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Welcome to our seventh 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

Virtual Campus wiki goes Public

A key output from the Re.ViCa project - the Virtual Campus wiki at <http://www.virtualcampuses.eu> - is now available to the public and the reactions to date have been really encouraging. In this short summary we highlight some of the main features of the wiki and invite you to visit and to add input where appropriate. Anyone can view the wiki but you need to register to add or edit content. All project partners have been involved in developing the wiki but the core team who have been responsible for its development are Paul Bacsich, Sara Frank Bristow, Bieke Schreurs and Nikki Cortoos.



Prof. Paul Bacsich



Sara Frank Bristow



Bieke Schreurs



Nikki Cortoos

The purpose of the Re.ViCa wiki is to provide an inventory and to show the results of a systematic review of Virtual Campus initiatives of the past decade within higher education throughout the world. With currently more than 1,400 content pages – and growing by the day – this wiki is probably one of the largest open resources on the topic of Virtual Campus available today.

Contents

The wiki currently provides information about more than 300 interesting [Virtual Campus Programmes](#), all of which have been categorised.

The wiki also contains a growing selection of [country reports](#), describing the educational context and ways in which decision-makers in these countries have taken steps to address changes brought about due to the emergence of the Information Society. The wiki also contains nine in-depth institutional reports prepared by the project partners.

In addition to the inventory, the wiki also contains significant entries about the nature and realisation of Virtual Campuses generally. This includes an extensive section on a [definition of the](#)

[term Virtual Campus](#), as well as an analysis of what makes Virtual Campuses successful with the work undertaken by the Re.ViCa project team on [Critical Success Factors](#).

Additional Resources

One important objective in our creation of this wiki was to try to provide a single entry point for researchers on the topic of Virtual Campus and so there is a large and growing body of reports and other research outputs and artifacts which are freely available for all to use and augment. These can be found under the wiki page [Publications](#). It includes a list of experts, reports, related networks, related wikis and other research projects active in the same field.

Community

Almost all pages are available for editing once you log in and part of what the project team hope to do is to create an enthusiastic and committed community who will adopt the wiki as their own and help to sustain and grow it in the future in order to create an even larger and dynamic inventory of Virtual Campuses. The wiki contains lots of information intended to support this community including information about the naming scheme being used as well as templates for specific entries like new country reports.

Search Functionality

One of the key features of this wiki is the wealth of search choices it allows and visitors can search for entries using a variety of different search criteria. These include typical search criteria like country and institution as well as search choices based on the categories used by the project team in their research to categorise various sizes and types of Virtual Campus initiatives like Notable E-Learning Initiative (NELI) or Ceased E-Learning Initiative (CELI). Categories used also include those used by others in their investigation of the Virtual Campus phenomenon like the categories used by UNESCO e.g. Newly created institution and Consortium. A complete description of the [types of Virtual Campus categories](#) used in the wiki is available as well. For a full list of all the categories that are available in the wiki, see the wiki page [Categories](#).

Analytics

The number of unique visitors to the wiki in the first full month of operation has been impressive and to date there have been 3,149 visitors from 138 countries or territories. This is particularly encouraging given that we are in the middle of the European

academic summer holiday period. Up to now, the greatest number of visitors have come from the US. Visitors in the first month have looked collectively at more than 16,000 pages and apart from the main page, the greatest level of interest has been in the programmes section. Since the wiki first went online for the closed project community earlier in the project lifetime, there have been a total of 126,235 page views and 16,720 page edits.

Report from UNESCO Conference

Bieke Schreurs, coordinator of the Re.ViCa project, was invited to attend the [UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education](#) held in Paris 5-8 July. In the following short report, Bieke gives a summary of her impressions of this event which was attended by 1450 participants from 155 countries.

This strategic conference debated a wide range of issues including the impact of globalisation on higher education, social responsibility, academic freedom, research and ICT in education. A mix of presentations from high-profile speakers, discussion panels and small thematic discussion groups, there was a strong sense that we are in



Bieke Schreurs

the middle of a revolution in the Higher Education sector brought about in part by the current economic crisis.



One significant trend since the last World Conference in 1998 underlined by speakers has been the growth in the number of private/non-government providers of higher education. I was particularly struck by the

impact and influence the Bologna Process has on global ideas about the curricula and how the development of a common Higher Education area in Europe is being taken up elsewhere as a good practice model. Higher education provision is largely accepted as providing a doorway to economic recovery. China was presented here, as an example. The growth reported in China which has had a six-fold increase in the number of students enrolled in universities since 1998 was impressive. China has also made significant inroads in the use of ICT and Mr. Zhou, the Chinese Minister of Education in China addressing the conference, explained that digital libraries, virtual laboratories and online courses have been making a “profound indelible imprint on higher education” in China. Later, a presentation about Shanghai Television University, showed one interesting approach in China’s massification of Higher Education.

Most speakers addressed the importance of academic freedom, quality and inter-cultural dialogue. They emphasised the need for inter-regional cooperation and collaboration, both between international public Institutions, as well as with private institutions, the wide range of innovative international initiatives and partnerships; and the potential offered by cross-border delivery of education and educational resources. Problems and issues addressed included ‘brain drain’, quality in education, teacher training, lack of teachers, corruption and lack of resources.



While most speakers touched but did not fully address the possibilities of distance teaching and the use of ICT in education, Sir John Daniel, President & CEO of the Commonwealth of Learning, opened the debate into the added value of ICT in education, with his presentation entitled *Internationalization, Regionalization and Globalization: Breaking out of the Iron Triangle*. Sir John spoke about how some universities have responded to recent challenges through a technological revolution that has widened access, improved quality and cut costs all at the same time and how the OER movement is making this revolution possible in small states as well as large; his full speech is available on [YouTube](#). An extended version of this report is available from the Re.ViCa team and you can find the results of the conference in the form of a [Communiqué](#) (in PDF).

Project Activities for September

Given the wealth of conferences taking place in September, it is hardly surprising that Re.ViCa team members will be busy attending several and will be promoting Re.ViCa as part of the message they bring. This includes [ALT-C](#) and the [Cambridge International Conference on Open and Distance Learning 2009](#) in the UK, [ICL](#) in Villach, Austria and the 15th [Annual ABED conference](#) in Brazil.

In between we will be working hard on the final publication of the Re.ViCa handbook which will be published in October 2009. The project team will also meet for the final Re.ViCa project meeting on 22/23 September in Leuven, Belgium.

New People in the Re.ViCa Network

The more people get to know about Re.ViCa and contribute to the work the team is doing, and the Virtual Campus wiki in particular, the more the network grows. We are delighted to introduce you to 3 new experts on the topic of Virtual Campus.



Expert for Canada: Rory McGreal, Athabasca University



Prof. Rory McGreal

Rory McGreal is a Professor and Associate VP, Research at [Athabasca University](#) – Canada’s Open University. Previously, he was the executive director of TeleEducation New Brunswick, a province-wide bilingual (French/English) distributed distance learning network. Before that, he was responsible for the expansion of Contact North/Contact Nord (a distance education network in the remote region of Northern Ontario – serving remote native reserves and small mining towns). Rory was the founder of the world’s first e-learning website for TeleEducation NB and one of the world’s first metadata learning object repositories. He is the recipient of the Wedemeyer Award as a distance education practitioner.

Expert for Malaysia: Mohd Osmail Ramli, MARA University of Technology

Mohd Ismail Ramli is currently the Director of the Institute of Education Development (the Institute for Distance Education) and Associate Professor Faculty of Accountancy, [Universiti Teknologi MARA](#) Malaysia. He teaches Comparative International Accountancy and supervises master and doctorate students at the Faculty. Prior to joining the Institute he was the Head of Strategic Planning Monitoring Unit of the University. He graduated from the same University with a bachelor degree in Accountancy in 1984 and pursued his MSc in Accounting and Finance in 1987 at the University of Stirling, Scotland. He returned to the United Kingdom in 1996 for his PhD at the University of Plymouth. He innovates various management concepts and tools to be used by the University and other organizations. His most outstanding innovation is the *Hadhari Scorecard* for which he won a Gold Medal Award of Merit at the INPEX 2007 Pittsburgh, USA.



Professor Mohd Ismail Ramli

Expert for Israel: Sarah Guri-Rosenblit, Open University of Israel

Prof. Sarah Guri-Rosenblit is the Director of International Academic Outreach and the Head of Graduate Studies in Education at the [Open University of Israel](#). She got her PhD from Stanford University in 1984 in education and political science. Her areas of expertise are focused on comparative research of higher education systems, distance education and e-learning. She has published books and dozens of articles in these fields. She has participated in the last



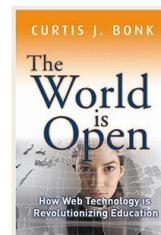
Professor Sarah Guri-Rosenblit

decade in many international and national forums on various aspects of higher education. She was selected in 2005/6 as one of the 30 New Century Scholars in the Fulbright Program on: *Higher Education in the 21st Century: Global Challenge and National Response*. Since 2003 she has been a member of the Scientific Committee of Europe and North America in the UNESCO Forum of Higher Education, Research and Knowledge. She is also a member in expert evaluations panels of HESC (Higher Education and Social Change) under the auspices of the European Science Foundation, and the Bellagio Conference Center of the Rockefeller Foundation. Her full CV and a list of publications, keynotes and conference presentations can be found at her [web site](#).

Announcements

New Book on How Web Technology is Changing Education

Dr. Curtis J. Bonk’s latest publication *The World Is Open: How Web Technology Is Revolutionizing Education* is attracting a great deal of attention from the higher education sector globally. Published by Jossey-Bass/Wiley, this new publication records the way in which digital technology is transforming the very nature of education as well as the way in which people can access educational resources and services. Find out more from [The World Is Open web site](#).



New Book on Digital Technologies Published

Prof. Sarah Guri-Rosenblit from the Open University Israel has recently written a new book entitled *Digital Technologies in Higher Education - Sweeping Expectations and Actual Effects*. Published by Nova Science Publishers in March 2009, this book challenges many of the assumptions about the take-up of ICT in today’s universities and raises a number of issues and questions about how well higher educational institutions are adopting digital technologies. More information available [online](#).

OBHE Event in Malaysia

The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education is hosting a Global Forum on Cross-Border Higher Education entitled *Global Connections – Local Impacts: Best Practices, Models and Policies for Cross-Border Higher Education* in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 21-24 October 2009. For more information visit the [OBHE Global Forum web site](#).



21st Annual WCET conference in Colorado, USA

The annual WCET conference takes place 21 – 24 October in Denver, Colorado, USA and looks set to debate many issues of interest to those involved in Virtual Campuses around the world. For more information, visit the [conference web site](#).



Bits and Pieces

Learnovation Survey

The Learnovation project supported under the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme is carrying out a series of activities aimed at stimulating a consensus-based definition of eLearning and Technology-Enhanced Learning. One of these activities is an online survey which you are invited to complete where you are asked to vote on the validity of 26 statements related to future priorities for increasing creativity and innovation in European lifelong learning. The survey takes about 10 minutes and you will find it [here](#).



New Report Shows Bologna Progressing Well

A recent report written by David Crosier and Philippe Ruffio and published by the EACEA shows that in general terms the Bologna process is progressing well in Europe with European universities well on track to achieve the central objective of creating the European Higher Education Area by 2010. According to Commissioner Ján Figel' "Greater compatibility of the different national European education degree structures has been achieved through significant reforms, and now the challenge is to work on quality, namely the content and profile of qualifications to ensure that they are meaningful and relevant within and beyond national boundaries." Although the report describes the main tools being used to achieve a European Higher Education area, it is telling and also somewhat worrying, that there is no mention of Virtual Campuses and related topics at all in this report. This report, entitled *Higher Education in Europe 2009: Developments in the Bologna Process* is available from the EACEA web site as a [PDF](#) (also in [French](#)).



Universities are Ill-Prepared for the Future

While on a recent visit to Australia, innovation guru Sir Ken Robinson had some harsh words for traditional universities claiming they were still based on out-moded models. His book *The Element*, published earlier this year, looks at the careers of many well-known people and shows how badly served they were by traditional universities. To view a video of an extensive and riveting interview with Sir Robinson while he was in Australia, visit the [Education.au newsletter issue](#).



Sir Ken Robinson

Plea for Academics to Dump Classroom Computers

In a thought-provoking recent [article in the Chronicle](#), José A. Bowen, Dean of the Meadows School of the Arts in the US has challenged his colleagues to "teach naked"—by which he means, without the aid of machines. José's primary complaint is about the use of PowerPoint which he describes as stifling creativity and merely boring students and academics alike. You can see an interview with José about his ideas and how he believes that by taking computers out of classroom, we are making way for a revolution in classroom experience. Read the article [here](#).



Professor José A. Bowen

Tony Makes it to Sydney (Nova Scotia!)

We are delighted to report that well-known Virtual Campus guru and Re.ViCa IAC member Tony Bates has succeeded in his goal to fly his Cessna 172 as one of 100 planes travelling from Boundary Bay, Vancouver, to Sydney, Nova Scotia to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first powered Canadian flight. The event is called the Cross Canada Century Flight and to follow Tony online see his [blog](#).



Reminders

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

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