

Vienna Visit - July 2015

The visit to Vienna was a very enlightening experience, it showed us many ways in which the country was far more advanced than ours in terms of the internet, and on the other hand some of the areas we explored were not as advanced as we are here in the UK. It also opened our minds to see what we can do here in the UK to progress on a global scale.

The thing which impressed us most was the Wi-Fi access, from café's to parks, it was everywhere. It was quite astonishing how we could receive this free internet access almost instantly regardless of where we were. This was a massive improvement on what we are used to back home, where you'd expect to have easier access, but this is far from the case, as we are used to using mobile data when we are away from our Wi-Fi router at home. As well as there being loads of Wi-Fi hotspots, the connection was also very strong, which came as quite a shock, because back in the UK when we do find access to a hotspot, the connection is quite weak and barely holds. Accessing the Wi-Fi itself in Vienna, was extremely easy, it was a matter of accepting a set of terms and conditions and you were in, whereas here in the UK you have to go to a very lengthy process, which may even include creating an account and verifying it through email.

The use of internet in Vienna is a lot more productive than us in the UK. It is used mainly for educational purposes and to teach people of all ages how the 21st century works. We visited a centre called A1 internet Vienna. This provided children of very young ages with a chance to learn how to use the internet, in a safe and secure way. This was not only limited to children, but also to people who never got the chance to learn how to use the internet, i.e. the older generation. We felt that this centre was making good use of its facilities, and was good for the local community and that more should be established in less developed areas for the younger generation to have knowledge of the world one day they will conquer. This is where we felt Austria and probably most of Europe had an advantage over us here in the UK, because it seemed they were helping more less privileged communities than we are.

One area which caught our attention was that of computer programming, and how here in the UK you can only learn it in school at a late GCSE level or when you begin to take A-levels in college. What we found in Austria was that they teach computing from a very young age of 6, in order to develop their skills and allow them to be at an advantage over people of the same age bracket. Even though their minds may not be as developed as that of a 17 year old in college, it is quite possible that they understand the subject better than that person ever will, just because they started at a younger age. This tells us that in the future they are likely to be better than us on a global scale, because they are putting more knowledge, effort and time into their youth as opposed to us.

To conclude, our visit to Vienna showed us that we can learn a lot from a country which is not as recognised as we are in the world, yet what they do, which most people cannot see, is worthy of recognition far beyond what can be explained. There are things which we can take from them, which would help us improve vastly, and vice versa. This trip was very insightful to us as 17 year olds, as it allowed us to see what we didn't have when we were younger; as now children are able to explore the internet.

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