

**Kurt-Ulrich Witt** received his Master's degree in Mathematics with a minor in Computer Science with distinction from RWTH Aachen University in 1978. He then worked as a software engineer on the development of a telephone traffic monitoring system for a software company. After one year he returned to the RWTH Aachen University as a research assistant. He did research in the new field of Graph Languages, a generalization of the Theory of Formal Languages from strings to graphs. In 1981, he was the first to receive a doctorate in Computer Science from RWTH Aachen. He left the university in early 1983 and worked for a year as a systems analyst in a consultancy firm.

In 1984 Witt became a research assistant at the Central Institute for Applied Mathematics (now the John von Neumann Institute for Computing) at the Research Centre Jülich. He worked there in the fields of Information Systems and Artificial Intelligence. In 1989 - 1991 he was on leave to hold professorships in Practical Computer Science at the Institute for Computer Science at the University of Hildesheim and at the Institute for Applied Computer Science and Formal Description Methods at the Technical University of Karlsruhe (now Karlsruhe Institute of Technology). There he gave lectures in Foundations of Computer Science, Computer Architecture, Software Engineering and Communication Systems. During this time, he co-authored two of the first textbooks in the field of Database Systems, and co-edited a book on the state of the art on development trends in Database Systems at that time. In 1992, Witt published the first textbook on Object-Oriented Programming in Germany.

During this time, Witt received appointments from several universities of applied sciences. At the end of 1991, he accepted the appointment as full professor of Practical Informatics to the Trier University of Applied Sciences. Together with his colleagues, he established a degree program in Applied Computer Science and the Department of Applied Computer Science there.

At the beginning of 1995, he was appointed head of a project for the development and implementation of a distance learning program for the academic education of working professionals in applied computer science. It was the first offer of scientific education of this kind in Germany. In this education program, it is possible to obtain a Master's degree in computer science in addition to certificates in individual courses. This study offer can be seen as a predecessor model for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs). However, at that time these were more or less text-based. In the meantime, with the advance of digitalization, the portions that are really conducted online have increased.

In 1997, Witt was appointed head of the Central Office for Distance Learning in Koblenz as part of a joint initiative of the federal states of Rheinland-Pfalz, Hessen and Saarland. One of the aims of this institute was and is to develop further distance learning programs. In the meantime, there exists a number of study programs in the fields of economics, engineering and social sciences.

Witt himself developed courses on Database Systems, Mathematical Foundations of Computer Science, and on Automata Theory, Formal Languages and Computability. He continues to supervise the theory courses and is still a member of the academic advisory board of the distance learning program in computer science at Trier University of Applied Sciences. In Witt's opinion MOOCs are more or less the only way to continue your further academic education alongside work and family or for other reasons. In traditional face-to-face teaching at universities, digital learning formats offer a variety of opportunities to improve teaching and learning outcomes. The lockdown phases in the Corona pandemic have given a boost to the development of such formats. However, Witt believes that face-to-face communication is indispensable in both academic education and scientific research.

In August 1998, Witt was appointed Professor of Mathematical and Theoretical Foundations of Computer Science at the Department of Computer Science at the newly founded Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences in Sankt Augustin. He became the founding dean of the department and was later elected dean several times. Under his leadership, the department

developed into one of the largest and most successful in Germany. Numerous cooperations with scientific institutions at home and abroad were established, interesting research projects were recruited, many graduates achieved prizes in various competitions and got interesting positions in companies or scientific institutions. A comparatively large proportion of graduates successfully completed their doctorates at universities in Germany and abroad. He strongly advocated for universities of applied sciences to be granted the right to award doctorates, which is indeed becoming more and more established in the meantime.

In autumn 2002, Witt was appointed as one of the founding directors of the Bonn-Aachen International Center for Information Technology (b-it). He founded and directed the b-it Applied Science Institute (b-itAS) and the Autonomous Systems Master's program at the Department of Computer Science at Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. In a short time, the institute achieved worldwide recognition, among other things through many successful participations in international robotics competitions. The activities of the institute have significantly increased the research achievements of the department.

At the end of 2010 Witt finished his work as dean, and at the end of 2016 he retired from the position of b-it director, and in February 2019 he retired as a professor.

In addition to the textbooks already mentioned above, Witt wrote other textbooks on mathematical foundations of computer science in the fields of algebra, number theory, and combinatorics. Based on his experiences from distance learning, he designed all books to be suitable for self-study. The theory book that he co-authored is, with its six editions, one of the most successful textbooks in Germany in this field. Together with many of his students, he published research results in the fields of applied computer science and discrete mathematics.

To date, Witt has been and continues to be active as a reviewer in research and teaching programs as well as a member and leader of scientific advisory boards, including

- reviewer and principal reviewer for ministries of science and research in Germany and Austria in research programs for application-oriented computer science research
- reviewer for the ARS Legendi Faculty Award of the Donors' Association for the Promotion of Sciences in Germany (Stifterverband der deutschen Wissenschaft)
- reviewer for the award of theses in computer science at universities of applied sciences
- member and head of the Computer Science Expert Committee in the Accreditation Agency for Study Programs in Engineering, Computer Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ASIIN)
- member and head of the Committee for the Accreditation of Study Programs in Engineering, Computer Science, Natural Sciences and Mathematics at ASIIN
- member of the Scientific Advisory Board of the Department of Computer Science at Trier University of Applied Sciences
- head of the Computer Science Network at the German Jordanian University (GJU), Amman, Jordan
- representative of Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences in the consortium of German universities to support the development of the Vietnam German University (VGU), Ho Chi Min City, Vietnam

Witt would like to emphasize that the successes described were only possible because he was supported at all times by many professors, scientific, technical and administrative staff of the faculty and the university and, last but not least, by many interested, motivated and committed students.