

NETIS NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the NET-IS project 🚀 10th issue 🚀 September, 2008



Leonardo da Vinci



Contents

NETIS thematic issue of Hungarian Information Society Quarterly	2
NETIS project meeting in Bologna	5
A NETIS Course book chapter will be republished	6
New blogposts.....	6
Short news from the world of information society and e-learning.....	6
Event Announcements	7
Imprint.....	7

NETIS THEMATIC ISSUE OF HUNGARIAN INFORMATION SOCIETY QUARTERLY

A NETIS thematic issue of Hungarian Information Society Quarterly has just been published in mid-September: 11 articles, 10 authors, app. 400 thousand characters. The more than 500 copies are disseminated countrywide and can be purchased at bigger local newspaper stands in Hungary. The issue contains country reports (Estonian and Greek ones), papers and a summary of 6th Networked Learning Conference, chapters from the Textbook. All articles are translated into Hungarian.



Cover of NETIS thematic issue of Információs Társadalom

Detailed content (abstracts in English, however the articles are in Hungarian):

Robert Pinter

Information society studies in practice - introducing the NETIS project

The NETIS (Network for Teaching Information Society) consortium was formed by seven European institutions of higher education in 2006 to develop, in the frames of a two-year project supported by the EU's Leonardo da Vinci program, a widely accessible, innovative and sustainable course on the information society aiming at the improvement of skills and competences of students, teachers, researchers, experts and the wider public. Course materials were organized in a modular structure, taking advantage of international synergies to produce reliable content to be adapted in various educational systems. A course book was prepared in several languages and made available in both printed and electronic format. A textbook containing relevant country reports and a collection of teachers' and students' contributions was also elaborated. At the same time, test teaching in five participating countries was organized. By these means, using the methodology of blended learning, NETIS expects to increase the participants' awareness and reflections on the impact of the information society on everyday life. Research accounts and interim reports on the experiences, with proposals for further implementation, are being published.

Keywords: Network for teaching information society (NETIS), information society, networked learning

István Bessenyei – Zsolt Tóth

E-learning: Experiences gained in the NETIS project

The authors of this paper summarize the experiences gained when teaching the NETIS course on the information society at the University of West Hungary. If every student turns to the lecturer with his or her questions, and the lecturer checks every

step of the students in acquiring their knowledge, the result will be an unmanageable flood of information. Consequently, prior knowledge and life experience of participating students had to be relied upon in order to render knowledge exchange between students possible and to lessen the burden of the lecturer. This, however, was only possible if a detailed portfolio, with knowledge map containing the student's competencies, successes and failures, and basic biographical data was made available for each student. The article introduces a sample of possible themes for such mapping of one's competencies. The first step in self-organized learning of participants is self-appraisal of the level of their knowledge, with the help of competency catalogues or knowledge mapping. The authors propound a sample self-check questionnaire and expound some inherent contradictions of the organization, regulation and evaluation of networked teaching and learning, including the difficulties of creating knowledge maps and skills portfolios.

Keywords: e-learning, network learning, knowledge map, e-portfolio, self-organized learning

Zsolt Tóth – István Bessenyei

Constructivism in creating learning environments and the Moodle system

After giving a general overview on the development of virtual learning environments and e-learning management systems, the authors of the paper outline the Moodle L(C)MS system, used as the NETIS project's e-learning environment. Among the various free open source software packages designed to create course management systems (CMSs), the most popular Moodle system owes its popularity not only to its technical characteristics, but to its flexible architecture, based on constructivist learning theory which can be a rich source for the renewal of ineffective methodology. However, even new courses created in Moodle are rarely based on constructivist foundations. According to the authors, the causes of this can primarily be traced back to general environmental shortcomings of present-day university-level instruction, while certain problems of the constructivist approach are of secondary importance.

Keywords: constructivism, e-learning, Learning Management Systems, L(C)MS

Tarmo Kalvet

The Estonian Information Society Developments Since the 1990s

Since the 1990s Estonia has made remarkable successes 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 the economic factors, active role of the public sector, technological competency, and socio-cultural factors. It is argued that telecommunications and banking sectors are the cornerstones of Estonian information society developments; they are also behind major initiatives dedicated to computer training and awareness raising. Activities of the public sector have been also crucial in providing favourable legislative environment, but also in launching infrastructural projects and in implementing innovative e-services. Public sector developments have been strongly influenced by some non-governmental organisations. ICT skills and R&D competencies, a lot of which is Soviet inheritance, have been also crucial.

Keywords: Estonia, information society, economy, benchmarking

Veronika Stoffa

THE ROLE OF ANIMATION IN ELECTRONIC COURSE BOOKS

The article deals with the objectives and the role of animation in computer assisted learning. The author offers an in-depth analysis of the importance of audiovisual interactive learning material elaborated in multimedia form using modern

information and communication technologies. Animations not only motivate the student and decrease the time needed for understanding new information but also support the creation of a virtual learning environment. The paper gives a short review of several types of animation and their characteristics supported by various examples.

Keywords: electronic teaching/learning materials, animation, interactivity, audiovisual presentation, multimedia, information and communication technologies, educational process, virtual learning environment.

Chris Sadler – Tarmo Kalvet

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

The Network for Teaching Information Society (NETIS) consortium has designed a curriculum for studies concerning the information society, aimed at university undergraduates. Courses can be delivered in various pedagogic formats including (appropriately) networked learning. NETIS participants consulted students prior to developing this curriculum and tested the learning materials in different contexts. In this paper, the results of the consultation survey and the design of the monitoring instruments are discussed and some preliminary results from the trials are reported.

Keywords: Network for Teaching Information Society (NETIS), information society studies, networked learning, students, case study

Kerstin V. Siakas

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

This paper reports on the experiences of networking within a diverse intercultural and interdisciplinary environment involving research, development of learning material and teaching on the same e-learning platform within the frame of the NETIS project. The students come 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 information and communication technology (ICT) environment into consideration is highlighted by emphasizing caution and awareness of particularities, such as differences in the development of national information societies, institutional regulations, disciplines (students from informatics and social sciences), language, attitudes and values, as well as operational issues, such as numbers of students participating in the course on information society in the different countries. The project team, aiming at continuous improvement of the course, tried to combine classroom experience and research evidence by sharing and evaluating feedback from both students and educators.

Keywords: Network for teaching information society, NETIS, networked life-long learning, interculturality

Kerstin Siakas – Themis Kotsialos

The Greek information society

The authors of this country report argue that the information society in Greece is developing slowly, and Greece is close to the bottom of the EU ranking regarding most indicators. Broadband adoption is not sufficient, and even narrowband is not widespread. Due to shortcomings of the infrastructure, across all internet services usage is far below average. Accordingly, basic and specialist ICT skills in Greece are low. However, important encouraging steps are being taken to improve the situation. ICT development initiatives for regulation, education, and infrastructure development have been announced and several programs are being implemented. A fundamental precondition for success is rapid completion of liberalisation of the telecommunications services market. The Digital Strategy 2006-2013 aims at bridging the digital gap that still exists between Greece and other member states of

the EU.

Keywords: Greece, information society, broadband access, telecommunications, ICT

The materials will be available at the official website of the quarterly and at the NETIS site as well.

NETIS PROJECT MEETING IN BOLOGNA

NETIS project partners knew the name of Bologna because of the Bologna process in the higher education reform, and because of the delicious ragout and pastry. But NETIS partners got know a new face of the city when we have organized our 5th project meeting in Bologna with the kind host of SCIENTER.



Main square of Bologna

The meeting (7-10 September 2008) focused mainly on the 2nd monitoring visit and evaluation of the Leonardo Office. We had a long conversation on financial and management issues in order to be ready for project closing. We have also spoken about the Evaluation Plan of the project. Products were also important parts of the agenda: the Greek Course Book will be published in September, the Textbook is under construction and the *Teaching reports* with *Teaching guidelines* are prepared in these days. Due to the planned two-month-prolongation of the project, this meeting was not the last one as we have planned earlier this year. The project partners will meet again in November, in Komárno, Slovakia.

Pictures of the meeting and the lovely city of Bologna are available [here](#).

A NETIS COURSE BOOK CHAPTER WILL BE REPUBLISHED

COEDU KnowledgeNetwork in Budapest, Hungary prepares a volume about the possibilities of the eLearning. The revised article written by István Bessenyei from the NETIS textbook "Information Society" (Learning and Teaching in the Information Society. eLearning 2.0 and Connectivism) will be published in this volume.

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:

- [NETIS project meeting in Bologna](#) by Robert Pinter
- [Middlesex Trial Teaching Completed](#) by Chris Sadler

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

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

ICT to shape the future of education and learning

„GKP publishes an exclusive interview with Abdul Waheed Khan, UNESCOs Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information, in which he shares his insights on education and the role of ICT for socio-economic development.”

http://www.unesco-ci.org/newsletter/lt/t_go.php?i=1534&e=NTg3NDE=&l=http--portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL ID--E-27501--A-URL DO--E-DO TOPIC--A-URL SECTION--E-201.html

A Review of: "Brave New Classrooms: Democratic Education and the Internet

Author: Sharon Stoerger

http://www.informaworld.com/openurl?genre=article&issn=0197-2243&volume=24&issue=5&spage=360&uno_jumptype=alert&uno_alerttype=new_issue_alert_email

A European research and innovation strategy for ICT: time horizon 2020

„In search of the best strategies to boost Europe's leadership in ICT (Information and Communications Technology) research and innovation in the next decade, the European Commission today launched a public consultation. Contributions from industry, ICT experts, policy-makers and the wider public will be fed into a new strategy for ICT research and innovation, to be unveiled next year. The aim is to put European ICT industry, especially SMEs, to the fore of the race for global competitiveness. The public consultation is open until 7 November 2008.”

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/1287&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

EVENT ANNOUNCEMENTS

eLearning Papers calls for contributions on Digital Literacy

„Digital publication ‘eLearning Papers’ is calling for contributions to enhance the European learning communities’ approach to the 21st century Literacies’ Agenda. The deadline for the submission of the articles is 10 November 2008.”

<http://www.epractice.eu/document/5041>

CFP: e-Society 2009

IADIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE E-SOCIETY 2009

February 25-28, 2009 – BARCELONA, SPAIN

“The IADIS e-Society 2009 conference aims to address the main issues of concern within the Information Society. This conference covers both the technical as well as the non-technical aspects of the Information Society. Broad areas of interest are eSociety and Digital Divide, eBusiness / eCommerce, eLearning, New Media and E-Society, Digital Services in eSociety, eGovernment /eGovernance, eHealth, Information Systems, and Information Management. These broad areas are divided into more detailed areas (see below). However innovative contributes that don't fit into these areas will also be considered since they might be of benefit to conference attendees.”

Submissions until 20 October 2008

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

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>

This Newsletter was edited by Robert Pinter (r.pinter@netisproject.eu) and written by NETIS project members: István Bessenyei, Robert Pinter, Chris Sadler.

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

All articles in the Newsletter are legally protected. Duplication or use of the articles/texts for publication is only permitted if the source is referenced (www.netisproject.eu).