# Re.ViCa: Review of (traces of) Virtual Campuses

Re.ViCa is a project funded under the Lifelong Learning Programme of the European Union. It runs from October 2007 to the end of September 2009. It is carrying out a systematic review of institution-wide and cross-institution Virtual Campus initiatives – **Major E-Learning Initiatives** – of the past decade within higher education at European, national and regional levels. *It is vital to stress that these are not restricted to distance learning initiatives, or to those just from public-sector universities or funded earlier by the EU or national governments.*

Re.ViCa is looking not only at currently operational Virtual Campuses, but also at the legacy and impact of those initiatives that have ceased activities – **Failed E-Learning Initiatives**. It is identifying relevant parameters – **Critical Success Factors** – for aiming to ensure success in Virtual Campus deployment. A feature not common in EU projects is that it is analysing selected **non-European** initiatives also. Re.ViCa also organises in-depth discussions to incorporate the input of different interest groups. It has an **International Advisory Group** of experts whose UK members include Professor Gilly Salmon and Terence Karran.

The classification scheme for Virtual Campus case studies is based on a modified MIT90s scheme using eight categories including a specific Learning and Teaching category (which pure MIT90s does not have). Unlike some other schemes used in the past for international comparison, this will be placed soon in the public domain. (Some of the thinking was presented in the paper on MIT90s at ALT-C last year.)

Re.ViCa is led by EuroPACE, an association of universities active in e-learning; partners include an open university, a telematic university, several universities active in e-learning, including KU Leuven, and two specialist consultancies known to UK agencies.

The project is based round the use of a collaborative team of editors on a wiki, using the same software and some of the same naming schemes as Wikipedia and several existing educational wikis including for the Higher Education Academy and Sloan Foundation.

## Countries and programmes

Within Europe the project has produced 21 country reports on HE e-learning in the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Russia , Sweden, Switzerland , and United Kingdom. (See the poster.) Some smaller countries and islands also have reports including Isle of Man and the Channel Islands. Outside Europe the countries covered in detail are so far Australia, Brazil, Canada and South Africa. A rapidly growing list of brief entries on major programmes is also being created based on databases produced earlier by UNESCO and the e-University Compendium. The next piece of work is to produce a first round of case study reports – at this stage the list is confidential but includes open universities, national initiatives and blended learning programmes including from private providers.

## Critical Success Factors

The project is synthesising and updating earlier work on critical success factors for e-universities and more generally for major change (**step-change**) in scale and scope of e-learning.

It is most useful to regard critical success factors as statements "floating in the ether" with a rather general phrasing which can be "brought down to earth" – *incarnated* – in one or more particular schemes for benchmarking e-learning – such as **Pick&Mix**, the e-Maturity Model (**eMM**) or **E-xcellence** (of interest to distance learning institutions).

As an example currently under discussion in the project, below are *some* of the criteria under scrutiny as Critical Success Factors – taken from the current draft Welsh form (ELDDA) of Pick&Mix. See also the Re.ViCa poster.

| PnM No. | Criterion name | Code | Best practice statement (level 5) *(slightly edited for space reasons)* | MIT90s (sub)category |
|---------|----------------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 4 | Usability | USA | All services usable, with internal evidence for this. | Technology |
| 6 | e-Learning Strategy | ELS | Regularly updated e-Learning Strategy, integrated with Learning and Teaching Strategy and related (e.g. DL). | Strategy |
| 7 | Decisions on Projects | DPR | Effective decision-making for e-learning across the whole institution, including variations when justified. | Processes |
| 11 | Academic Workload | AWK | Work planning system which recognises the main differences that e-learning courses have from traditional. | Processes |
| 12 | Costs | CNL | Activity-Based Costing or a system with equivalent functionality being used in all departments. | Processes |
| 17 | Quality Assurance | QAS | Conformance to external quality agency precepts and local guidelines for e-learning within an overarching methodology (EFQM, etc). | Processes |
| 19 | Decisions on Programmes | DPG | Effective decision-making for e-learning across the whole institution, including variations when justified. | Processes |
| 22 | Leadership in e-Learning | LEL | The capability of leaders to make decisions regarding e-learning is fully developed. | Individuals (Leaders) |
| 27 | Time to Market | TTM | Time to market is low compared with comparators | External environment |
| 29 | Management Style | HYB | The management style is a hybrid of academic and corporate, accepted by staff | Individuals (Leaders) |
| 58 | Market Research | MRE | 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. | External environment |
| 79 | Collaboration Roles | COL | The roles and responsibilities of each collaborative partner are clear and the procedures always followed. | External environment |
| 82 | Dissemination Internal | DIN | A systematic managed process of internal dissemination of good practice is in place. | Processes |
| 92 | Student Help Desk | SHD | Help Desk is deemed as best practice. | Individuals (Students) |

## Issues

The project is seeking feedback on which further *relevant* countries it should focus on for case studies. Relevant to the UK, suggestions include Malaysia, Singapore, China (including Hong Kong) and the US. Relevant to other EU countries, Mexico and Turkey are suggested.

It is also looking for further input on critical success factors and for examples of *existing* case studies that the "wiki worker bees" may have overlooked.

For further details, especially for UK and Ireland issues, please contact **Paul Bacsich** at bacsich@matic-media.co.uk. The Re.ViCa wiki is closed to external access until later in the project but there is a project web site with many more details at http://revica.europace.org.