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Authors:	Veronika Stoffa (J. Selye University, Komarno, SK)
Editors:	Róbert Pintér (ISRI, Hungary)
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Summary

This report summarizes the results from the researchers/teachers segmentation interviews carried out by Slovakian NETIS partner's (J. Selye University, Komarno, SK) team between July and August 2007 in Slovakia.

The general conclusion regarding the information society research and teaching in Slovakia was that it is very limited, occasional and fragmented between different universities and departments (this is also supported by the results of the student questionnaire). It is mainly taught as an individual subject within social science and public administration oriented faculties. Other university programmes (curricula) only rarely include individual subject oriented to information society. Topics related to information society are introduced to first year university students as a part of subject *Information and communication technologies*. This subject is included into curricula for getting information and communication literacy by university students for their every day using.

A general feeling is that information society topics, considering their important role, should be given more prominent place in curricula.

The opinion that there is a strong need for additional teaching materials was clearly expressed, although textbooks and course books regarding information society from Slovak authors are up till now no published. Student use information sources on Internet. While text-book would be welcomed by students, they would not be probably willing to pay for it. Considering how Internet-friendly students are, on-line version might be a solution.

Blended learning was suggested as the main teaching method, but piloting of teaching with recorded lectures might be worth of trying as well. Moodle as e-learning environment is very popular in Slovakia among teachers as well as among students.

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NETIS Interview Results, Slovakia

EXPECTATIONS REGARDING INFORMATION SOCIETY TEACHING AND RESEARCH IN SLOVAKIA

By Veronika STOFFA, J. Selye University, Komarno, SK

Komárno, August 2007

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Introduction

The objective of the Network for Teaching Information Society (NETIS, <http://www.ittk.hu/netis/>) is to increase knowledge and competence of students and other participants of the course on information society based on knowledge and skills in selecting, elaborating and using information in every day life. According to the mission statement: *The NETIS aims to improve the skills and competences of students, teachers, researchers, experts and wider public by developing widely accessible, relevant, innovative and sustainable e-learning course on information society.* By these means NETIS expects to increase the participants' awareness and reflections on the impact of information society on everyday life. The electronic course on the information society topic is developed through a constructivist approach using a modular course-design with application advantages of international synergies to produce adaptable, reliable content.

One of the activities was to carry out interviews with respective teachers and researchers. Those experts were expected to be the information society experts, leader/participants of academic research groups, directors of NGOs and/or think tanks in information society related research and teachers already prepared a book and/or having a class in this topic for a longer period.

In July and August 2007 such interviews (altogether 6) were carried out in Slovakia within the NETIS project. The interviews content following 6 questions.

1. question: Can you introduce yourself? Where did he/she finish his/her studies, what and how long has he/she been teaching? (What is your professional position, and interests?)
2. question: What is your opinion about e-learning and e-teaching method? Are you practice them?
3. question: Have you took part in doing electronic course book?
4. question: What are your electronic teaching/learning experiences? What is your relation to information society research/education? Why did you start to research /teach this topic? Personal milestones in information society research / teaching.
5. question: What is your opinion about including subject called „Information society“ into the curriculum for selected faculties on the universities)
6. question: What is your opinion about actual life standards of the youth? (Is the observable process: development or devolution? What do you think, which questions are the most important within the information society?)

The tape recorded interviews were realised in native language (Hungarian) and an extra interview was realised with persons for what the Slovak language is their native language.

Also a questionnaire for informatics, information society, information and communication technologies subjects teachers and researchers was elaborated. The questionnaire was filled out by teachers and researchers **from different universities in Slovakia.** The filled questionnaires are in attachment of this document.

Information society research and teaching

The general conclusion regarding the information society research and teaching in Slovakia was that it is very limited, occasional and fragmented between different universities and departments (this is also supported by the results of the student questionnaire). It is mainly taught as an individual subject within social science and public administration oriented faculties. Other university programmes (curricula) only rarely include individual subject oriented to information society. Topics related to information society are introduced to first year university students as a part of subject *Information and communication technologies*. This subject is included into curricula for getting information and communication literacy by university students for their every day using. Some chapter about *information and society* is included into the new elementary and high school curricula as well.

It should be noticed that information and communication technologies have a strong influence on the content several other subjects and to the teaching method and forms. We can find different courses or some part of courses related to information society in the university study programmes. It is significant for economy, marketing, public administration, sociology and social sciences faculties. But influence of changes is real in all fields of university study specialisation. New study, teaching and learning methods are used not only at the informatics and computer science oriented departments at the technology universities but (slowly) also at other universities. Using information and communication technologies in teaching by the staff at other departments is very limited. New phenomena in society result from great number of indirect changes in other subjects and also initialised creation new subjects. For example: e-commerce, e-government, e-administration, etc. Universities created also several post graduate and supplement courses including course on Government and Information, eGovernance, e-Public Administration, etc. ICT education provided by technical faculties has a very limited space for introducing societal issues. Therefore there was a social necessity, for creation new faculties oriented to public communication, social work, administration, public administration, etc. at several Slovak universities.

A general feeling is that information society topics, considering their important role, should be given more prominent place in curricula. The opinion presented by Slovak Ministry of Education is: to have a lot of specific bachelor study programs at universities, but at least two times more master degree programs and at least three times more doctoral programs.

Recently, a new commission was established by Slovak Ministry of Education for elaboration a new material: Curricular Transformation of Education in Slovakia. In this document considerable attention will be given to ICT as it is the driving force of economic and social developments today.

To increase the effectivity, modularity, flexibility of education, to increase and access education and learning possibilities for all new technologies, mainly e-learning by Internet were introduced to education. At Slovak universities commonly the Moodle LMS is used for distance learning after different experiences with several Learning Management Systems (WebCT, Klick2Learn, etc.).

Reflections regarding the Course Book

The opinion that there is a strong need for additional teaching materials was clearly expressed, although textbooks and course books regarding information society from Slovak authors are up till now no published. Student use information sources on Internet and papers in different conference proceeding books or temporary not reviewed texts.

The themes going to be covered by the Course Book were generally welcomed by experts interviewed. Actually there are several topics to add and expand the content of the course book. Some additional topics popped up as well:

- Information security;
- Informatization of education (more deeply) ,
- Distributed information systems,
- Virtual reality;
- eHealth;
- New information technologies.

Analysis of how some countries are doing better in ICT economy, others in eGovernment, etc. would provide an interesting analysis.

Reflections regarding Country Reports

Although in Slovakia there are many available benchmarking reports, e.g.

- Plan for informatization process of society named „*Politika informatizácie spoločnosti v Slovenskej republike*“ (**Policy of society informatisation in Slovak republic**)
[http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/2FE5A619ACE03805C1256E240033210E/\\$FILE/Zdroj.html](http://www.rokovania.sk/appl/material.nsf/0/2FE5A619ACE03805C1256E240033210E/$FILE/Zdroj.html)
- The running national project **Infovek** (Info-age) (<http://www.infovek.sk>)
- The **section research and evaluation state program about building information society** for the period of 2002 - 2005 with perspective to year 2010
- The **strategy plan for informatization of society in SR**
- **National Action Plan of the Slovak Republic Regarding the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005 – 2015**
- **The Section of Information Society** of the Ministry of Transport, Post and Communication of the Slovak Republic (<http://www.telecom.gov.sk/index/index.php?ids=13831&lang=en>)

A closer look at the respective countries and deep analyses of actual situation might be interesting.

Structure of country reports sounded reasonable as it might give a good overview regarding developments in respective countries. However, they should not remain just descriptive, but be analytical as well.

Practical suggestions

As information society topics in subject Information and Communication Technologies are taught in first semester on bachelor level at our university. The topic e-learning and e-teaching is a part of subject Teaching and Learning Methods

Also, this topic is important for life-long learning.

Students are very familiar with computers and Internet in Slovakia and the latter is considered as important source during studies. Attending of classes is mostly not obligatory.

While text-book would be welcomed by students, they would not be probably willing to pay for it. Considering how Internet-friendly students are, on-line version might be a solution.

Blended learning was suggested as the main teaching method, but piloting of teaching with recorded lectures might be worth of trying as well.

Moodle as e-learning environment is very popular in Slovakia among teachers as well as among students. Actually, having conventional lectures supported with Moodle is currently standard solution at several universities in Slovakia and students have welcomed this educational form very much.

Annex – list of experts interviewed

A short introduction of the participants of interview

1. Prof. Dr. Ing. Imrich OKENKA, CSc., Agroinštitút, Nitra

He has been teaching since 1970. He is actually the director of Agroinštitút and also the headmaster of the Information Services Centre at the Department of Information Technology of the Slovak Agriculture University in Nitra. He has experiences in teaching, research and also in university management. He was for a long time the dean of the Faculty of economy and management of The Slovak Agriculture University in Nitra and also its rector for 2 period.

He has been teaching information technologies, computer science and programming for 37 years.

2. Prof. Ing. Ján STOFFA, DrSc., Palacky University, Faculty of Pedagogy, Department of Technology and Information Technologies in Olomouc (Czech Republic)

He has been teaching at several universities since 1963. He actually teaches at the Palacky University in Olomouc (Czech Republic) and at the J. Selye University in Komárno. He teaches several technology subjects. His research work in the last ten years is oriented into terminology, especially in the field of modern information and communication technologies. He is an intensive, every day user of information and communication technologies.

3. Ing. Vojtech HOSCHEK, CSc., Faculty of Wood Science and Technology of the Technical University in Zvolen

He had finished his studies in 1968 on the Faculty of Chemical Technology of the Technical University in Zvolen. He has been teaching since 1978 (Cobol, Fortran, Assembler languages, he has taken algorithmization courses – in vocational training centre).

He has been teaching programming, object oriented programming, information technology, optimization since 1990.

He teaches information technology on the Faculty of Wood Science and Technology of the Technical University in Zvolen.

He had been teaching information technology on the Faculty of Economy of the University J. Selye in Komárno in the period 2005-2006.

4. Zoltán BALOGH, Ing., PhD. Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra

He has been working at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra since 2004. He is teaching: operating systems and computer network systems. He is in touch everyday with e-learning and he is also a developer of e-learning courses for own taught subjects. He is an active and intensive user of modern information and communication technologies.

5. Veronika Stoffa, Prof., Ing., CSc. (PhD) - Department of Informatics of the J. Selye University of in Komárno

Graduation: Slovak Technical University, Electrotechnical Faculty. Specialisation: Computer Science, Bratislava, SK (1974). **Postgraduation:** PhD: Technical Cybernetics – Computer Science at Slovak Technical University, Bratislava, SK (1981). **Habilitation1:** Technical Cybernetics – Computer Science (Army University Brno - Czech Republic) (1984). **Habilitation2:** Teaching Mathematics - University of Constantine the Philosopher (1999). **Inauguration:** Teaching Mathematics - University of Constantine the Philosopher (2003). **Teaching experiences:** 32 years. **Subjects of teaching:** Programming, Modelling and Simulation, Information and Communication Technologies, Software Creation, Information Systems, Database Systems.

6. Tóth Krisztina, Mgr. - Department of Informatics of the J. Selye University of in Komárno

She had finished her master studies at the Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra in 1997 (Specialisation: Mathematics and informatics on the Department of Computer Science at the Faculty of Natural Sciences).

2 years taught mathematics and information technology at a Private High School in Galanta. 1 year taught mathematics and information technology at the Grammar School in Nemesócsa and also 5 years mathematics, information technology, statistics and computer writing at the Agricultural High School in Komárno. She works as assistant on the Department of Informatics of the J. Selye University of in Komárno and teach programming, introduction to the programming, introduction to the informatics, and history of informatics and information technologies for 3 years.

Survey for teachers

1. Name of Your university/institution, where You teach?
2. Name of Your Department?
3. Your gender?
4. How old are You?
5. What university are You finished?
6. Your qualification, specialisation?
7. How long are You teach?
8. Which subjects (how long)
9. For how long have You used a computer?
10. For how long have You used the Internet?
11. How often do You use internet for fun?
12. How often do You use internet for learning?
13. How often do You use internet for work?
14. How often do You use the Internet out of curiosity?
15. How often do You use internet for playing?
16. How often do You use internet for mailing?
17. How often do You use internet to chat?
18. How often do You use internet for reading forums?
19. How often do You use internet for online banking?
20. How often do You use internet to buy something?
21. How often do You use internet for downloading?
22. How often do You have lectures?
23. How often do You have seminars?

24. Do You need electronic (e-mail, chat....) contact with students?

25. Which one is the best form of education?

conventional lecture / online lecture (in an e-learning system) / either of them / both of them

26. What kind of documents can You use for teaching/studying?

Course textbook / Lecture notes / Bibliography / Other

27. What kind of online services do You need for better education?

Online course syllabus / Description of assumptions / Themes of examination / Student mail list /
Forum / Chat

28. Are You interested in Information Society studies?

29. Have You ever participated in an “Information Society” course?

30. Have You ever teach an “Information Society” course?

31. Would You like one overall course textbook in this topic?

32. Which format would be better for this course textbook?

Printed / Online / Both of them / Other

33. Would You use the printed course textbook?

34. Would You use an online course textbook?

35. Explain Your answers to last two questions please:

36. Have You experiences with e-learning material creation?

Thank You very much for Your answers!