



## In this Newsletter

- p. 1 Project news
- p. 1 Report from World Forum
- p. 3 Sample from the wiki
- p. 3 History of Virtual Campus
- p. 4 Announcements
- p. 4 Bits and Pieces
- p. 4 Reminders

Welcome to our second newsletter of 2009 – which we are sending to an extended circle of researchers, academics and others interested in Virtual Campuses

## Project news

Since the beginning of January, the project partners have been working hard on finalising their country reports to get them ready for the external evaluation process which has now begun. This process has also included some degree of streamlining to make them more coherent and to facilitate comparison and analysis as well as to make the necessary links to the case studies completed and the initiatives of interest in different parts of the world. You can see the current status of these reports here in the wiki:

[http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Country\\_reports](http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Country_reports)

As always, your feedback is much appreciated. While we have already identified experts willing to evaluate these reports for us in many countries, there are some countries where we have not yet found experts able to help so if you have suggestions for people who can help in this process, please do let us know.

Our next set of task include further work on the Critical Success Factors, this includes benchmarking our work in this area with the **UNIQUE** and **E-xcellence** projects as well as work on categorizing the CSFs and re-phrasing where necessary. We are also busy gathering some of the lessons learned from the experience of researching Virtual Campus initiatives in different countries and will take the first steps towards creation of the Virtual Campus Manual, a key outcome of the project which we will have available this summer.



## Report from World Forum



Learning and Technology World Forum 2009

Two of our project team, Paul Bacsich and Bieke Schreurs took part in the very first Learning and Technology World Forum (LATWF) in London on 12-14 January.

About 500 policy makers and practitioners and around 70 ministers representing two thirds of the world's population took part in this event which was organised by Becta in the UK. Speakers included internet pioneer Tim Berners-Lee, Sebastian Coe, David Blunkett, Michael Barber (Expert Partner, McKinsey), Barbara Ischinger (Director of Education, OECD) and many ministerial visitors.

Bieke Schreurs summarized her experiences at the LATWF:

### Re.ViCa at The Learning and Technology World Forum.

The Learning and Technology World Forum (LATWF) took place in London at the QE II conference centre (near Westminster) from 12-14 January 2009. The World Forum included the main World Forum event and the separate ministerial-level "Moving Young Minds" event with more than 50 Ministers of Education.



Bieke Schreurs

Although the very existence of the event was meant to be kept rather confidential given the planned participation of Ministers, since the autumn the scope of the World Forum has been extended somewhat and there was a concerted effort made to

invite delegates from the university sector. In autumn several people associated with Re.ViCa were invited, including myself, Paul Bacsich and Terence Karran, and it became clear that it was to be a key event in the UK government e-learning calendar. Francesc Pedró and Claudio Dondi, both members of the Re.ViCa IAC also took part in this Forum.



Paul Bacsich and Terence Karran



Francesc Pedró and Claudio Dondi

To kick start this interesting 3 day stay in London, our WP Leader Research Paul Bacsich arranged a small social get-together of ex-UKeU types on the Sunday before the World Forum started. Among these was Dick Hill, formerly of NHSU, and Jonathan Darby, now at the UKOU who is key to a number of UKOU agendas in e-learning including collaboration with the University of Derby (the UK Re.ViCa case study). So in an informal way we got a good insight into one of the key former Virtual Campus initiatives! At the Conference Re.ViCa were also involved in the workshop on “e-Impact” led by Paul. The e-Impact workshop presenters were:

1. Paul Bacsich,
2. Giles Pepler, Sero
3. Peter Chatterton, colleague of Paul’s on benchmarking
4. Dave O’Hare, University of Derby (Re.ViCa UK case study)
5. Terence Karran, University of Lincoln and IAC member.



We had three working groups, all of which provided good contributions on the topics they had chosen. I participated in the one dedicated to discussing cost-issues. Although the discussion time was –as usual– too short, there may be some linkage of this

work, when written up, to our Critical Success Factors studies. Also the BECTA Workshop on Tools for Benchmarking and Reviewing Institutions use of ICT initiated some critical thinking.



There was probably not enough time allowed for networking. But I managed to meet e-learning experts there such as Claudio Dondi and Malcolm Read, the Executive Secretary of JISC.

I also had the opportunity to meet a strong delegation coming from the Thompson Rivers University in Canada, sharing their thoughts and insights of their study visit in the UK.



Together with them and Dick Moore we had the chance to end this very fruitful trip with “one of the things you need to have done in London”: reflecting on Virtual Campuses with the background music of Ronnie Scot’s jazz band.

For more information about the Forum, please visit the LATWF web site <http://www.latwf.org/>. There are also videos available here: [http://www.latwf.org/latest\\_news-7.html](http://www.latwf.org/latest_news-7.html)



## Sample from the wiki

To give you an example of what we have been doing in respect to write-ups of programmes of interest for researchers, we have chosen a sample from the Finnish Virtual University. This report was originally prepared by Sara Frank Bristow. You can read the full report here:

[http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Finnish\\_Virtual\\_University](http://www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Finnish_Virtual_University)

Here is the part dealing with the history of this important initiative:



### History

The idea of a national virtual university came from two directions: from the universities themselves and from the Ministry of Education's Strategy for Education and Research 2000 - 2004. Terms such as 'virtual university' and 'online university' started to pop up in the international and domestic university discussions at the end of 1990's. At the same time, discussion begun about the globalization of educational markets and the European Higher Education Area. In Finland, the discussion swiftly crystallized into concrete proposals:

At the 1998 term-opening ceremony of Helsinki University of Technology (TKK), rector Paavo Uronen brought up the idea of 'Finland's Online University'

At the same time, the Minister of Education of that time, Olli-Pekka Heinonen, suggested that the committee preparing for the Information Strategy for Education and Research should include a proposal for a virtual university in the strategy. Such proposal was, in fact, included in the new information strategy for 2000 - 2004.

In summer 1999, the Minister of Education Maija Rask set up an organization for implementing the strategy, including a working group on the virtual university.

The working group prepared an implementation plan, according to which the development unit of the virtual university was established in 2000.

Based on the new strategy, the Ministry of Education financed a number of virtual university projects and activities in years 2001 - 2006, and the development of FVU during that time was, indeed, rapid:

2001: FVU Consortium Agreement is signed. 2003: Nationwide Agreement on Flexible Study Rights is signed. 2004:

Networks and ICT support units become part of everyday university life. Flexible Study Rights Service, JOOPAS, is launched. 2005: FVU Strategy for 2005 - 2010 is adopted. 2006: Cooperation Agreement between the Finnish Virtual University and the Bavarian Virtual University is signed. 2007: The FVU Service Unit starts operating as an independent institution of the Helsinki University of Technology, and the FVU cooperation among universities continues within the framework of the new consortium statutes.

In the implementation plan of the Information Strategy for Education and Research 2000 - 2004, there was also a mention about integrating polytechnics, companies and research institutes into the virtual university consortium. However, the polytechnics decided to launch their own 'virtual university' project at about the same time (2001), so the Finnish Virtual Polytechnic was set in motion.

## History of Virtual Campus

As part of our work in getting to grips with the evolution of the term "Virtual Campus", here are two interesting reports passed onto us by International Advisory Committee Terence Karran from 2002/2003 on Digital Campus and Virtual Models that you might be interested in reading:



- Summary report on Digital Campus in France: Campus Numériques: Enjeux et Perspectives pour la Formation Ouverte et à Distance undertaken by Michel Averous and Gilbert Touzot in 2002. Available from <http://www.education.gouv.fr/cid2036/campus-numeriques%C2%A0-enjeux-et-perspectives-pour-la-formation-ouverte-et-a-distance.html>
- Studies in the Context of the E-learning Initiative from the European Commission: Virtual Models for European Universities (lot 1), Final Report to the EU Commission, DG Education & Culture. Available from [http://ec.europa.eu/education/archive/elearning/doc/studies/virtual\\_annex\\_a\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/archive/elearning/doc/studies/virtual_annex_a_en.pdf)

## Announcements

We have launched a Re.ViCa Netvibes page. This page collects interesting sites relevant to Virtual Campuses throughout the world, here it is: <http://www.netvibes.com/revica>





If you are not yet familiar with Netvibes, it's a handy way to organise your links, bookmarks and other bits and pieces of digital information that you like to have close at hand, we hope you enjoy the Re.ViCa Netvibes page – feel free to add your own materials!

This month we have extended the reach of this newsletter to academics, policy-makers, researchers and others who we think would be interested in the outcomes of our work. If you would like to suggest colleagues or others potentially interested in receiving this newsletter, please send us their contact details.

We have recently published the notes from the second meeting of the International Advisory Committee that took place in Berlin in December. You will find these notes on the front page of the project web site along with the January newsletter.

The third and final meeting of the International Advisory Committee will take place in June to coincide with the 23rd World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education including the 2009 EADTU



Annual Conference, to be held on 7-10 June 2009 in Maastricht in the Netherlands. The conference is hosted by Open Universiteit Nederland and more details about the IAC meeting will be available shortly.



For more information about this conference, see: <http://www.ou.nl/eCache/DEF/80/137.html>

## Bits and Pieces

Here are some bits and pieces we have gathered which we hope you will find interesting:



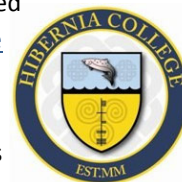
The VCSE – Virtual Campus for a Sustainable Europe – is an international, virtual educational platform of five European universities looking at the topic of sustainable development

and e-learning from diverse perspectives. Find out more about the project here: <http://www.vcse.eu>.

You can download the useful Best Practice Guidebook they have just published here:

[http://www.vcse.eu/fileadmin/upload/downloads/BEST\\_PRACTISE\\_GUIDEBOOK.pdf](http://www.vcse.eu/fileadmin/upload/downloads/BEST_PRACTISE_GUIDEBOOK.pdf)

One of the institutions where we have carried out a detailed case study, [Hibernia College](#) in Ireland, has also had one of its courses featured in an innovative case study by the Beyond Maturity team in the UK. This case study provides insight into the case for a Master of Science in Pharmaceutical Medicine and highlights the role of partnerships. For more information, visit:



<http://www.towardsmaturity.org/article/2008/08/18/master-class-hibernia-college-and-pfizer-breaking-/>

**nmc** The [New Media Consortium](#) and the [EDUCAUSE](#)

[Learning Initiative](#) recently published their annual Horizon report which provides lots of information about emerging trends and developments arising from the experiences and expectations of the US HE sector. Read the full report here:

<http://wp.nmc.org/horizon2009/>

## Reminders

If you haven't yet sent us your cost claim for the Berlin meeting, please send them to Ilse Op de Beeck, EuroPACE ivzw, Kapeldreef 62, 3001 Heverlee, Belgium, Tel: +32 16 32 78 15, [ilse.opdebeek@europace.be](mailto:ilse.opdebeek@europace.be)

We look forward to receiving input from you for our next newsletter which will be published in March. This input can be news items, new RSS feeds, relevant papers or publications by you or others.

## Editorial team

Nikki Cortoos: [nikki.cortoos@atit.be](mailto:nikki.cortoos@atit.be)

Sally Reynolds: [sally.reynolds@atit.be](mailto:sally.reynolds@atit.be)