There is nothing as frustrating as a slow internet connection, be it for a gamer or for the average internet user. Fiber To The Home (FTTH) networks provide faster connection speeds and carrying capacity and are now rolled out all over the world. Designing them however is difficult. Compare it to planning your route on your GPS: how to get from A to B in the most efficient and 'economical' way possible and with a minimum of effort? How do you know you're taking the right route? You'll get there eventually but how much time will you have lost? The answer lies with Comsof, the Belgian software company, that developed the FiberPlanIT solution to making FTTH network planning easier and smarter. Since 2006 Comsof has assisted in the planning of more than 65 million homes – worldwide.



Comsof consist of a small team of highly passionate engineers and they are assisting telecom operators, consulting engineering firms, communal and national administrations, ... with their challenges by moving the fiber closer to the user, more efficiently and at a competitive cost. In the end, FiberPlanIT makes internet faster for the user.

Julie Neckebroek (33) is one of the team-members and as a civil engineer in computer sciences, she works as FTTx Design Consultant at Comsof, the developers of FiberPlanIT.

How did you start working at Comsof?

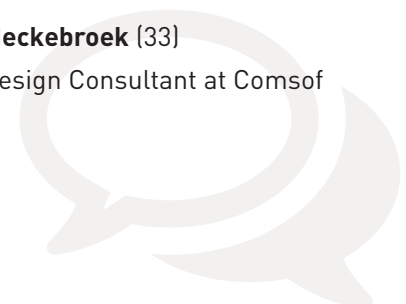
Comsof is my first job in a private company, after 9 years of research and a PhD at Gent University. I received an email mailing from them with job offers right before the University Job Fair. I read about Comsof and I must say that they were active in my area of interest as I have a doctorate in Digital Communications. So, I was immediately interested. I love to work with algorithms and I like to analyze and solve problems. During my talks with management it became clear that these elements were an integral part of the job offering. I was quickly convinced that this would be a good choice and so I signed up.

What are your responsibilities?

As a consultant, I am the interface between the client and the development team. Therefore, I need to understand the needs of our clients, process the data, (e.g. buildings, poles, streets,...) that we receive in many different formats (excel, files, database) and sometimes for whole countries, load it in our software, define scenarios, do calculations and report back to them. Let's not forget that we are talking about projects which cost millions of Euro's or dollars. We provide our clients with strategic advice so that they can make the right decisions for the planning and rollout of their networks. Of course, I am not alone to do that. As I said, in the Gent office I am the interface between the client and the team and I can count 100% on the expertise and help of my colleagues. We're a real team committed to finding solutions for our clients.



Julie Neckebroek (33)
FTTx Design Consultant at Comsof



Comsof also sells their FiberPlanIT software worldwide on a license base. Even in India and if you know how many brilliant developers they have there, it is credit to our work that they use our software to solve their network planning challenges. It is a complex matter and they welcome the expertise and knowledge that FiberPlanIT has acquired in this field.

It is also one of my tasks to train the clients and support them in the use of our software. And as always, to listen and identify new needs, out of which we can further develop our products.

Do you only do consulting? What about your love of algorithms?

No, there's more. As an engineer I personally love algorithms. A consultancy job at FiberPlanIT does not restrict one to talking to the clients and reporting back. Our software is so flexible that we configure and customize to the needs of our customers. So I also write code and I am responsible for the implementation. Obviously, we are closest to the clients so we are in the best possible place to do that. This is something that immediately appealed to me as I knew that I could continue to put into practice what I love.

It was your first job in a private company, how did that go?

How you are received and trained is very important. And that is where I think that the team is extremely valuable. The support comes naturally and everybody is open to discussions. The Comsof FiberPlanIT structure is very flat.

Training is swift and efficient. In fact, you are put in the role of a client and you learn the products just as the client would. The in-house training by our peers is very efficient and you are quickly brought up to speed. As an example,

we also learn via the same tutorials (online and video) that our clients use. In the beginning, you work in parallel with a more seasoned colleague but, for example in my case, after 5 weeks I was given the responsibility to work on concrete projects.

Can your job evolve? What does the future hold at FiberPlanIT?

How the job evolves? Well, it's early days now but from what I can see there are many exciting evolutions. A lot of new technologies surface to which we can adapt our solution. As a team we constantly think about new ways to improve our own products to keep abreast of developments in this growing market. As we are not pigeonholed, the possibilities for growth, personal and company-wise, are endless.

How would you summarize your job at FiberPlanIT?

Consultancy at FiberPlanIT is intellectually challenging. The open and flexible environment means that you can pretty much define and develop your own job. The combination of consulting and coding is unique and appealing to a civil engineer. As the company is driven by the evolutions in the market the software is constantly evolving and there are always new challenges ahead. The whole team works together to tackle them and find the best solutions for the clients. It's maybe a little corny to say but it's a great team and we participate in a lot of joint activities out of office hours.... that must mean something. And oh yes, as we are operating on a worldwide basis most of our customers operate abroad, so international travel is part of the job, which is nice.



FiberPlanIT
BY COMSOF

www.fiberplanit.com

Interested in a job at Comsof? Let's talk!

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