

NETIS NEWSLETTER

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Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci



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CLOSING NETIS: PRODUCTS, EXPERIENCES AND SUGGESTIONS BASED ON TEACHING – OR HOW TO ADAPT THE TEACHING MATERIALS

The primary output of the NETIS project has been a range of teaching and learning resources. The purpose of this short summary is to itemise the available resources; to reveal the pedagogical context within which they were conceived; and finally, to offer suggestions as to how these materials may be deployed to promote the teaching and learning of Information Society as a subject of study.

The major resource components include:

The Course Book - Information Society: it consists thirteen chapters in [English](#), [Greek](#) and [Hungarian](#).

The Textbook: the Textbook aims to deepen knowledge on information society by providing:

- six country reports which analyze the state of development of the information societies in the participant countries of the NETIS project (all papers are in the same structure to allow comparison).
- 19 case studies and conference articles focusing on different research topics of interest to the partners.
- seven papers from students and early stage researchers in Greece and Hungary - the results of a NETIS Call for Papers.
- an annex (with statistics, bibliographic sources and a list of key terms) relevant to research and development in this area.

All papers appear in English and many appear also in one or more of the other partner languages. Precise up-to-date details are available on the project website.

The Learning Activities

These are contained in a [Moodle virtual learning environment](#) (vle) with thirteen 'courses', one for each course book chapter, in each of English, Greek and Hungarian. Each such course has the following sections:

- Competences to be achieved – here the learning goals for the chapter are listed together with a before-and-after self-assessment questionnaire.
- Main text – the text of the relevant chapter drawn from the course book.
- Resources – recommended reading drawn from the bibliography accompanying the course book.
- Course Glossary – a tool for students to contribute or review definitions and explanations.
- Creative Tasks – a series of discussion forums related to course-wide and chapter-specific topics.
- Review Questions – some assignments seeking student input relating to specific questions arising out of the chapter.
- Quiz – a multiple-choice quiz designed to test the student's reading and understanding of the chapter.
- ePortfolio – a tool allowing the student to create personal wiki pages mapping the knowledge and ideas accumulated during the course. Individual wiki pages can be interlinked.
- Surveys – a number of questionnaires designed to gather student data during the Netis teaching trials.
- Complementary Exercises – a place to add additional materials and assignments.

All the above materials are made available to teachers and learners in a variety of formats and locations.

| Location | CourseBook | CourseBook Chapters | TextBook Articles | Learning Activities |
|-----------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| NETIS Project Website | ✓ pdf | ✓ pdf | ✓ pdf | ✓ zip |
| NETIS Moodle | - | ✓ pdf | ✓ pdf | ✓ |
| Printed Course Book | ✓ | - | - | - |
| NETIS CD | ✓ pdf | ✓ pdf | ✓ pdf | ✓ zip |

Instructional Design Goals

Although the learning materials listed above were assembled and presented in the formats described to serve a variety of pedagogical styles, the underlying philosophical approach to their development was rooted in networked learning. In addition to the traditional, hierarchical model of teacher/producer and learner/consumer, we wanted to accommodate a decentralised, constructivist strategy where the learners create personal knowledge through interactions with their peers. In this context, the assembled materials, especially the Moodle learning activities, have been designed to mediate these interactions. For further elaboration of these ideas, please see [Chapter 12: Learning and Teaching in the Information Society. eLearning 2.0 and Connectivism](#) (Course Book) or [Information Society Studies in Practice – Experiences of Teachers in NETIS project](#) (Textbook) in the first instance.

Teaching and Learning Styles

In the course of the NETIS project, the partners tested the teaching and learning materials in different countries and contexts; with different types of students and using different teaching and learning styles. The following are the main exemplars:

Traditional Lecture Course

Format: The course is taught over a semester. Each week the lecturer delivers a lecture covering a sub-topic of the subject.

Focus: The students take notes during the lecture, read up on the sub-topic and prepare seminar presentations.

Primary resources: The published course book Information Society, with one chapter for each week.

Assessment: Traditional essays and examination questions.

NETIS Reflections: A traditional teaching format was followed (amongst others) at the [Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki](#). Students were provided with a copy of the textbook in advance, and weekly lectures were given, followed by an examination. The outcome for the majority of participants was not successful for a number of reasons:

- The traditional format was conducted alongside a more active-learning format. The teacher reported that the students were initially suspicious of the non-traditional offering but that those who eventually chose it were the most conscientious and successful. Therefore those students opting for the traditional mode must have been more passive or at least more cautious.
- The teacher reported that attendance had been poor for one lecture to the next. This can happen with some students when they possess the course book (and so think they already 'have' the material).

A variant of the traditional format was also followed at [Eotvos Lorand University of Sciences in Budapest](#). In this case there was a weekly topic but the sessions were student-led. One student would present an introduction to the topic, based on the appropriate course book chapter, whilst a second would offer a critique. This was followed by a general class discussion. In general, the students did not regard the introductory presentation as a more accessible pathway to the material than the written chapter itself. However, they did appreciate the critiques and these seem to have sustained better attendance and higher levels of participation than parallel courses.

Blended Learning Course

Format: Students utilise online resources, primarily those embodied in a vle (NETIS Moodle). The teacher is present on a regular basis.

Focus: The teacher talks less and listens more. The students focus on learning activities set in Moodle. Some of these (sometimes all) are collaborative tasks which require the students to work together and to contribute to one another's learning.

Primary resources: The virtual learning environment.

Assessment: Typically a portfolio of work.

NETIS Reflections: This format was most closely followed in the test teaching at the [University of West Hungary](#) (see the Textbook: [E-learning experiences in the NETIS project](#)). The teachers were pleased with the level of work and commitment shown by the students but reported that they were not very accustomed to the less structured learning forms (for example, developing knowledge maps) and it proved difficult to get them to comment on each other's work. The teachers also expressed disappointment that their assessment of the rich products resulting from student work had been institutionally required to be reduced to mere percentages.

Students at the [Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki](#) were offered an 'active-learning' variant. Working singly or in pairs, they were required to prepare written reports and presentations on seven out of 35 given topics over the course of the semester. Students were expected to participate in discussions after the presentations and assessed (overall) on the quality of their reports, their presentations and their participation in discussions. Students who chose this format scored well in their assessments compared with the students attending traditional lectures.

e-Learning Course

Format: Students utilise online resources. These may be provided via a vle or may only involve a looser collection of facilities like search engines and particularly Web 2.0 learning tools like wikis etc. The teacher is not present, at least on a timetabled basis.

Focus: The teacher typically sets the learning tasks and moderates student interactions in discussion forums.

Primary resources: Online.

Assessment: By portfolio or other learning task outcomes. Sometimes these may be negotiated between students and teacher.

NETIS Reflections: After a single laboratory session with the students, the [Middlesex University, London](#) course followed an e-learning approach. Students were issued with the course book and directed to read selected passages. Following this they downloaded their assignments from the NETIS Moodle site. These required them to accomplish a learning task in pairs. Beforehand however, they had to negotiate their partnerships online (via the discussion form and email) and then finally collaborate face-to-face or electronically to produce a deliverable product. Some students avoided the online negotiation stage by partnering with their friends but apart from

this the trial made good use of the Moodle facilities and students who opted for this assignment outperformed those who avoided it.

Independent Study

Format: The student uses one or two particular topics covered in the Information Society course as an entry point to developing some expertise in the subject.

Focus: The student determines the learning tasks, having initially set the goals for what he or she wanted to achieve, possibly in consultation with the teacher/supervisor.

Primary resources: Either the published texts or the Moodle resources, depending on the task.

Assessment: Most likely a dissertation or portion of a dissertation.

NETIS Reflections: Independent study was another format chosen by some students at the [Alexander Technological Educational Institute of Thessaloniki](#). The teacher adopted a conference-like format where students were required to submit extended abstracts and then met regularly with the teacher to develop 'the paper'.

Participating students found this format the most rewarding and scored correspondingly high marks in the assessments. However, the teacher had a busy time training them in conference paper production techniques and, as Greek-speaking students, they had the additional barrier of having to prepare their work in English.

Accessing NETIS Resources

The primary source for the NETIS teaching materials is the [NETIS website](#). From here interested parties can download all the articles listed in this document including the Course Book as a single document or as individual chapters in English, Greek and Hungarian; all the Textbook articles; and the Moodle course images. In addition the results of the partner country segmentation interviews and the partner country teaching trials are published in full there. Enquiries can be made to the project coordinator, Robert Pinter (pinter.robert@ittk.hu). It is planned to maintain the website for resource access until at least 2013.

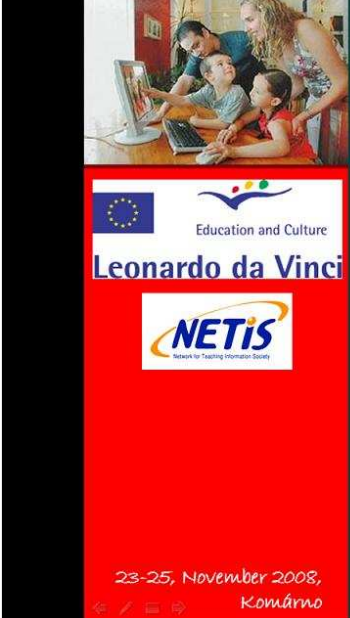
Teachers may utilise all the NETIS materials in their courses and on their own virtual learning environments at no cost. The Moodle course images should be directly uploadable on other Moodle hosts. However, teachers may be able to run courses hosted on the NETIS Moodle site itself. Please contact Istvan Bessenyei (i.bessenyei@externet.hu) to enquire about likely conditions and costs.

METHODOLOGICAL GUIDE AND TEACHING REPORTS ARE AVAILABLE

NETIS project partners have tested the teaching materials (mainly Course Book and Moodle) in Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Slovakia and the UK in 2007/2008. The results of these trial teaching are available in summary reports of teaching from each country. We have also prepared a *Methodological Guide* which shortly introduces the project materials and the pedagogic concept of the project. This report helps in adaptation of NETIS materials outside (and after) the project.

SHORT 'EVALUATION' OF NETIS FROM A PARTNER'S VIEWPOINT

The project is coming to an end. NETIS partners at University of János Selye, Slovakia have some nice impressions about the work in this international project. Let them to show the best points of the project from their viewpoint:



University of J. Selyeho in Komárno
UNIVERZITA J. SELYEHO v Komárne
4 most important thing by NETIS project

1. The Netis project was the first possibility to work in an international team, because UJS is a young university and the Netis project is the first one of national projects here.
2. We start work in Moodle e-learning expert program system at first time and we start to prepare teaching materials for use in that system in the subjects of programming.
3. We had ability for developing our vocabulary at Information Society in Hungarian and English languages also.
4. We innovate subject Information Society like optional (alternative) subject for all faculty of our university at the new accreditation program of UJS university.

23-25, November 2008,
Komárno

TEACHING PLANS FOR THE FUTURE IN ESTONIA

Course *Information Society and E-Governance* (3 CPs) will take place at the [Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences](#), Tallinn University of Technology (TUT) in Spring Term 2009. It will be coordinated by Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Drechsler and Tarmo Kalvet, and assisted by Margit Suurna.

Estonia is known internationally as a well-developed 'e-country' that can be well described by the current advancement and activity in the field of e-governance. This is implicitly characterized by the wide usage of electronic applications in management, the submission of income tax returns over the Internet up to the Internet based elections, etc. At the same time, e-governance has raised several principal problems in the field of public administration, as well as democracy issues. On the one hand, this is about how e-governance fits into and what kind of impact it has on the current public administration system. On the other hand, the question is about the perceptiveness of citizens to use different e-applications.

The main aim of this course is to introduce main theories about and practice in information society in the context of public administration systems and reform. The course will cover topics as follows: the current state and development of the information society and e-governance (including issues such as Internet-based voting, e-security, m-governance, etc.) with special emphasis on the Estonian case; the impact of the information society on public service delivery (based on the examples of e-health and e-learning); the impact of e-Government on the private sector; and critique of e-governance. The course will be conducted in English.

The course takes place as a two-week session from 20 April to 4 May 2009, Monday–Friday 16:00-17:30 (18:00) h. It is an elective course for all public administration graduate programs; participants from other graduate programs from TUT, as well as outside guest participants (who may fully register), are welcome as well.

NEW BLOGPOSTS

The project team launched its blog in September, 2007 in order to disseminate news and developments more effectively.

New posts in the blog:

- [Last meeting of NETIS in Komarno](#) by Robert Pinter
- [Four best things of NETIS project for UJS in Komárno](#) by Nika Stoffova
- [NETIS-related teaching to be repeated in Estonia, spring 2009](#) by Tarmo Kalvet

The blog is available at: <http://netis.edublogs.org>

SHORT NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF INFORMATION SOCIETY AND E-LEARNING

ICTs for education : a reference handbook (Vol. 1 of 3) - Decision makers essentials

“The purpose of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for education - a reference handbook is to provide decision makers, planners, and practitioners with a summary of what is known about the potential and conditions of effective use of ICTs for education and learning by drawing on worldwide knowledge, research, and experience.”

<http://www->

[wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/11/28/000333038_20081128021029/Rendered/PDF/466440WP0vol101Education1Essentials.pdf](http://www-wds.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2008/11/28/000333038_20081128021029/Rendered/PDF/466440WP0vol101Education1Essentials.pdf)

Internet access and use in the EU27 in 2008: Nearly 30% of individuals use internet banking and 60% of households have internet access

“In the EU27, 60% of households had access to the internet during the first quarter of 2008, compared with 54% during the first quarter of 2007, and 48% had a broadband internet connection, compared with 42% in 2007. These data published by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities, represent only a small part of the results of a survey on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) usage in households and by individuals in the EU27 Member States, Norway, Iceland and Croatia. As well as internet use and broadband connections, the survey also covers other indicators such as e-shopping, e-government and advanced communication and content related services.”

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=STAT/08/169&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=nl>

Online time 'is good for teens'

“Surfing the internet, playing games and hanging out on social networks are important for teen development, a large study of online use has revealed. The report

counters the stereotypical view held by many parents and teachers that such activity is a waste of time. More than 800 teenagers and parents took part in the three-year [US project](#) . See [Two page summary](#) (pdf) and [White Paper - Living and Learning with New Media: Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project](#)"
<http://digitalyouth.ischool.berkeley.edu/report>

Study: Mobile phones to be primary Internet device by 2020

"Nearly four out of five experts agreed with this scenario, according to an online Pew survey which formed the basis of the report. Pew surveyed 578 leading Internet activists, builders and commentators, identified through various technology associations as well as an "extensive canvassing of scholarly, government and business documents from the period 1990-1995 to see who had ventured predictions about the future impact of the Internet." A few of the experts polled were Nicholas Carr, author of the Rough Type blog and The Big Switch; Havi Hoffman of the Yahoo Developer Network; Michael Botein, founding director of the Media Law Center at New York University Law School; and several members of the ICANN board."

<http://www.networkworld.com/news/2008/121508-pew-report.html>

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

IADIS International Conference e-Society 2009

25 to 28 February 2009

Barcelona, Spain

The IADIS e-Society 2009 conference aims to address the main issues of concern within the Information Society.

<http://www.esociety-conf.org/>

5th eLSE 2009 – eLearning and Software for Education

9 to 10 April 2009

Bucharest, Romania

Central topic for this edition: eLearning 2.0 and Innovative practices with eLearning. Subtopics: eLearning visions and theoretical contributions; software related developments; eLearning educational case studies.

<http://adl.unap.ro/else2009>

5th EduMedia Conference 2009 – Creativity and Innovation Competencies in the Web (e-creativity and e-innovation)

4 to 5 May 2009

Salzburg, Austria

How do digital technologies in particular interactive learning environments and social software with semantic web features have an impact on the creativity and idea generation process, on the formation of creative teams and communities...

<http://edumedia.salzburgresearch.at/>

IMPRINT

NETIS is available on the web:

Project website: <http://www.netisproject.eu>,

E-learning environment: <http://netis.nyme.hu>

Blog: <http://netis.edublogs.org>

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Please send your comments, observations and proposals directly to the editor's email address: r.pinter@netisproject.eu

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