



Title:	R1.2_6: Segmentation Interviews Report – Italy
Authors:	Michela Moretti (SCIENTER, Bologna, Italy)
Editors:	Róbert Pintér (ISRI, Hungary)
Reviewers:	Róbert Pintér (ISRI, Hungary)
Identifier:	R1.2_56
Type:	Report
Version:	Final version
Date:	27 October 2008
Status:	Final version
File:	NETIS_Italy_segmentation_interviews_report_FINAL.doc

Summary

This report summarizes the results from the researchers/teachers segmentation interviews carried out by Italian NETIS partner (SCIENTER, Bologna) in October 2007 in Italy.

About researching and teaching in the information society in Italy, all the experts agree that a lot has been made in these years but also that still a lot have to be done to bring Italy to a satisfactory and homogeneous level on the national territory.

In Italy Schools and Universities are not “totally” ready to answer to the key questions of the information society and there are a lot of resistance among all levels of educators and teachers. Many experiences and activities being carried out with success now have to be “systemised” at national level.

The NETIS course book has been considered very positively by the experts group. It seems that in Italy does not exist a wide range of courses about information society and the NETIS course book that is very comprehensive, could fulfil the different needs of different categories of beneficiaries.

The course book turns out to be very interesting at a regional level, for the local authorities and for the educational environment as well (both schools and universities). One of the most important elements to keep into great consideration is to choose a simple and understandable language that could allow the course book to be targeted to different users' categories.

Copyright Notice

This document may not be copied, reproduced, or modified in whole or in part for any purpose without written permission from the NET-IS Consortium. In addition to such written permission to copy, reproduce, or modify this document in whole or part, an acknowledgement of the authors of the document and all applicable portions of the copyright notice must be clearly referenced.

The circulation of this document is restricted to the staff of the NET-IS partner organisations and the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. All information contained in this document is strictly confidential and may not be divulged to third parties without the express permission of the partners.

For permission please contact: Robert Pinter, professional co-ordinator of NET-IS project (r.pinter@netisproject.eu)

All rights reserved.

Members of the NET-IS consortium

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. Information Society Research Institute, Budapest University of Technology and Economics, Budapest | Hungary |
| 2. Praxis Center for Policy Studies, Tallinn | Estonia |
| 3. Department of Informatics, Alexander Technological Educational Institute, Thessaloniki | Greece |
| 4. Information Society Education and Research Group, University of West Hungary, Sopron | Hungary |
| 5. SCIENTER, Bologna | Italy |
| 6. János Selye University, Komarno | Slovakia |
| 7. School of Computing Science, Middlesex University, London | United Kingdom |

NETIS Interview Results, Italy

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING INFORMATION SOCIETY TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN ITALY

By Michela Moretti, SCIENTER, Bologna, Italy

Bologna, October 2007

Table of contents

Introduction	6
Main issues regarding information society research and teaching.....	7
Reflections regarding the Course Book.....	10
Reflections regarding Country Reports	11
Practical suggestions	12
Annex – list of experts interviewed	13

Introduction

This report aims to present a summary of the results emerged from interviews carried out to a group of experts about information society in Italy and about the different NETIS project outputs (course book and national report).

In October 2007, eight interviews were carried out in Italy by SCIENTER. We paid particular attention to the composition of the group of experts (please see the List of Expert interviewed).

The group of experts we consulted was made up by university representatives, researchers and Public Authority officers that work with and promote (at different levels and with different degrees of responsibility) innovation and the usage new technologies and new methods within the information society.

A brief project presentation and the interview grid were sent beforehand to the experts so they could prepare themselves properly to face the themes analyzed. Interviews were carried out by telephone or face to face.

The group typology (in terms of background, competences and knowledge, skills) allowed to analyse the themes presented in the interviews in a different and sometimes complementary way. For this reason, in order to keep the richness of the contributions collected, we choose to present the main comments emerged briefly but in detail.

Main issues regarding information society research and teaching

About researching and teaching in the information society in Italy, all the experts agree that a lot has been made in these years but also that still a lot have to be done to bring Italy to a satisfactory and homogeneous level on the national territory.

In the country there are very different realities. These realities possess different degrees of maturity. Schools and Universities are not “totally” ready to answer to the key questions of the information society and there are a lot of resistance among all levels of educators and teachers. Many experiences and activities being carried out with success now have to be “systemised” at national level.

In particular, experts underline:

- If we look at the trends of information society in the rest of Europe, we could undoubtedly say that Italy is late, together with others few European countries. Eurostat statistics give a quite clear picture of that. The access and usage of the Internet by companies, families, the demographic profile of the users, the broadband penetration, the frequency in using the Internet, the reasons why using the Internet, the relationship with net security (devices and simple awareness), the eGovernment level, the number of ICT graduates, are all indicators where Italy do not excels at, and often is among the tail enders in European statistics. Nevertheless in the last three years all this indicators showed a certain dynamism- we owe this dynamism even to the matured awareness of the fundamental role played by technologies in increasing the government effectiveness and in guaranteeing the taking part of the citizens in the republic. Previous governments pushed on the accelerator about eGovernment. First results are surely remarkable, but a good part of the provision is still informative and not “trans-active”: the citizen is informed about the existence of certain services, but very often those services are not available on the net (various transactions). As regard research/teaching, the number of ICT graduates and the number of the researches carried out about this subject is surely lower if we put it in comparison to what has been observed in other European countries. However it is possible to see excellence centres even in some Italian regions, such as Emilia Romagna where, according to 2004 data, the graduates number in ICT on the total number of graduates in the region was the 24%, that is a little bit more than the OCSE graduates number (22%). This bring us to say once again that our country is made up by specificities where one can find from one side deep gaps and on the other excellent situations.
- The information society theme is present in a marginal and fragmentary way, of course the Formative Offer Plans of the different primary and secondary education institutions, shows various activities linked with this subject. Also exist lots of teachers networks that work on the developing of a didactics more connected with the new media usage, but doesn't exist an organic project of global developing of the educational Italian system that tends toward a more profitable integration of contents and practices directly connected with the information society. In the middle of the reflection in our country, in these days are the unsatisfactory level of knowledge and com-

petences that our students have in the mathematical, logical and linguistic field. Very few is known or said about the impact that could have on our students' competences a more aware, focused, integrated and strategic usage of new media. Finally, still very few is known about the resistance of teachers in including these themes in daily didactics. So it appears necessary a careful reflection on the impact of technologies and new media on:

- Cognitive set
 - The approach and access to knowledge
 - New processes of building and sharing the knowledge
 - The work methodologies actually carried on (centrality of method and not centrality of content).
 - The results achievable in terms of knowledge and competences ready to be spent out from the educational environment with a more significant and strategic usage.
- Moreover, public administration is required to speed up the times to provide the citizens and service companies with new technologies really accessible and usable (by all). The citizen, on the other hand, is required to be ready and able to interact with the online services available the territory. So, training actions and removing the digital divide with the weakest ranges of the population (old people, immigrants etc.) are crucial priorities.
 - It is undoubted that ICT can be considered a catalyst for major innovation and ICT plays a key role in transforming Universities. It is also true that today most of European universities are integrating technology in their daily work. Nevertheless, looking at the Italian current situation, there has been a progressive diffusion of ICT based learning (and eLearning) but it is still a rather new phenomenon and despite excellence cases, the situation emerges that is characterised by a level of coverage that only partially meets the needs of the whole university system.

An expert has underlined some aspects regard his own experience in teaching and researching:

- There is a very serious problem, youngsters live completely and actively the information society while schools and universities live it passively and considered it as a disturbing element and not as a great occasion for rethinking and reinventing themselves. I, as a university teacher, do not live well this relationship, because I consider the information society as a great resource for learning and teaching and doing so I find myself against the institutions and against a large extent of students that have a passive relation with the educational institutions. At a personal level, I'm trying to promote information society doing everything to react against the inhumanization of face to face teaching that is formless, uniform, standardized, calibrated exclusively on teaching times instead of being calibrated on the learning ones and that has no dialogical moments. To face these problems the net is surely very useful if it is conceived as a place for sharing, exchanging and interacting. A positive way to focus the attention on learning, and not to subdue each need to the teaching luxury, is that enter the net and live this experience as an occasion where you are free to share your own learning problems with the other's problems and so, the building of a learning community. Speaking about success, I think I can asses this success with data that are not superior to the ones you can obtain with a good face to face teaching. Where I'm able see

a greater possibility for developing is in the fact that the percentage (10-20%) of the students that obtain successful university results could have a stronger leadership and motivation role within the net, because they have other means to communicate, differently from what happens in face to face teaching. While in face to face teaching a minimum of discussion is present, the 10-20% ends up separating with the rest of the audience because establish a direct relation with the teacher, in the net this group not only starts with talking over with the teacher but also they start to know each other, communicate, exchange and intercommunicate even without the teacher presence and this could easily involve other students. The most important questions in the information society are: why I have to learn “this thing” and which is the best way to learn it. In front of these questions we can say that the 85% of university and schools are unprepared to give answers.

Reflections regarding the Course Book

The course book has been considered very positively by the experts group. It seems that in Italy does not exist a wide range of courses about information society and the NETIS course book that is very comprehensive, could fulfil the different needs of different categories of beneficiaries.

Different suggestions and reflection have emerged by experts comments:

- As regards the educational environment (schools and universities) the main questions to which NETIS course should answer are:
 - How the knowledge and the relationship with the outside world mediated by net impact on/modifies the “cognitive set” of individuals.
 - How the information society, and web 2.0 in particular, redefine the rules and the approach to the way knowledge is accessed and built.
 - How the extensive usage of technologies and of new media allow the integration and the valorisation new knowledge and non formal and informal learning processes.
 - Which are the knowledge and competence standards determined by new media integrated usage and advanced technological applications needed for students/citizens growth in the actual development stage.
 - Which work methodologies (supported by the integrated usage of the information technologies) do allow reaching the competence standards required by our labour sector.
- Deepen in the course book the basic themes related to: eGovernment, eHealth, eCommerce, eInclusion that include aspects related to access and accessibility, and of the many digital divides. Moreover, copyrights and legal aspects could be interesting themes as well as the relationship between formal and informal learning in the net society.
- Is often said that a new media does not substitute completely the previous one (television did not substitute completely the radio and so on) and one of the most discussed subjects is the convergence: more media joined together and much more usable. This leads to omnipresence more and more invasive in our lives. How can we manage this stimulus overload? How we can manage the information overload? How can manage our personal data since we are in the risk society (Beck) and there is a strong request for security?
- I would be important, more than an out-and-out ordination of the basic themes, to divide the course book into thematic areas that can be usable singly. The different areas could be addressed to diversified targets.

Reflections regarding Country Reports

All the experts think that the country reports are very useful and important tools.

As regard the question “What would be interesting areas/topics in comparative information country reports” these are the suggestions given by the experts:

- 1) As regard the eLearning usage and information society, understand in which way eLearning is used in the different NETIS countries.
- 2) Which are the factors that slower information society and in which way the cultural dimension and the practices capitalization weights on the take-off of the information society in the different countries.
- 3) Analyse the report results using the parameters that allow to identify the information society impact in the different countries (for example: number of services available to citizens, which are and how many are the companies that have an e-commerce web page, which are the municipalities and the local agencies that allow to prepare all the documents online, number of online courses, etc.).

Practical suggestions

The course book turns out to be very interesting at a regional level, for the local authorities and for the educational environment as well (both schools and universities). One of the most important elements to keep into great consideration is to choose a simple and understandable language that could allow the course book to be targeted to different users' categories.

The course division into modules will allow choosing the contents that answer the better to needs or specific interests. The course should be available to every educational level (in order to build a network culture).

For the dissemination of the course it will be important to use different strategies and means in order to reach a broader audience. In the network society the relationship is horizontal and because of that, is important to reach anyone who is directly or indirectly interested to solve learning and educational problem in our actual society. This means to sensitize parents, workers, students, and all the people that have learning problems and they wish to act actively in the information society.

Annex – list of experts interviewed

1. Councillor Paolo ReBaudengo, Responsible for Education and Training within Bologna Province.
2. Dr. Agostina Betta, Manager of Emilia Romagna Region at the General Direction of Telematic and Informative systems organization. Within the Competence Centre for e-government and the information society Dr Agostina Betta is responsible for eLearning and eGovernment training in relation with local agencies.
3. Dr. Claudio Del Rio – Tutor of SPF (online continuous training system) - ISFOL (Istituto per lo Sviluppo e la Formazione dei Lavoratori, Rome), Researcher within the Observatory Unit of Scierter.
4. Dr. Gemma Fiocchetta, official representative within the Italian Ministry of Education.
5. Prof. Lucia Giovannini, Full Professor, Alma mater Studiorum – Bologna University, Professor of “Learning and competence evaluation” and “Design of training projects/programmes”.
6. Prof. Roberto Maragliano, Full Professor ROMATre University, Professor of “Educational and learning technologies”.
7. Dr. Tania Salandin – Member of the Communication, Documentation and Training area within the Emilia-Romagna Regional Healthcare Agency.
8. Dr. Pier Giacomo Sola – President of Amitiè (Amitiè was created in 1991 as part of a University-Enterprise Training Partnership in the framework of the COMETT Programme, sponsored by the European Commission, with the aim to promote training activities in the Information and Communication Technology sector. Amitiè then created a private organization).