

Dragondays - deeptech and startup conference ignites innovation in Celje

Dragondays 2024 brings together top innovators, experts, and investors in Celje to explore groundbreaking advancements in deep tech and AI.

CELJE, SLOVENIA, September 19, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a world where technology is rapidly advancing and becoming increasingly important, Dragondays 2024 stands as one of the key conferences in Europe. Organized by LUI (Ljubljana University Incubator), Matic Užmah, and Raw Studio, the event was held in Celje's Hall, gathering experts, innovators, and leading thinkers in deep tech and artificial intelligence (AI). This year's event also celebrated the 20th anniversary of LUI, which has been supporting and encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in Slovenia for two decades.

Dragondays 2024 focused on key topics shaping the future of industry and society. The conference program included presentations on the latest trends and innovations in AI, machine learning, neural networks, robotics, quantum computing, mobility, crowdfunding, and alternative fuel sources. More than 400 participants heard insights from top experts from companies like Celtra, Synthesia, ReCatalyst, Outfit7, Kickstarter, and others, alongside investors and representatives from the support ecosystem.



Jakob Gajsek welcomes guests to Dragondays



fluxmoto presents at dragondays

LUI Director Jakob Gajšek commented on the conference:

"Dragondays is much more than just a conference for our ecosystem. It's a call to awareness that we are building the future together. Innovation and technology are its building blocks. Only in this way will we remain relevant and technologically self-sufficient in the long term. Dragondays is a hub for innovators, entrepreneurs, investors, and academics, and an excellent opportunity to present ideas and research on a global scale while



Networking at dragondays

connecting with key players who can contribute to their development and success. Dragondays is not just a one-time event; it's a movement that builds an ecosystem where deep tech is not only promoted but realized in concrete solutions addressing the greatest challenges of our time. The future of Dragondays lies in even closer collaboration with global partners and local communities, enabling the growth of deep tech companies and promoting innovations based on scientific discoveries. Our goal is to become a key platform in Europe, uniting the best ideas, talents, and capital to accelerate breakthroughs in technology. I believe this will continue to create sustainable change and an innovation environment that puts Slovenia and the wider region on the world's technological map."

This year's Dragondays also addressed questions of ethics and social responsibility. Artist The Miha Artnak spoke in detail about the special emphasis on art and its place in the age of AI, using his works to tackle controversial social issues and question the replaceability of artists in a time of artificial intelligence.

Dragondays took place at the Hall in the heart of Celje. The building, an important symbol of the shift from German influence to a stronger Slovenian national identity, plays a significant role in the cultural and social life of Celje. Through Dragondays, it is also experiencing a technological renaissance. Celje's mayor, Matija Kovač, commented:

"I am pleased that the city is not only recognized for the Counts of Celje and its rich cultural tradition but also for putting Celje on the technological map through such a conference. Dragondays brings together remarkable experts in fields that represent our future, companies operating in the most propulsive industrial sectors that are already shaping and transforming society. The fact that Celje is at the center of this event is also important for the economic development of the city, for which we at the municipality are trying to create the best possible conditions, not least by supporting such outstanding events."

A notable guest at this year's conference was Dr. Emilija Stojmenova Duh, Minister for Digital Transformation, who said:

"In the rapidly evolving world of artificial intelligence and modern technology, cooperation is key. We don't need to face challenges alone or start from scratch, but global standards are essential. At the core of our efforts are shared human values — dignity, freedom, and respect for human rights. Ethics must always guide technological advancement. People are the legitimate owners of their data, not governments or corporations, and trust can only be built through transparency. AI algorithms and models should be treated as a public good, open and accessible to all. It is our shared responsibility to ensure that AI serves the greater good and empowers individuals equally, regardless of where they live or who they are."

Among the keynote speakers at Dragondays 2024 were Michael Stucky, business coach and mentor for future entrepreneurs at ETH Zurich and partner at Serpentine Ventures, and Matija Gatalo, co-founder of ReCatalyst, a successful spin-out company from the Chemical Institute that was named Slovenian start-up of the year in 2023. Rahul Bathia, EMEA Sales Director at Celtra, which specializes in creative automation, also participated in AI panels, among others.

Dragondays also featured presentations from eight young deep tech companies or potential companies completing LUI's venture-building program for researchers, Labs to Market, supported by EIT Health. Additionally, several deep tech startups currently raising funds had the opportunity to pitch to renowned international investors.

About Dragondays

Dragondays is one of Europe's leading conferences in deep tech and AI, an essential venue for anyone wanting to stay updated on the latest achievements in technology and AI. The event brings together industry experts, academics, and innovators who explore and shape the future of technology. The conference offers a great opportunity for in-depth understanding of trends shaping the future, as well as networking with leading thinkers and creators.

Why Dragondays?

The festival's name, Dragondays, carries deep symbolism. In the startup world, the term "unicorn" is often used to describe rare, highly successful companies valued at over a billion dollars. However, the festival organizers ask, why focus on unicorns when we have dragons? LUI Director Jakob Gajšek, who is also from Celje, explained this metaphorically: "If a dragon and a unicorn faced off, who would you bet on? We bet on dragons." Dragons symbolize strength, endurance, and the ability to overcome the toughest challenges — and that's precisely the essence of deep tech companies.

Organizers:

LUI (Ljubljana University Incubator), Raw Studio, Matic Uzmač

Partners and Sponsors of Dragondays events include:

EIT Health, EIT Urban Mobility, SPIRIT Slovenia, Slovenian Enterprise Fund, Municipality of Celje,

Toyota Slovenia, Outfit7

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