



Mediterranean

August 11 - Doing IT Around the World





Androula - Greece:
Microelectronics Director
About My Career About Me

Interview with Androula– Microelectronics Director: Greece

What do you do?

My career is devoted to research and education and I find it very exciting. At present, I am directing the Institute of Microelectronics (IMEL) at NCSR Demokritos, a large Research Center situated in Athens-Greece.

I am also member of the Board of Directors that manage this Center. NCSR Demokritos has 8 different Institutes. IMEL is one of them, devoted to silicon technology. It is currently established as the National Center of Excellence in micro-, nanofabrication, nanoelectronics and MEMS in Greece.

How did you get started?

Just after receiving my PhD from the University of Paris XI, a position of Associate Professor was offered to me at the University of Reims-France, after recommendation from my supervisor. I applied and got the position. I stayed there for five years, doing both research and teaching, until the establishment of the Institute of Microelectronics at NCSR “Demokritos” in Athens, Greece, in the middle of the eighties. Microelectronics was at that time very fast growing. The idea to come back to Greece and support a newly established Institute fascinated me. I took the position offered to me and that’s how I started my research career at NCSR “Demokritos”.

Challenges?

Research and education are very interesting from many points of view: to discover new things and to better understand and transmit your knowledge to other people. Research and education are potentially the two main enablers of a better future. In information technology, the fast evolution of the field creates new challenges.

What do you love about what you do?

I enjoy doing research and producing new results. Supervising young people in their research is also something very exciting. Each of them has his/her own approach in research, his/her own character and his/her own background. The big challenge is to help them go ahead and to discover new things together with them.

My role of Director is also very challenging and enjoyable. Defining research directions and general goals of an Institute and putting all your efforts to succeed in these goals is quite fulfilling. Mobilizing human resources is also very important.

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About Me interview with Androula– Microelectronics Director: Greece

What has been your BEST experience?

The most enjoyable days in my job were related with the discovery of important new results. I had the chance to have several such days, together with my collaborators. I would just like to mention two of them.

The first one was an experimental observation that contradicted established theories and happened during my PhD research. During experimental work on Surface Spectroscopies, I observed some strange signals, not corresponding to known ones. After systematic investigations, I concluded that these signals might be attributed to electron energy loss signals, although theoretically these were not “allowed” in the reflection mode, according to dipole approximation. I announced this to my supervisor and together we reconsidered the theoretical assumptions. The occurrence of electron energy loss in the reflection mode was indeed the explanation of the observed signals! This is how a new spectroscopy named “Reflection Electron Energy Loss Spectroscopy” (SEELS) emerged.

The second exciting result was obtained by one of my PhD students at IMEL later in my career. It concerned the observation of light emission at room temperature from a device containing Si nanowires. Quantum confinement in Si nanowires was thus demonstrated for the first time worldwide. The fabrication of the nanowires was a very significant achievement at that time (early nineties). But what was the most exciting and fascinating was that the first fabricated device really worked! After applying a voltage on it, we have seen visible light coming out of it!

These two experiences make me feel that it is worth while working in IT research. And in research in general.

Your first day?

I feel that research and education were always part of my life from my very early age.

It is so difficult for me to remember my first day at work clearly, but I do know that it was exciting!

Will you continue?

Certainly I will continue this work. My plans are to concentrate more in research and reduce management responsibilities in the future.

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About Me interview with Androula– Microelectronics Director: Greece

What are 3 words that describe you?

Devoted to work, honest, strict (first with myself and then with others)

What qualities?

I am devoted to work, honest, and pragmatic and I like reading, writing, setting goals and working hard to fulfill them.

What qualifications do you have?

- BSc in Physics from the University of Athens
- MSc and PhD from the University of Paris XI (Orsay-France)
- Professorship (Doctorat d'Etat) from the University of Reims in France

My first university studies were held at the University of Athens in Greece, where I studied Physics. I then moved to the University of Paris XI in Orsay-France, where I studied Electronics (fundamentals and materials) and from where I got my MSc and PhD degrees.

My first employment after my PhD was at the University of Reims in France, where I stayed for 5 years as an Associate Professor. There, I had a full teaching program, and in parallel I was involved in research that led to my Professorship: "Doctorat d'Etat Sciences Physiques

Do you travel much?

For a researcher and a research manager, traveling becomes more and more frequent in Europe. Large consortia of several partners are formed, working together for specific research objectives towards the development of technologies and technology applications. Meetings are more and more frequent. Participation in conferences and workshops is also a must, if we want our research to be state-of-the art. Sometimes, traveling becomes too much, and it can be very tiring.

What previous jobs have you held?

Research contract for my PhD research at the University of Paris XI (2 years)
Associate Professor at the University of Reims-France (5 years)
Senior Researcher at NCSR Demokritos (10 Years)
Director of IMEL and Member of the Board of Management of NCSR Demokritos since 1997

What motivates you?

I like collaborating with people, making difficult decisions and fulfilling difficult goals. These are my motivations for my career.

Hobbies?

- reading,
- swimming,
- dancing,
- keeping a flower garden

What is your advice to other women?

A technology career is fascinating, but not easy. Please don't hesitate to choose it if you like working and discovering new things about our world.

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More Androula: Greece

Did you know that Androula has been member of the Greek National Research Council in the years 2001-2003, member of the Expert Advisory Group of NMP-FP6 in 2003-2005 and Vice President of NCSR Demokritos in 2001-2003. She was the founder and currently the President of the Board of the National scientific society "Micro & Nano", devoted to Micro and Nanotechnologies, Nanoelectronics and MEMS. She is at the Head of "Nanostructures for Nanoelectronics, Photonics and Sensors" research group at IMEL. She is author or co-author of over 250 publications in international journals, reviews, books and conference proceedings, has been granted 5 patents, edited 11 Conference Proceedings books and supervised 15 PhD theses. She has been or is being involved or she coordinated/coordinates an important number of EU and national research projects. She chaired or co-chaired more than ten National and International Conferences and Symposia.



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Alessandra
-Italy:
Computational
Biologist

About My
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Interview with Alessandra – Computational Biologist: Italy

What do you do?

I am developing and using softwares for bioinformatic analyses of gene regulation and annotation. I am now involved in microRNA analyses about precursor and target prediction and validation. I am responsible about Rho Dependent Terminator (RDT) prediction and validation project. I manage CRIBI Genomics and Genome Browser databases and sites and their configurations.

Ever had a funny work experience?

Our group is composed of 30 people. Somebody work in wetlab, somebody work in bioinformatics lab (infolab).

It happens seldom but we have a laugh one of us. Someone about wetlab sometime uses bioinformatic softwares in infolab. Once when he comes out of infolab, we create image about his actual desktop, we change desktop background with this image and remove original buttons and links. We film his clicks desperately on false desktop.

Describe a typical day

I take my baby to nursery school. I go to university by train. I deal with secondary structure sequence bioinformatic analyses and visualization of gene annotation in genome browser. I go home. I spend the evening with my family.

How did you get started do you plan to stay?

I started this work because I love biology but also informatics

I hope to continue this work because I love my role.

What is your most significant achievement?

This year, I achieved Ph.D. in Biotechnology with a baby that now he is two year.

Bioinformatics is a baby field. It is blossoming now.

What do you love about what you do?

It is hard to run important algorithms real-time on long sequences, to have got the high-level server park and collaborations at the right time.

It gives great satisfaction to refine the execution time of important algorithms on long sequences.

Learn more at: <http://www.linkedin.com/in/bilardi>

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About Me interview with Alessandra – Computational Biologist: Italy

What are 3 words that describe you?

Mum, Mate, Bioinformatics.

I am stubborn (I work until the problem is resolved), curious and open minded

What past jobs have you had?

Learn about my past jobs on:
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/bilardi>

Do you travel much?

I do not travel much with my job because I have a baby. I prefer remote work.

First day Experience?

My first day of work was passed quiet and silent in my job.
My best experience is my present job.

What qualifications do you have?

PhD, Biotechnology, 2004–2007;
Bsc, Biological Sciences, 1997–2002

What hobbies do you have ?

- extreme programming,
- comics,
- digital art,
- playing piano,
- swimming,
- trainer swim,
- webmaster

What motivates you?

my family and my curiosity

advice to other women?

Where there's a will, there's a way.

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Angele -
Malta:
Managing
Director



About My Career
About Me

Interview with Angele – Managing Director: Malta

What do you do?

I own Across Limits www.acrosslimits.com, a technology-based SME registered in Malta that however operates in several European countries.

Our focus has shifted through the ages from traditional software house, to web application developers and now to a more research oriented innovation SME that focuses on the areas of eLearning, eHealth and eFinance. We also participate heavily in EU-funded projects and provide consulting to other organisations (public or private) that want to do so.

Challenges?

Our major challenge is always striking a balance between being experts in focused areas whilst at the same time remaining flexible to attack any opportunity that comes our way. Working with several European partners in creating new solutions is most rewarding and gives me the inspiration to go on.

What is a typical day like?

Typically a day at work starts at 0830 with me checking my emails for around 30 minutes in order to see if there are major urgent things to attend to. Since some of our solutions, partners and clients work 24 hours a day, I might have received important requests during the night from them or from some of my staff.

Then I look at the day ahead with my assistant, noting especially if I have meetings (physical or virtual) throughout the day in order to schedule other things around them.

I then ask my staff (both those physically in the same buildings and the external ones that I communicate with on MSN or Skype) if they require any decision from my end in order to move on the several projects they would be tackling and we might have an impromptu meeting if they require assistance.

Tell us more about your typical day.

An ongoing task is checking and attacking the famous to-do list that gets redone every week with the different priorities according to particular clients and projects.

Actions on the list might be designing new solutions, answering requests for tender, reporting on work done by the team on several actions, doing some banking transactions or deciding on purchasing new assets or services. In most cases I would be reviewing the work done already by staff members and this allows me to breeze from one business area to another quite quickly. My day finishes at 1800 when I go to my mother's house to pick up my son Daniel and we go home together to cook and eat dinner.

After putting my son to bed, I normally open up again my laptop to do some quiet work like report writing that requires concentration, or sometimes even to have online meetings with collaborators and clients that due to timezone differences cannot talk to me during my normal office hours.

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Continued interview with Angele – Managing Director: Malta

Do you travel much?

Travelling for work is a way of life for most of the project managers and top technical staff at my company. It does sound glamorous, but sometimes it's just downright tiring and stressful, especially if things like major flight delays or losing your luggage happen.

However we can all sit down with a cup of coffee and joke about the worst travel incidents in our life. My personal worst must be when in Trieste (Italy) I heard my name being called on the speakers and when I went the security told me matter of factly "You have a bomb in your suitcase" to which I said "No! Of course not". They kept insisting they saw it on the x-ray machine for checked-in luggage and I did not know what to say. They left me alone on one side of the room with the suitcase that I opened with shaking hands only to find out that the "bomb" was really my mobile phone charger whose wire I had wound up around the plug. They were infinitely apologetic but I breathed a sigh of relief!

What do you really enjoy?

I enjoy my role's great diversity, where in a single day I might be involved in assisting museums to digitise artefacts, configuring ehealth applications for dementia patients and showing teachers fun ways of using computers with 8-year old students.

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You must have multi cultural experiences then?

Since in my role I get in contact with many different Europeans and they all speak different languages I move from working and talking in one language to the next almost seamlessly.

In Malta we are all bi-lingual – English and Maltese, however I am also nearly mother tongue Italian (thanks to Sicilian parentage from my father's side), and I also understand a bit of other Latin languages and some German. Add to this that I have external consultants that are also Greek and you can imagine the Babel of languages I have to battle with every single day.

Funny incidents happen regularly within our staff and partners when we meet and similar words with different meanings get bandied about, however the richness of having inputs from a multi-cultural environment are great and really conducive to innovation and creativity.

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About Me Interview with Angele – Managing Director: Malta

What are 3 words that describe you?

Describing me is a little difficult, because there are many versions of “myself” according to the work or role at hand. However a quick vox-pop with friends and colleagues yielded some similar descriptions so the final 3 adjectives are:

Enterprising, Team-builder and Passionate.

What qualities do you have that make you good at what you do?

The qualities that help me on the job are surely a sense of humour, a caring and listening attitude and being able to be a fast thinker and problem solver.

Being self-confident has also helped me in challenging situations at the beginning of my career where I was mostly the youngest and/or the only woman present for work meetings.

I have always tried to find win-win situations for everyone; however I am not afraid to make tough decisions if needed.

Tell us a bit about your previous jobs

My first full-time job after University was as a Production Manager in a multimedia design company based in Malta. However my proper “vocation” was being a business owner so even at that time I had started some technology companies, first on the side and then full time.

I also spent 2 years teaching Computing at a private secondary and sixth form school, since I had burnt-out and needed to take a break from the intensity of non-stop working.

In 2001 I formed AcrossLimits together with some other individuals (who have since left the company) and I vowed never to drive myself so hard. In fact nowadays I do make an effort to take small holidays often and to keep a schedule of work that allows me to chill and do nothing over the weekends.

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Continued About Me Interview with Angele – Managing Director: Malta

What studies have you done?

I studied at the University of Malta where my first degree was a B.Sc in Business & Computing and my Masters degree was in Creativity & Innovation (though I directed my thesis towards technology anyhow).

For my B.Sc I was the only girl in my course but I thoroughly enjoyed being “one of the boys” for 3 years and this period gave me also great insight and experiences on how to work together in a diverse environment.

Do you have hobbies?

My hobbies are:

- travelling with my son (whom I take regularly with me to work meetings abroad),
- cooking Mediterranean food,
- singing in karaoke bars with friends and
- shopping.

I also love music, theatre and culture and whenever I have some spare time during my trips abroad I attend concerts, drama or wander through art galleries.

Family?

I’m a 32 year old Maltese national with Sicilian roots from my father’s side.

I am the youngest girl in a family of 3 girls but my extended family includes an incredible amount of aunts, uncles, cousins, second cousins etc. Baptisms and weddings end up being a very large affair!

I have a 5 year old son named Daniel that I totally adore and try in turn not to spoil

What is your advice to other women?

My advice to women starting a technology career is choosing an area that is engaging and inspiring to allow them to enjoy their work and be satisfied by it. I often tell the girls that I mentor at the Foundation for Women Entrepreneurs (www.women.org.mt) that they also need to be flexible enough to change directions every few years since technology is a fast-moving animal.

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Andorra



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Bosnia



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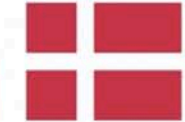
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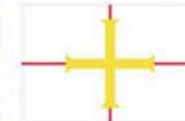
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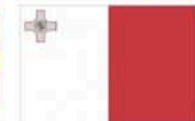
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