

In this Newsletter

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

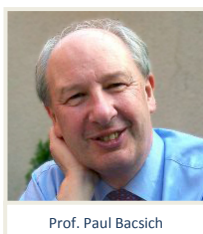
To subscribe to this monthly newsletter, please contact nikki.cortoos@atit.be.

Project news

Finalising the Critical Success Factors

One of the key outputs of the Re.ViCa project is a set of Critical Success Factors related to Virtual Campuses. We use the term Critical Success Factor to describe a condition, prerequisite or situation which has an impact on the overall success or otherwise of a Virtual Campus initiative and the final set of factors produced by the Re.ViCa team will form a significant chapter in the project manual which will be published in September 2009. While there has been some work in this area in the past, much of it has focussed on quality issues and so the final set of CSFs produced by Re.ViCa provides a unique contribution to a study of the Virtual Campus phenomenon.

This work, led by research workpackage leader Prof. Paul Bacsich has gone through various stages and the list summarised in this newsletter has had several different iterations and has also been the subject of discussion during meetings of the International Advisory Committee in June 2008 and December 2008.



Prof. Paul Bacsich

A detailed concordance or cross-referencing exercise has also been carried out between the Re.ViCa set of Critical Success Factors and the outputs of the UNIQUE (<http://unique.europace.org/>) and E-xcellence projects (<http://www.eadtu.nl/e-xcellenceqs/>). The same exercise has also been carried out with the principles arising from the PBP-VC project <http://vc.msroot.paisley.ac.uk/index.php> and the recommendations for large-scale and robust e-learning arising from the MegaTrends project: http://nettskolen.nki.no/in_english/megatrends/.



Below you can find a table of 17 identified CSFs and a table of 14 Key Success Factors, relevant to subsets of Virtual Campuses (explained further in the Newsletter).

Critical Success Factors as of 27 May 2009	
R4	Usability: All systems usable, with internal evidence to back this up.
R6	e-Learning Strategy: Regularly updated e-Learning Strategy, integrated with Learning and Teaching Strategy and all related strategies (e.g. Distance Learning, if relevant).
R7	Decisions on Projects: Effective decision-making for e-learning projects across the whole institution, including variations when justified.
R10	Training: All staff trained in VLE use, appropriate to job type - and retrained when needed.
R12	Costs: A fit for purpose costing system is used in all departments for costs of e-learning.
R13	Planning Annually: Integrated annual planning process for e-learning integrated with overall course planning.
R16	Technical Support to Staff: All staff engaged in the e-learning process have "nearby" fast-response technical support.
R19	Decisions on Programmes: There is effective decision-making for e-learning programmes across the whole institution, including variations when justified.



R22	Leadership in e-Learning: The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-learning is fully developed at departmental and institutional level.
R29	Management Style: The overall institutional management style is appropriate to manage its mix of educational and business activities
R35	Relationship Management Upwards: The institution has effective processes designed to achieve high formal and informal credibility with relevant government and public agencies overseeing it.
R53	Reliability: The e-learning system is as reliable as the main systems students and staff are used to from their wider experience as students and citizens,
R58	Market Research: Market research done centrally and in or on behalf of all departments, and aware of e-learning aspects; updated annually or prior to major programme planning.
R60	Security: A system where security breaches are known not to occur yet which allows staff and students to carry out their authorised duties easily and efficiently.
R91	Student Understanding of System: Students have good understanding of the rules governing assignment submission, feedback, plagiarism, costs, attendance, etc and always act on them.
R92	Student Help Desk: Help Desk is deemed as best practice.
R94	Student Satisfaction: Frequent (ideally annual) Student Satisfaction survey which explicitly addresses the main e-learning issues of relevance to students.

In the following table Prof. Bacsich has identified 14 separate Key Success Factors. These are Critical Success Factors which are relevant to the success of e-learning in one or more subsets (categories) of a Virtual Campus - such as private for-profit providers, consortia, etc.

Key Success Factors (Critical Success Factors for subsets of Virtual Campuses)	
R24	Collaboration for e-Learning: The institution has a reasoned approach to collaboration at various levels to gain additional benefit from sharing e-learning material, methodologies and systems. <i>Applies to: Consortia, National initiatives.</i>
R25	Brand Management: The institution has a reasoned approach to managing its brand. <i>Applies to: Private for-profit providers.</i>
R32	Worldware for Students: Students can on the whole make use of widely-used hardware and software thus minimising cost and support issues. <i>Applies to: Evolution of existing institutions, National initiatives.</i>
R34	Recruitment of Staff: The institution has effective processes designed to attract, for appropriate roles, employees enthusiastic about e-learning. <i>Applies to: Newly created institutions.</i>
R36	Pricing: The institution has effective processes which ensure that the price of its courses are competitive yet sustainable. <i>Applies to: Private for-profit providers, but maybe other groupings also (e.g. public institutions in countries where they compete).</i>
R37	Innovation Management: The institution has a balanced approach to encouraging innovation and innovators within the constraints of delivering effective services attractive to students. <i>Applies to: Evolution of existing institutions.</i>
R41	Consortia No-Compete: The consortium has taken steps to ensure that issues of competing with its members are resolved. <i>Applies to: Consortia.</i>
R42	Consortia Roles Definition: Each member of the consortium has a reasoned, evidenced and documented approach to collaboration with partners. <i>Applies to: Consortia.</i>
R43	Consortia Role Implementation: Each member of the consortium implements the collaboration role it agreed with its partners. <i>Applies to: Consortia.</i>
R55	Foresight: Both look-ahead and lab, working in concert. <i>Applies to: Public institutions.</i>

R56	Selling: Widespread skill in selling e-learning and the theory to support the skills. <i>Applies to: Private for-profit providers, maybe others (see R36).</i>
R59	Competitor Research: The institution has processes to carefully analyse the relationship of each proposed e-learning offering to existing providers and stakeholders. <i>Applies to: Private for-profit providers, maybe others (see R36).</i>
R82	Dissemination Internal: A systematic managed process of internal dissemination of good practice in e-learning aspects of courses is in place.
R99	Organisational Learning: Institution is a learning organisation on all core aspects of e-learning.

New People in the Re.ViCa Network!

As part of our efforts to extend the reach of our research network we have been actively canvassing for researchers to join our network of experts.



More specifically we have invited experts and practitioners to provide input to the wiki at both a country and programme level. In April we began a regular newsletter feature about newcomers to the Re.ViCa network which we are delighted to continue here with Dr Tae Rim Lee from South Korea.

Expert for South Korea



Dr. Tae Rim Lee

Dr Tae Rim Lee has worked for 25 years in the fields of Lifelong Learning at the Korea National Open University (KNOU) and was a former director of the KNOU e-Learning Center. She is a biostatistician, and in this role was former president of the Korean Biometric Society (the Korean region of the International

Biometric Society) during 2004-2008, and now the president of the Korean Society of Public Health Information Statistics and also of the Korean Classification Society (a member society of the International Federation of Classification Societies). In her e-learning activities, she was program organizer of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) e-Learning ICT Colloquy in 2006 which took place with 27 countries in Seoul. She was the coordinator of the e-ASEM Network (a follow up

to this Colloquy) from 2004 - 2007 and is an ASEM-ASEF education Hub Advisory member and advisory member of UNESCO Education for All. During her term as director of the KNOU e-Learning Center, she became president of KUACE (Korea University Alliance for Cyber Education) with 89 universities nationwide in Korea. She has published books on many aspects of statistics including Exploratory Data Analysis, Statistical Packages and Data Mining.

New Look for the Re.ViCa wiki!

Getting the Re.ViCa wiki ready for its public launch at the ICDE/EADTU conference has involved not only a re-visit to much of the content of the wiki but also a re-styling of the look and feel of the wiki site itself. Instead of the uniform mediawiki template, www.virtualcampuses.eu now shows continuity with the Re.ViCa layout and touches upon the project's link with Europe. Navigational changes were also



made to increase the usability with for instance duplicate page-related links at the top and bottom of a page for easy editing of the more extensive entries on our research wiki. This work was carried out largely by Peter Andries from project partner ATiT.



Peter Andries

Announcements

Next IAC Meeting

Plans for the next IAC meeting have now been finalised and the updated agenda for the IAC meeting will be sent out to all those participating before the end of May. This meeting will be held on Monday 8th June in the [Maastrichts Expositie en Congres Centrum \(MECC\)](http://www.maastrichtseurope.nl) from 18.00 – 20.30 and will be followed by a dinner, hosted by the project team. The main agenda topic will be a discussion about whether there are any real differences between Virtual Campuses in Europe and those in the rest of the world.

Those attending the meeting will also have a chance to provide their feedback on the 'Lessons Learned': a set of statements summarising some of the most obvious trends and



characteristics defining Virtual Campuses identified by the project team during their inventory work.

In order to extend the reach of this discussion, additional experts have been invited to this meeting, many of them from non-European countries like Brazil and Indonesia in order to validate the work carried out by the project and to avoid an overly Europe-centric discussion!



This meeting will take place during the M-2009 event, the 23rd ICDE World Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education including the 2009 EADTU Annual Conference, to be held on

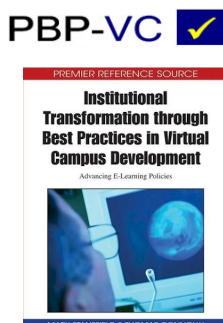
7-10 June 2009 in Maastricht in the Netherlands.

The M-2009 conference is hosted by Open Universiteit Nederland. For more information see <http://www.ou.nl/eCache/DEF/80/137.html>

Bits and Pieces

PBP launch of book

The PBP-VC project (promoting Best Practice in Virtual Campuses) have published their book entitled "Institutional Transformation through Best Practices in Virtual Campus Development: Advancing E-Learning Policies".



It is published under the imprint Information Science Reference (formerly Idea Group Reference) <http://www.igi-global.com/reference/details.asp?ID=33409> with an ISBN: 978-1-60566-358-6; 354 pp; May 2009. Edited by Mark Stansfield and Thomas Connolly, University of Paisley, UK, this book provides cost effective and sustainable learning procedures vital to ensuring long term success for both teachers and student. This book provides the latest research and findings in relation to best practice examples and case studies across the globe and includes a chapter from the Re.ViCa team.

ABED Conference to Focus on Innovation

The 15th CIAED – Brazilian International Congress of Distance Education will take place in Fortaleza, Brasil from September 27-30 and has as its overall theme "The Search for Innovations in the Teaching-Learning Process: Identifying and Disseminating Innovations in Distance Education". Although papers on a variety of related topics are welcome, the organizers are particularly keen to receive proposals that deal with the identification of innovations that demonstrably were successful in distance learning, whether in or out of Brazil, and whose originality and significance can be proven by the use of traditional scientific methods. The submission deadline is 5th, June, 2009 and more information is available from the CIAED web site at <http://www.abed.org.br/congresso2009/>



UNI-QM: A Step by Step Approach to Excellence

The European University Quality Management Tools (UNI-QM) project was set up to provide a comprehensive model and set of tools for quality management in lifelong learning organisations and continuing education. These management tools are based on the EFQM model and information about them can be found on the UNI-QM project website: www.uniqm.net.



Outputs include a questionnaire for self-assessment, a matrix for self-assessment, a matrix for external evaluation and the UNI-QM framework for quality management. An electronic version of those tools is also foreseen. The project also provides specific case studies on different topics: leadership, partnership and resources, policy and strategy, process management and human resources, these case studies coming from top leading institutions in Europe.

Reminders

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

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