

NETIS NEWSLETTER

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NETIS AT NETWORKED LEARNING CONFERENCE: ABSTRACTS OF SUBMITTED PAPERS



The Sixth International Conference on Networked Learning 2008 is a research-based conference on networked learning in higher education and lifelong learning. NETIS project will have an independent panel at the conference (5th & 6th May 2008, Halkidiki, Greece).

We plan that conference papers will be available later hence we publish here only the short abstracts of the submitted and accepted papers.

Robert Pinter: Information Society Studies in Practice - a Networked Learning Case Study

Abstract

NETIS (Network for Teaching Information Society) is a consortium, the aim of which is to develop a course as part of a two-year programme (2006-2008), with the support of the European Union funded Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The course prepared by NETIS is designed to provide an introduction to the information society studies mainly for undergraduate students.

The project aims to improve the skills and competences of students, teachers and researchers by developing a widely accessible, innovative e-learning course on the information society. We use a modular course-design and take advantage of international synergies to produce adaptable, reliable contents. Through applying these means NETIS expects to increase the participants' awareness and reflections on the impact of the information society on everyday life.

NETIS has developed an electronic and e-learning course book in both printed and electronic forms and an electronic textbook on the information society, and has organized test teaching in participant countries. Meanwhile NETIS publishes research reports on students', teachers' and researchers' expectations regarding learning and teaching the information society. Finally the NETIS team will prepare a methodology report on how to teach this subject in Europe, and how to use traditional and e-learning methods in a blended mode.

Chris Sadler and Tarmo Kalvet: Information Society Studies in Practice – a Networked Learning Case Study: student needs and feedback in the NETIS project

Abstract

The Network for Teaching Information Society (NETIS) consortium has designed an Information Society studies curriculum aimed at university undergraduates. Courses can be delivered in various pedagogic formats including (appropriately) networked learning. NETIS has consulted students prior to developing this curriculum and trialled the learning materials in different contexts. The results of the consultation

survey and the design of the monitoring instruments are discussed in this paper and some preliminary results from the trials are reported.

István Bessenyei and Veronika Stoffa: Information Society Studies in Practice – a Networked Learning Case Study: Experiences of Teachers in NETIS project

Abstract

The course prepared by the NETIS consortium within the frame of a European Leonardo da Vinci project aims to provide an introduction to information society studies mainly for undergraduate students. This paper summarises some experiences with the eLearning courses.

Traditional centralised knowledge sharing in an eLearning environment with intensive communication and feedback tools lead to “traffic collapse”. The solution can be a horizontal, networked communication between students, between specialists and students, and between institutions.

Participants in networked learning needs information about the knowledge structure of each other. The problems are: In which way can we document and share the knowledge in the learning network? What kind of knowledge do we have? In which way can we register and document the prior learning experiment, the tacit knowledge? A possible solution can be the using of knowledge maps and e-portfolios as tools for knowledge sharing. The learning goals in form of sophisticated competence portfolios are helpful tools to manage the self organised learning process. The participants can check the competences on their own and steer the learning due to this self evaluation. To reach the given learning goals the course provided creative tasks and projects.

The most difficult part of the project was to organise effective knowledge sharing between students and to involve other tutors and other student groups in a common learning organisation.

Kerstin Siakas: A Distributed Multicultural Network for Teaching Information Society: Cultural Diversity Aspects

Abstract

This paper reports on the experiences gathered from the collaborative development of the Network for Teaching the Information Society (NETIS). The main aims of the project are to contribute to the emerging EU requirements of promoting an inclusive information society by developing a life-long open networked technology-based teaching-and-learning environment.

Emphasis is put on challenges of networking within an intercultural and interdisciplinary diverse environment with aspects of the Information Society. The networking challenges involve research, development of learning material and teaching on the same e-learning platform to students from different educational environments encompassing different disciplines, and from different national cultures with different languages.

The importance of taking the existing cultural particularities and the national ICT environment into consideration is highlighted by emphasizing particular caution and awareness of particularities, such as differences in national Information Society adoption levels, institutional regulations, disciplines (students from informatics and social sciences), language, attitudes and values, as well as operational issues, such as numbers of students that will participate in the Information Society course in the different countries. Our approach combines classroom experience and research evidence aiming for continuous improvement. Experiences, both from students and from educators are evaluated and reported.



More information on the Networked Learning 2008 conference:
<http://www.networkedlearningconference.org.uk/>

NETIS TEACHING AT BUDAPEST (EOTVOS LORAND UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES)

Administrative information

Semester has started at September 2007, and will end in January 2008 (with the exam period). Participants were students in sociology (mainly in 3-5th years). 32 students started the course. Two of them left the group in the first weeks. Classes were held by Robert Pinter, except the class on technology (held by the author of the chapter, Attila Kincsei), and culture (held by Bence Kollanyi, a PhD student). The entire semester was focused on the NETIS curriculum, with 13 classes. The first class was an introduction to the NETIS project and explained the basic conditions of the course, structure of class, exam etc.

The entire course textbook was taught except the last chapter. Students could have a free copy of the printed book in Hungarian, or could use the NETIS Moodle. Approximately half of the students asked for the printed version. Faculty library also received several volumes of the book.

Registration in Moodle was obligatory, but using Moodle was elective. With these conditions, only one student made comments in the system, students mainly did not use Moodle, or used it only as the source of texts (passive usage).

Students can have a grade based on their class work and presentation. Students without the presentation need to prepare 3 short essays (no longer than one page each), based on elective questions found on the NETIS Moodle.

Structure of classes

The course was a "classical", normal semester with student presentations (two presentations for each topic, one introduction and one critique of the given

chapter). Student presentations were mainly recorded in mp3 format (only in cases when students permitted the recording).

First two classes were taught by the teacher as an introduction to the course (chapters of Karvalics and Pinter). After the presentations of students there were short teacher comments.

Conversation took part in the last 30-50 minutes of the classes, based on questions of presenters, teacher and students, ranked by group voting. Memos of classes contain the questions and the number of votes.

In some cases (e.g. in topics of e-government and e-learning) group work was organized. Students were divided into 4 sub-groups, and had joint work, then presentations and a debate.

Finally, students filled out the same questionnaire at the end of all classes: what was the most exciting/boring, helpful/obstructing, surprising in the class, and they evaluated the given class with a grade 1-10 with an explanation.

Overall opinion on the course

Students mostly liked the course, and attended the classes regularly (more so than for other, typical courses). Most of the class disliked the students introductory presentations, as these presentations served only as summary introductions and did not have added value. But some students stated that they did not read the chapter in advance because these summaries were enough for them.

However students liked the critique presentations especially where their classmates had formed independent opinions. Some students stated that they would have preferred lectures from the teacher and would have eliminated all students' presentations. Conversation was an important part for everybody – they liked to participate in debates, hear new arguments and share personal experiences. Students most enjoyed the group work – however they remarked that the first assignment was more exciting than the second one, maybe because it has lost its novelty.

In the next semester we plan to have an entirely e-learning course with students in sociology and then to compare the differences between the two methods and groups.

NETIS AT JYVASKYLA SUMMER SCHOOL

Kerstin Siakas (ATEI, Thessaloniki, Greece) will teach 20 hours the NETIS course in Finland at the Jyvaskyla Summer School in August 2008.

http://www.jyu.fi/science/muut_yksikot/summerschool/en

Kerstin has agreed with the University and planning the details. However it is a lot of extra summer work, we know that she will enjoy it, and it is also important in dissemination of NETIS materials.



The 18th Jyväskylä Summer School

NETIS IN ACCREDITATION OF A NEW COURSE (UNIVERSITY OF WEST HUNGARY)

The teacher building college of the Faculty of Wood Industry of the University of West Hungary submitted a new course "Human Management Advising" to accreditation. One of the subjects is the "Information Society", based on the NETIS course book and e-learning environment – reported by teacher dr. István Bessenyei, member of the NETIS consortium.

TEACHING PLANS IN ESTONIA

Officially NETIS project did not plan to have teaching activity in Estonia, but thanks to Tarmo Kalvet, NETIS has the opportunity to run a course at [Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tallinn University of Technology](#). Tarmo Kalvet and [Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Drechsler](#) will be teaching the course with guest lecturers include Ülle Madise (Internet-based voting), Tarvi Martens (E-Security and Cyberwar) and others.

The intensive course runs 18 April - 2 May 2008 and is titled "Information Society and E-Governance". It is oriented towards graduate students; should international students attend, it will be carried out in English.

NETIS materials have proved useful in preparing for the class and they will be used extensively.

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:

- [Teaching information society for sociologists - first experiences from Budapest](#) by Robert Pinter
- [Information Society in numbers: an interesting Italian website](#) by Michela Moretti

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

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

European Commission consultation: the need for pan-European copyright licences

“The European Commission says European media businesses should be able to offer creative content in a single legal environment. It has launched a consultation that calls for multi-territory licences and interoperable digital rights management (DRM) systems.”

More: <http://www.out-law.com/page-8784>

One Laptop Per Child (OLPC): Intel 'undermined' laptop project

“Mr Negroponte cited an example in Peru where Intel sales staff tried to persuade the country's vice-minister of education, Oscar Becerra Tresierra, to buy the Intel Classmate PC. Peru has ordered 270,000 XO laptops from OLPC.”

More: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/technology/7178241.stm>

Comparing e-government and e-governance

“William Sheridan and Tom Riley of the Commonwealth Centre for e-Governance present an in depth look into how e-government relates to e-governance and the issues that converge and diverge among these two paradigms.”

More: <http://www.egovnews.org/?p=3138>

Open Training Platform: Five questions and answers

The Open Training Platform (OTP) is a UNESCO-powered online collaborative knowledge hub for free training resources for development. It currently has more than 1700 resources produced by over 600 development stakeholders worldwide on various subjects grouped under 21 categories. Through the OTP, partners and communities can share and use materials to support local sustainable development

More:

<http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php->

[URL_ID=25774&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html](http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=25774&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html)

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

4th EduMedia Conference '08: Self-organised learning in the interactive Web

"Self-organised learning in the interactive Web" - A change in learning culture?

June 02.-03, 2008 Salzburg, Austria

“Self-organised learning covers ways of learning, which allow learners in comparison to traditional educational scenarios a major dimension of self-determination and self-regulation: self-regulated learning is a self-initiated action that involves goal setting (why and what is learned?) and regulating one's efforts to reach the goal (how it is learned?). Nowadays this way of learning is increasingly supported by interactive learning environments, semantically enhanced content and Social Software (e.g. Wikis, Weblogs, ePortfolios, Social Bookmarks, Social networks like YouTube, FaceBook, Flickr).”

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

Submission Deadline (second call): 23 March 2008

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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