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# CERN openlab holds annual technical workshop and announces new leader

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Last week, CERN openlab held its annual technical workshop at CERN. CERN openlab is a unique public-private partnership between CERN and leading tech companies, which works to drive innovation in the computing technologies needed by CERN's research community.

The ambitious upgrade programme for the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) poses significant computing challenges. When the High-Luminosity LHC (HL-LHC) (<https://home.cern/science/accelerators/high-luminosity-lhc>) comes online in 2029, around ten times the computing capacity of today will be required. Simply spending more money to buy more equipment isn't an option; instead, IT experts across CERN are finding ways to work smarter.

CERN openlab is central to this work. Today, 30 R&D projects are carried out through this

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collaboration, addressing challenges related to the next generation of supercomputers, known as

“exascale”, artificial intelligence (AI), and quantum computing. CERN openlab also runs projects

aimed at sharing knowledge and expertise with research communities beyond particle physics. All

these projects were presented at the two-day technical workshop, which was held in the CERN Council Chamber.

The event was attended by 145 people (in person and online), including representatives of member companies Intel, Oracle, Siemens, Micron, Google, IBM, Roche and Comtrade. As well as discussing ongoing projects, the workshop provided an excellent opportunity for considering emerging challenges and identifying opportunities for mutually beneficial collaboration.

At the event, Maria Girone was announced as the new head of CERN openlab. Girone, who has served as CERN openlab’s Chief Technology Officer since 2016, recently received a prestigious Italian award (<https://openlab.cern/index.php/news/11-nov-2022/maria-girone-cern-openlab-cto-awarded-gold-medal-calabria>), and founded the Swiss chapter of the Women in High-Performance Computing advocacy group (<https://openlab.cern/news/10-feb-2023/cern-openlab-cto-co-founds-swiss-chapter-women-hpc-advocacy-group>).

Alberto Di Meglio, who has served as the head of CERN openlab since 2013, is now responsible for running CERN IT’s new Innovation section. This section, created as part of the CERN IT department’s new strategy (<https://home.cern/news/opinion/cern/new-strategy-and-structure-tackle-ambitious-challenges-ahead>), includes CERN openlab, the CERN Quantum Technology Initiative (<https://quantum.cern/>), and IT-related projects funded by the European Commission.

At the workshop, Di Meglio presented the CERN IT department’s new Innovation Roadmap, which will be published in June. This roadmap addresses five main objectives:

1. Introduce heterogeneous computing infrastructures and software-engineering services/tools;
2. Scale up data management, data storage and databases towards the requirements of the HL-LHC;
3. Support the introduction of AI technologies in the community;
4. Keep the CERN IT department at the forefront of R&D;
5. Enable open science and boost CERN’s positive impact on society.

“CERN openlab has played an important role in making sure CERN’s computing infrastructure is ready to meet the challenges of LHC Run 3,” says Di Meglio. “This roadmap will set out how the CERN IT department will help drive the innovation needed to meet the massive computing challenges posed by the HL-LHC.”

“I would like to thank Alberto for his excellent stewardship of CERN openlab over the past decade,” says Enrica Porcari, head of the CERN IT department. “During his time, the collaboration has roughly trebled in size, with CERN openlab also growing to include collaborations involving other research organisations. There has also been significant growth in the popular CERN openlab Summer Student programme (<https://openlab.cern/education>).”

“I am looking forward to establishing new collaborations and exploring new, emerging technologies through CERN openlab,” says Girone. “This workshop, the first we have held in person at CERN since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, was an excellent way to get this work started.”

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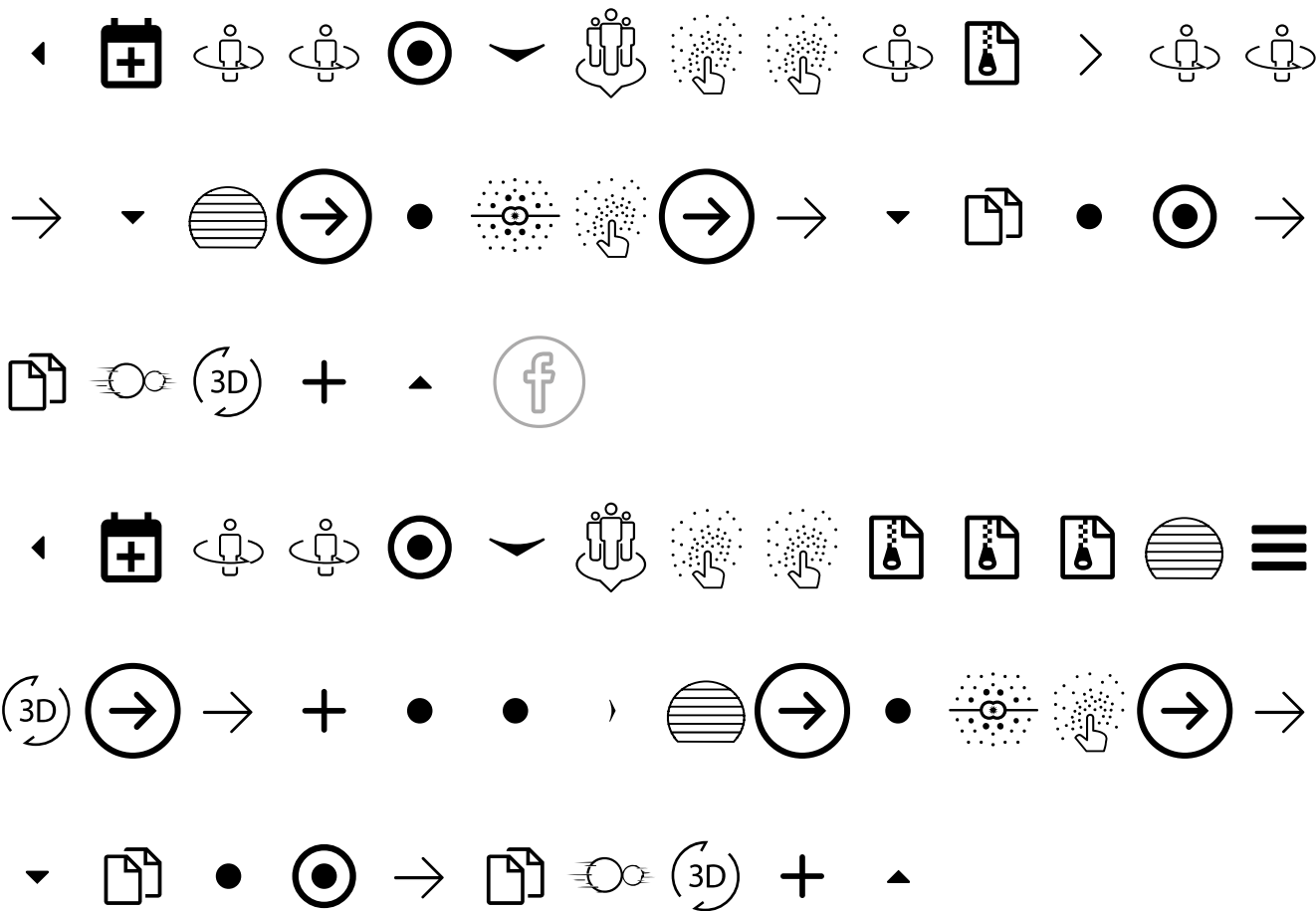
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