

NETIS NEWSLETTER

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Education and Culture
Leonardo da Vinci



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BOOK LAUNCHES IN HUNGARY

The NETIS team organised book launches in Sopron (HU), Komarno (SK) and Budapest in October 2007 and introduced the book for researchers, students and colleagues.

In Budapest the book launch was located at the city centre in a bookshop, named Fókusz Könyvruház. Although there were not so many guests at the end of the launch we had a very interesting conversation on teaching in the 21st century, students' needs and activities, and teachers practices and malpractices. We came to the agreement that e-learning is by no means an easy challenge. Even though, everybody has the usual methods and techniques to use when teaching in front of a group of students, and knows how to hold a traditional class with 90 minutes work, in a seminar or lecture E-learning is something completely different. You, the teacher, need to involve the students and work together in a group, encouraging them to communicate with each other, because if you stay in the centre as a teacher, and the only communication is between you and everybody else, it becomes too stressful, and the result will be frustration on both sides. We also had a conversation on the book itself, for example how long can a book like this be useful, written on the information society, and what is after all sometimes ephemeral phenomena. We hope that most of our book will be useful in the coming decade too. There are theoretical chapters on the meaning of information society, the relation between technology and society, the role of innovation in general etc. Ideas regarding these kind of topics change so fast. However, changes are more rapid in other topics such like e-government, elnclusion policy and information literacy in the European Union. The book is out now and available in Hungarian, in both a printed and [electronic version](#), and in [Moodle](#). We are currently preparing the English and the Greek versions, and these will hopefully be ready at the beginning of next year.

Pictures from all three book launches are available [here](#). (If you need the podcast of the Budapest book launch /in Hungarian/, please contact us at our [website](#).)



THE ESTONIAN, GREEK AND HUNGARIAN SEGMENTATION REPORTS ARE READY

The first three Segmentation Reports based on interviews with teachers and researchers are now ready and available via the project's website. In these reports NETIS clarify the specific needs of the secondary target groups, e.g. teachers and researchers, who are especially interested in the topic of the information society.

[Estonia: the teaching information society should be given more a prominent place](#)

The Estonian report summarizes the results from the researchers/teachers interviews carried out by Tarmo Kalvet in Estonia, in July-August 2007. The general conclusion regarding the information society research and teaching in Estonia was that it is very limited, haphazard and fragmented between different universities and departments. Considering their important role information society topics should be given a more prominent place in curricula. Although books on the information society are available in Estonia, more accessible additional materials might be useful. The themes to be covered by the Course Book were generally welcomed by the experts interviewed. Analysis of how some countries are doing better in ICT economy, others in eGovernment, etc. would provide an interesting analysis. Blended learning was suggested as the main teaching method. Moodle as e-learning environment is very popular in Estonia among teachers as well as students (having conventional lectures supported with Moodle is currently standard practise at some universities in Estonia).

[Greece: blended learning is likely to provide a good course outcome](#)

The Greek report summarizes the results from the researchers/teachers interviews carried out by Kerstin Siakas in Greece, June 2007.

The Greek segmentation report shows that the emphasis of the books is influenced by the background of the authors. Usually information society books are written either from a social science or from an information systems viewpoint. In the NETIS case the authors seem to be multidisciplinary and multicultural, which is likely to bridge the gap between the viewpoints held by various disciplines and cultures. As a result this is likely to embrace a wider target group, including students both from social and economical study programmes to IT students. The role of the teacher is highlighted by the interviewees. Teachers should start with an overview of the information society and then emphasise the different issues tailoring this to the given audience. The blended learning methodology provided by NETIS is likely to provide a good course outcome, firstly because the teacher can highlight topics and concerns relevant to the targeted students and secondly because the e-learning platform provides hands-on exercises. Simultaneously the e-learning platform is a part of the information society and can be an excellent proactive experience if utilised well in the form of the creation of social computing exercises, such as blogs, discussion groups, chats, teleconferencing etc.

Hungary: researching information society is in the early stages

The report summarizes the results from the researchers/teachers interviews carried out by ITTK team between May and August 2007 in Hungary. Summing up the results in Hungary, it can be claimed that information society researchers and teachers generally liked the Course Book in progress, although, similarly to other fundamental issues in the discipline, emphasis falls on different areas according to individual interest. It draws attention to the fact that researching information society is in the early stages; while the Course Book serves as an important initiative.

CALL FOR PAPERS: 19 ABSTRACTS FROM FOUR COUNTRIES

The NETIS team has summarised the results of CfP (the deadline was 16th of November):

1. We have received 19 abstracts, from four countries and from 15 persons. There are abstracts not only from graduate students, but from PhD students and even young researchers as well.
2. We have four abstracts from Greece, all of them from ATEI (thanks to Kerstin Siakas) their interests are e-crime, cultural heritage, e-health and e-commerce.
3. We have 12 abstracts from Hungary (one of them is not an abstract, but rather a paper, and already in Hungarian). Topics are: education, social networks, the digital divide, the regulation of the Internet and digital culture.
4. We have two abstracts from Italy (from a former research fellow of ITTK, coordinator organization of the NETIS project), on the topic of virtual identity and accessibility (e-Inclusion).
5. And we have one abstract from two students of Middlesex University on training and e-Inclusion (thanks to Chris Sadler).

The Invitation for Papers was successful, and we will contact all the participants in the next few days. Every student is permitted to have a tutor to help in his/her research. We try to find a tutor for the students within NETIS or outside the NETIS network if necessary.

Important deadlines for the papers:

- receipt of full papers (end of January)
- peer review the papers (end of February)
- awards for the best ones (March)
- translations of the best ones – if necessary (by the end of March)
- publication in a NETIS electronic Text Book (by the end of May)
- and publication in various journals in 2008/2009

If you have any questions, please contact the organizer r.pinter@netisproject.eu.

ARTICLE ON “THE ESTONIAN INFORMATION SOCIETY DEVELOPMENTS SINCE THE 1990S”

Since the 1990s Estonia has made remarkable progress in information society development. The current article describes achievements in key fields and discusses the main factors that have made such developments possible. It asserts that the major factors that have affected as well as contributed to the evolution of information society in Estonia include economic factors, the active role of the public sector, technological competency, and socio-cultural factors.

For the report in full, see Tarmo Kalvet (2007), “The Estonian Information Society Developments Since the 1990s.” [PRAXIS Working Paper 29/2007](#).

The report is also available in Estonian: Tarmo Kalvet (2007), “Eesti infoühiskonna arengud alates 1990. aastatest.” [PRAXIS e Toimetised 30/2007](#).

HUNGARIAN EDITION OF COURSE BOOK IS AVAILABLE ON PC WORLD CD/DVDV

The Hungarian PC World with DVD and CD appeared on the 5th November 2007 and contains the Hungarian edition of the NETIS Course Book (Information society: from theory to the political practice). Next to the full PDF version, it is also available in separated chapters, and Moodle ZIP (you need to upload this version to a Moodle system to make it work).

Hungarian readers can obtain a CD/DVDV “copy” of the book, which is an easy way to archive the NETIS Course Book.

Picture from the PC World, introducing the DVD-version:



Információs társadalom: az elmélettől a politikai gyakorlatig

Mellékletünkön elhelyeztük az Információs társadalom: az elmélettől a politikai gyakorlatig című tankönyvet PDF formátumban (egyben és fejezetenként is), valamint Moodle-keretrendszerben használható verzióban is. Részletesebb információ a mappájában levő szöveglájlban olvasható.

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:

- [Course book – book launch of the Hungarian edition](#) by Robert Pinter
- [NETIS book Hungarian edition on PC World CD/DVDV](#) by Robert Pinter
- [Article published: "The Estonian Information Society Developments since the 1990s"](#) by Tarmo Kalvet
- [The Sorcerer's Apprentice's Apprentice](#) by Chris Sadler
- [Results of Call for Papers \(CfP\) and future steps in Text Book preparation](#) by Robert Pinter

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

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

KERSTIN SIAKAS – FINGERPRINTS

No two fingerprints are exactly alike. Identification by fingerprint impressions is not a new issue. Advances in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have introduced new possibilities to the scene.

What is a fingerprint?

The term fingerprint usually refers to impressions transferred from the pad on the last joint of fingers and the thumb or portions of lower joint areas of the fingers for identification purposes through an examination of the general ridge formations, such as the presence or absence of circular patterns in various fingers, called papillary ridges, which are unique to each individual.

Fingerprints are stored in large computer databases, normally including an 8-bit grey scale image, a wavelet-based system for efficient storage of compressed fingerprint images at 500 pixels per inch (ppi) for each record. Each print is 512 x 512 pixels with 32 rows of white space at the bottom of the print.

What is Automated Fingerprint Identification System (or AFIS)?

Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS) is a system to automatically match one or many unknown fingerprints against a database of known prints. The identification and matching of two

fingerprints make up a complex algorithm. In general, the algorithm consists of at least two stages. The first stage will generally improve access precision by use of global fingerprint characteristics such as "pattern type combinations" while the second stage is the minutiae matcher.

Fingerprint History

In history the first use of fingerprints for identification dates back 4,000 years. At that time fingerprints were used in China on legal documents as a signature. Fingerprints were also used in the 14th century in Persia in various official government papers. However, it was not until 1858 that the first practical applications of the science were created, when an English administrator in India, Sir William Herschel, commenced placing the inked palm impressions, and, later thumb impressions, of members of the local population on contracts for the scientific identification of criminals. Since the late nineteenth century, fingerprint identification methods have been used by the police around the world to identify both suspected criminals, as well as victims of crime.

ePassports – Biometric Passports

In June 2006 the European Commission adopted the second part of the technical specifications required for the introduction of biometric identifiers (fingerprints) into passports and other travel documents [from 28 June 2009](#). Provisions regarding access control for chip data in electronic passports and Extended Access Control (EAC) were adopted. The fingerprints that will be stored in passports in the future will be [protected from unauthorized access](#).

From 1 November 2007, every German citizen must provide a set of fingerprints. The only exceptions are if people are prevented from doing this because of a long-term medical condition or in the case of [children aged under seven](#). According to NXP, which supplies the chips for passports, Germany will be the first country in the world to introduce second-generation ePassports with enhanced security. State Secretary Altmaier (BMI) confirms: "*With the electronic passport the citizens of Europe have an extremely secure document, which provides reliable protection against forgery and misuse and meets high data protection requirements. For Germany, the adoption of Extended Access Control is the go-ahead for thorough preparations for the second stage of the electronic passport's introduction to be implemented in Germany in 2007.*"

Fingerprint in Business

Today fingerprints are not only used for criminal investigations, but are also rapidly expanding into the business field. Credit card companies have started to replace different kinds of cards, with the forefingers of their customers. Fingerprints are claimed to be safe since the fingerprint is unique, fast, easy, and private, and there is thus no need to show any kind of identity card. There are companies promoting technology for fingerprint use in business, e.g. [Pay By Touch](#). Many stores have already

introduced fingerprints in their business and [even in schools fingerprints are used](#).

Fingerprint security

How secure are the fingerprints?

What would the outcome be if an original fingerprint were to fall into the wrong hands?

A fingerprint is actually fat and sweats onto a touched item. How difficult is it to carry out fingerprint fraud by using such an item?

What about privacy concerns?

The validity of forensic fingerprint evidence has been challenged by judges, the media and academics. (See for example Endeavour, Volume 27, Issue 2, June 2003, Pages 93-97, available [here](#).)

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

Walk on the wired side

On 23 October The Guardian reported the renewed interest in the use of GPS to maintain contact with children. Under the headline '*Walk on the wired side*' the article explained how recent developments in miniaturisation have produced the opportunity to either produce a 'toddler tag' or to introduce chips within clothing so that children can be tracked to within a few metres and monitored via Google Earth. More information in The Guardian, 23 October, 2007.

Book review of 'The Road to Southend Pier' by Ross Clark (CNN)

'The Road to Southend Pier' charts the difficulty in travelling in the UK without being observed by CCTV camera. The Author set out to travel from Cambridge to the end of Southend Pier (the longest in the world) without being recorded on CCTV. Even with substantial planning the venture failed at the last hurdle since the length of the pier is covered by CCTV and no alternative route was available.

The Road to Southend Pier is written by Ross Clark and published by Harriman house at £9.99

Use with caution: The perils of Wikipedia

It's one of the top 10 most-visited sites worldwide, with over two million articles in its English language edition. But is online encyclopaedia Wikipedia's strength - that anyone can edit it - also its greatest weakness?

<http://edition.cnn.com/2007/TECH/11/02/perils.wikipedia/index.html>

Estonia: e-learning as innovation diffusion tool

In spring 2007, a survey was carried out in Estonia to study the spread of e-learning in vocational and applied higher education institutions. Teachers were asked on e-learning practices, sources of motivation to use e-learning tools as well as hindering factors.

Two thirds of teachers use ICT tools (computer, data projector) and half of them regularly use computers in their teaching. 15% of respondents have been engaged in e-learning courses and 61% are willing to become thus engaged in the future. The most important prerequisites for e-learning usage are access to computers and the necessary competencies. Most teachers are granted access to computers but competencies vary a lot. Basic knowledge of computer usage is common but many teachers lack the skills to use e-learning techniques (e.g. manage forums, video conferences).

Therefore one of the main challenges in the future seems to be connected with the provision of training. Respondents were eager to learn e.g. graphical design programmes, databases programmes as well as e-learning methods.

More information (in Estonian):

<http://portaal.e-uni.ee/uudiskiri/folder.2006-09-11.2545054198/uuring-201ee-ope-kui-innovatsiooni-difusioon-kutse-ja-rakenduskoogkoolide-opetajate-seas201c>

International Association for Mobile Learning was inaugurated

At the mLearn 2007 conference in Melbourne, the International Association for Mobile Learning (IAMLearn) was inaugurated. Its aim is to provide a professional association for researchers and practitioners to promote excellence in research, development and the application of mobile and contextual learning.

The Association is registered as a non-profit company in South Africa. Prof. Sharples was elected as the founding President. Committee positions will be open for re-election at mLearn 2008, to be held at Ironbridge, UK (<http://www.mlearn2008.org/>). A draft constitution was presented at the founding meeting and this will be revised during the coming weeks.

Most important, IAMLearn should be a forum for all those with a professional interest in mobile learning. Everybody is welcome to send their suggestions as to how the Association can develop over the coming months and years.

The temporary website for the Association:
<http://www.iamlearn.caryloliver.com/>

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

Defining the Scientific Evolution of Technology Enhanced Learning: The Kaleidoscope 2007 Symposium

26 November 2007 – 27 November 2007 Berlin, Germany

This event aims to demonstrate the value and impact of interdisciplinary research, working with partners across Europe to outline how synergies between research activities from across the network have been translated into concrete achievements, to define excellence in a specific research field and to show how learning and education in society can benefit from research findings.

<http://www.noe-kaleidoscope.org/group/symposium/>

Online Educa Berlin

28 November 2007 – 30 November 2007 Berlin, Germany

This event focuses on technology-supported learning and training. Its objective is to be a key-networking venue for strategists and practitioners from all over the world. Over 2,000 delegates from more than 90 countries are expected to attend the conference. The organisers aim to attract high-level decision makers from education, business and government sectors. The conference is accompanied by an exhibition.

<http://www.online-educa.com/>

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: christina.sabo@netisproject.eu

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