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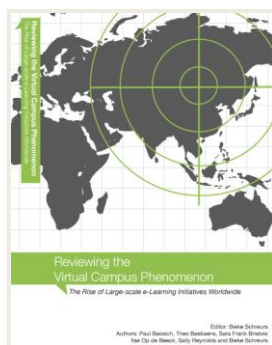
Welcome to our tenth newsletter of 2009 – which we are sending to an extended circle of researchers, academics and others interested in Virtual Campuses.

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

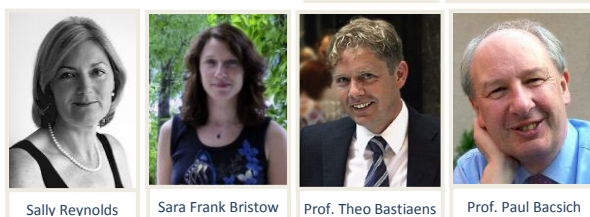
Project News

Handbook Ready for Publication

One of the main outcomes and the most significant publication arising from our work in Re.ViCa is our handbook, which will be published at the end of November. It is called “Reviewing the Virtual Campus Phenomenon: The Rise of Large Scale E-Learning Initiatives Worldwide” and our objective in writing this handbook is to provide policymakers and other interested stakeholders with valid, in-depth information about Virtual Campuses.



The main editors are project coordinator Bieke Schreurs, Ilse Op de Beeck, Paul Bacsich, Sally Reynolds, Sara Frank Bristow and Theo Bastiaens.



In the following article, we summarise what the handbook contains and provide a glimpse of some of the work on which it reports.

Contents of the Handbook

The Re.ViCa handbook on the Virtual Campus phenomenon provides a comprehensive and, we hope, useful appraisal of Virtual Campuses worldwide. It begins with a brief history, sketching the way the term ‘Virtual Campus’ first emerged in the 90’s and then goes on to examine the various ways the term has been defined before arriving at the working definition that was used by the Re.ViCa partnership in their work, which was simply to understand Virtual Campus as meaning a large scale e-learning initiative.

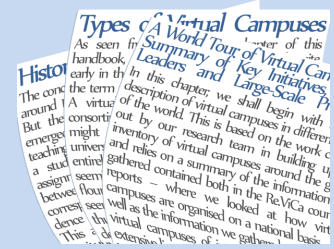
The next section of the handbook deals with the thorny question of categorisation or creating a taxonomy that could be applied to

Virtual Campuses and provides considerable background to the work we did in coming up with the eventual approach to categorisation that has been used. The team chose for an approach that combined a series of different categorisation models; an augmented version of the UNESCO categorisation of “Virtual University Models”, a further set related to the political scope of the initiative, a further set related to the current status of the initiative and two further categories dealing with scale and academic level of the initiative. Useful comparisons are made to other work which should be of benefit to other researchers in this field.

The next section of the handbook provides the reader with a summary of key initiatives, market leaders and large-scale providers in the different regions of the world. While not claiming to be exhaustive, this section certainly covers the main initiatives that are generally recognised amongst policy-makers and researchers alike. Described as a ‘World Tour’ this information is presented on a broad region by region basis and refers to more than 300 different institutions, organisations or networks from about 80 countries. As far as possible we include general comments about the status of virtual campuses in each region as well as significant links and other resources. This section includes a review of some of the factors and issues that can influence Virtual Campuses in different regions, but particularly those in Europe.

The next section deals with benchmarking and critical success factors and provides a detailed description of the work undertaken by the research team in arriving at the final set of 17 Critical Success Factors relevant to success of e-learning in all types of Virtual Campus along with a list of 14 Key Success Factors - these are Critical Success Factors relevant to success of e-learning in one or more subsets (categories) of Virtual Campus - such as private for-profit providers, consortia, etc. This is then followed by a description of the two methods by which an institution can check how well it is conforming to a set of Critical Success Factors – the Case Study (narrative) method and the Benchmarking method. For the case study method, we include a sample of narratives taken from the case study work carried out by the Re.ViCa team.

The handbook also contains useful annexes with, for example, links to key initiatives worldwide, further reading and other materials we hope the reader will find useful.





Growth of Re.ViCa Network

As the formal and funded Re.ViCa project comes to an end, it is a good time to report on the status of the network that has grown up around the project and to describe some of the support provided by members of the International Advisory Committee.

Setting up an International Advisory Committee

One of the most important tasks the project team set themselves when the project began more than 2 years ago was to establish a strong support network of experts from different parts of the world to advise on and help direct our investigations into the Virtual Campus phenomenon. We called this network our [International Advisory Committee \(IAC\)](#) which now includes more than 30 experts worldwide. Their input has been invaluable and has contributed significantly to the outputs of the project. In many cases, IAC members acted as mentors to the project, providing lots of ideas, feedback and suggestions throughout the lifetime of the project, and not only during the face-to-face meetings organised in Lisbon, Berlin and Maastricht. They have also made significant contributions to the wiki and the newsletters and evaluated country reports and case studies. In the case of the handbook, members of the IAC were particularly helpful in helping to shape and expand the descriptions of virtual campuses worldwide, taking responsibility for reviewing the specific chapters dealing with their own region to ensure its accuracy.

Our heartfelt thanks to IAC members for their support and on-going help.



Key Meeting 1 in Lisbon, Portugal before EDEN (2008)



Key Meeting 2 in Berlin, Germany before Online Educa Berlin (2008)



Key Meeting 3 in Maastricht, the Netherlands at ICDE/EADTU M-Conference (2009)

Community of Virtual Campus wiki Users

The [Virtual Campus wiki](#) was launched to the public in June 2009. Since then it has attracted over 8000 visitors and is a growing and highly dynamic resource attracting interest from all corners of the globe. In addition to visitors, in typical wiki style, there is a growing community of members which now totals more than 100 people many of whom support the wiki by adding valuable content and providing editorial input on existing content.

Newsletter Mailing List

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a simple communications vehicle that is also used to build a community of interest around Re.ViCa and to share our work with stakeholder and network representatives, as well as the core and expanded membership of the International Advisory Committee.

This is the tenth Virtual Campus Newsletter published in 2009 which is now received by more than 400 people worldwide and the level of interest has been growing. The impact these newsletters have had has been to extend the reach of our research work. More people now contribute to the Virtual Campus wiki because of the newsletters and at the same time, those contributing the wiki are brought into the community as they are added to the newsletter mailing list. From January 2010 onwards, the Re.ViCa newsletter will appear bimonthly.

The Current Status of the Open University of Japan

We invited International Expert, Dr. Kumiko Aoki, to provide us with a short description of changes taking place in the [Open University of Japan](#) (formerly known as the University of the Air in English) and to outline some of the challenges being faced by this institution, which is well known in open and distance learning circles.



Dr. Kumiko Aoki

The Open University of Japan was established as an independent 4-year institution of higher education in 1981 and started its television and radio broadcast instruction in April 1985.



Currently, the Open University of Japan (OUJ) has 79,056 undergraduate and 5,913 graduate students with 50 study centres all over Japan. OUJ has only one academic department, which is the liberal arts department. Throughout its history, OUJ has focused on liberal arts education rather than specialised professional education. In order to graduate from an undergraduate programme, a student must complete 124 credits, of which between 20 and 30 credits must be taken by face-to-face instruction conducted at an OUJ study centre.



The use of Internet for instruction is still very limited at OIJ which currently provides three major types of instruction: radio or television broadcast, printed materials, and face-to-face instruction. The television broadcast is done via three channels: digital terrestrial broadcasting in the Tokyo Metropolitan area, nationwide communication satellite (CS) broadcasting, and cable television broadcasting. This year OIJ obtained a license to broadcast via digital broadcasting satellite (BS) starting in 2011, which will give OIJ a much wider nationwide coverage than the CS broadcasting.

Due to the prevalence of the Internet, the student demand for making the broadcast lecture programmes available online has been increasing. OIJ started putting streaming videos of some of the lecture programmes online in 2008 and currently 19 video courses are available online to students.

But, the real challenge for OIJ is how it manages its pedagogical transformation: OIJ still relies on the one-way transmission mode of instructional delivery in most parts, which may no longer be very effective in today's digital age. Pedagogical transformation requires for there to be organisational transformation. How well OIJ can transform itself into a modern open university in the next few years may decide how well it can survive in the next few decades.

Project Activities for December

The Re.ViCa partners have agreed an exploitation plan for the project which will enable several aspects of our work to continue for the next 2 years. This plan includes the support and on-going maintenance of the Virtual Campus wiki and the publication of this newsletter. Meanwhile in November, the final reports are being written and the team has been working hard to prepare the handbook for publication.

Presentations and promotional work continue and in early December, Bieke Schreurs will be presenting Re.ViCa at [Online Educa Berlin](#) while a workshop on Critical Success Factors is also planned for the forthcoming [Learning and Technology World Forum](#) taking place 11 – 13 January 2010 in London.



Learning and Technology World Forum

New People in the Re.ViCa Network

Expert for Canada: David Porter, BCcampus, Canada

David Porter is the Executive Director of [BCcampus](#) in British Columbia, Canada. David arrived at BCcampus in 2003, with a mandate to create a web-based suite of services that British Columbia's 25 public post-secondary institutions could use to enhance their online learning capabilities. As a long-time

advocate for the benefits of adapting new technology to deliver educational opportunities, David was uniquely qualified to lead BCcampus in achieving its vision for creating a collaborative online learning agency that supports BC's public post-secondary institutions. With its education system partners, BCcampus identifies, acquires, develops and implements innovative technologies and services that facilitate system-wide connection points for student services and provides collaborative educational services for faculty and instructors. David's extensive experience in the education and training fields has included working with both public and private sector organizations in Canada. He has also been a project manager for industry-based projects in Canada and the US, and has worked as a project leader and consultant for international projects in Mexico, the Caribbean and India.



David Porter

Expert for UK: Terry Mayes, Glasgow Caledonian University, UK



Em. Prof. Terry Mayes

Terry Mayes is an Emeritus Professor at [Glasgow Caledonian University](#) where he was Head of Academic Practice until 2006. He currently leads the evaluation and dissemination team for the Higher Education Academy's e-learning benchmarking and pathfinder programme.

He is also an advisor to the Scottish Higher Education Quality Assurance Agency, for whom he has chaired the enhancement themes on flexible delivery and the first year experience. Terry has a long experience as both researcher and practitioner in learning technology. He was Director of Research in the Institute for Computer-Based Learning at Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh, from its formation in 1990. His early work with teaching machines was followed by 14 years as a lecturer in psychology at the University of Strathclyde, where he researched cognitive aspects of learning. At Heriot-Watt he led a research team that was funded under 5 different EU programmes, by industry, and by UK Research Councils. In recent years he has had extensive experience of policy work with the Scottish Funding Council, the QAA, the Higher Education Academy and the JISC.

Expert for Malaysia: Gajaraj Dhanarajan, Wawasan Open University, Malaysia

Emeritus Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan, the incumbent Vice Chancellor of the new [Wawasan Open University](#), was previously President of the Commonwealth of Learning and CEO of Open University Hong Kong. He holds B.Sc. and M.Sc. degrees from the University of Madras, a



Em. Prof. Gajaraj Dhanarajan



D.I.C. and an M.Sc. from the Imperial College of the University of London and a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Aston in Birmingham, U.K. As one of the world's leading advocate and expert on Open and Distance Learning, he has contributed to global discussion on the subject and further associated with the work of international development agencies.

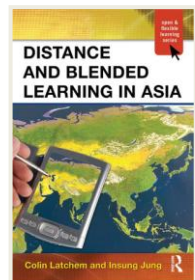
Announcements

OIKODOMOS Outcomes Presented at Barcelona Workshop

The goal of the OIKODOMOS project is to create a virtual campus to promote the study of dwelling on a European scale. This is a project financed by the Lifelong Learning programme with partners in Belgium, France, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. OIKODOMOS is coming to an end and the project team have organised a final workshop to take place in Barcelona, Spain on 10-11 December 2009. For more information visit www.oikodomos.org.



Bits and Pieces



Comprehensive Overview of ODL and Virtual Campuses in Asia

Anyone interested in developments taking place in distance learning, e-learning and education generally in Asia would do well to buy one of the latest publications in the Routledge Open and Flexible Learning Series. Entitled "[Distance and Blended Learning in Asia](#)", it is written by Colin Latchem and Insung Jung and provides a truly comprehensive analysis of open and distance learning and ICT in Asian education and training.

Special Issue of IRRODL dedicated to Open Learning

The November issue of the [International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning](#) is devoted entirely to the topic 'Openness and the Future of Higher Education'. Packed full of interesting articles from such notables as Andy Lane, [OUUK](#) and Terry Anderson, [Athabasca University](#), Canada, this issue covers a variety of open education issues and includes several descriptions of successful projects; see the online [overview](#).

New Publication Arising from Benchmarking & Pathfinder Programme in the UK

Containing a very broad spectrum of contributions, this new book published by the Higher Education Academy entitled "Transforming Higher Education Through Technology Enhanced Learning" contains several chapters of particular relevance to



researchers and others interested in virtual campuses. These include a chapter written by Paul Bacsich on benchmarking and another from Mark Stansfield from the PBP-VC project. This book was edited by a board chaired by Terry Mayes, further information is available [here](#).

UNINETTUNO Provides Live Coverage of Nobel Summit

Re.ViCa partner [UNINETTUNO](#) recently organised an exclusive live online broadcast of the 10th Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates which took place in Berlin on 10 November. Recordings are available [online](#).



Expanding ODL Offer in Portugal

In their October Newsletter, [EADTU](#) published an interesting report on the recommendations of a high-level panel to the Portuguese Ministry of Science, Technology and Higher Education on reforming distance education in higher education in Portugal. This report makes the case for expanding Portugal's distance learning using a variety of means and is available through the [EADTU web site](#) (PDF).

UK Report on Web 2.0 in Higher Education

JISC recently published an interesting report on the findings of an independent Committee of Inquiry into the impact on higher education brought about by students' widespread use of Web 2.0 technologies in the UK. This report identifies a number of critical issues and then goes on to make recommendations in four main areas: learner skills; staff skills; infrastructure; and inter-sectoral relationships. See the [online PDF](#).



Reminders

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

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