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A Very Happy New Year to all Members of our International Advisory Committee and Welcome to our First Newsletter of 2009!

Project news

The project team are currently reviewing the country reports in the wiki which you will find listed here: www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Country_reports.

We are using an online evaluation form developed and managed by project partner Grégory Lucas from University of West-Hungary, College of Geoinformatics. In this evaluation, partners are checking to see if the information contained in the country reports is of appropriate quality and whether any vital aspects are missing. Once we have completed this

internal evaluation, we will be inviting external experts familiar with the countries themselves to provide their feedback including members of the IAC! To give you an example of what we are doing, we have chosen a sample from Denmark. This country report was originally prepared by project partners Nikki Cortoos and Sally Reynolds from ATiT, Belgium. You can read the full report here: www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Denmark

Here is the part dealing with Virtual Initiatives in Denmark:

Introduction

Currently in Denmark, the term 'Virtual Campus' has fallen somewhat out of use and does not exist as an easily recognisable or identifiable term referring to any institution or particular practice. Several initiatives have been launched in the past including the Danish Virtual University and the term 'open' is used now far more to imply the use of technology to support a greater access to higher education. Furthermore several different government ministries have an interest in making university education more accessible and they each have different strategies and approaches, no centralised co-ordination amongst these programmes seems to exist. One significant player is the National IT and Telecom Agency which is run by The Ministry of Science Technology and Innovation. This agency has a national programme for e-learning for universities and research institutions. They provide seed money for specific courses and try to also encourage institutional management to become involved. 50% funding to support the development of open courseware is available from this agency not only to universities, but also to SMEs and other types of organisation. Approximately half of those applying are funded and demand for this seed funding is increasing.

The Danish Virtual University and Continuing Education at Danish Universities - A Virtual Approach

The Danish Virtual University (DVUNI) was conceived in 2000 as Denmark's response to the e-education boom in the late 1990s. The project, however, was never completed and was quietly wound up following a series of strategic failures. Following a re-think, the new Danish portal for professional development called 'Continuing Education at Danish Universities - A Virtual Approach' was launched in November 2003. The portal was established by the 12 Danish universities and encompasses all the institutions' professional development courses. The initiative is part of wider attempts to establish a closer co-operation between industry and universities, and the idea has been well received by Danish companies. The portal includes traditional campus-based courses as well as online provision (with a mix of programmes in Danish and English). In July 2004 the portal had almost 1,600 courses and 130 programmes leading to a formal qualification.

This section continues with a list of different institution-based initiatives that can broadly be described as fitting within our definition of Virtual Campus, which you can find here:

www.virtualcampuses.eu/index.php/Virtual_Initiatives_in_Denmark. This report has been reviewed by project partners Anna-Kaarina Kairamo and Ulla Rintala from the Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli of Helsinki University of Technology who described the information as follows: *“Basic / good information in most sections except for the 'information society' part. Requires more focus on the last two sections (Country's HEIs in the information society & Virtual initiatives in HE)! Additionally, there could be more focus on higher education in general in the education descriptions. Now there is all sorts of information about the countries' grading systems etc., which we think is irrelevant.”* ATiT are now reviewing the information contained in the Danish country report in an effort to improve it where possible taking into account this feedback.

IAC members are warmly invited to join this process and we will be contacting specific members of the IAC with help on certain countries – but do feel free to check the reports that are there already and let us have your feedback!

History of Virtual Campus

As you know, one of our tasks is also to write up a short history about the term **Virtual Campus**, When was it first used? How it has evolved? What does it mean in different countries, etc... During our meeting in Berlin, this already started quite a lively exchange! We are really keen to get your input about when and where you started to use the term first.

Morten Flate Paulsen tells us he was already using the term in 1987 – here is proof from his 1987 article entitled [“In Search of a Virtual School”](#) which we link to [here](#) with permission of the Editor of T.H.E. Journal.

Can you do any better?

Announcements

In this section we are including several announcements and links which we hope you will find interesting.

Leaflet

The Re.ViCa team have published a new leaflet on the web site which you can download in PDF format:



http://revica.europace.org/brochure_revica_website.pdf

Facebook Group

We have also launched our very own Facebook group, if



you would like to join then follow the link on the front page of the Re.ViCa web site here: <http://revica.europace.org/>

RSS Feeds



We are planning to set up a series of RSS feeds to sites we find interesting related to Virtual Campus, here are some of the sites under discussion:

- **Innovate**, open-access, peer-reviewed, online periodical published bimonthly: www.innovateonline.info
- **eLearningeuropa**, lots of news about what is happening in generally in the European eLearning world with quite some emphasis upon Higher Education: www.elearningeuropa.info
- **eCampus News**, very US based but can be interesting: www.ecampusnews.com
- **Higher Education Update**, all about what is happening in Higher Education in Australia published by edna - Australia's network of the education and training community: www.edna.edu.au/edna/go/highered/highered_news
- **Sloan C View**, a publication from the Sloan Consortium in the US which provides peer-reviewed articles of interest: www.sloanconsortium.org/publications/view/index.asp
- The **International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning** is a refereed, open access e-journal which is managed by Athabasca University in Canada: www.irrodl.org

Are there any you would like to suggest?

And here are some bits and pieces we found interesting in recent weeks:

- From OECD's latest news information on Institutional Management in higher education programmes, this is



about assessing quality in Higher Education:
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/37/24/41895081.pdf>

- The publication of the third edition of the Erasmus & Jean Monnet info-kit that provides up to date information on European activities in the field of higher education:

http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/erasmus/infokits_en.htm

- Article on the impact of the Google Generation on Higher Education written by Denise Haywood and Judy Hardy from The University of Edinburgh, UK:
www.elearningeuropa.info/directory/index.php?page=doc&doc_id=12957&doclng=6



Reminders

Don't forget to send us your cost claim for the Berlin meeting! If you have not yet done so, these should be addressed to Ilse Op de Beeck, EuroPACE ivzw, Kapeldreef 62, 3001 Heverlee, Belgium, Tel: +32 16 32 78 15, ilse.opdebeeck@europace.be

Photos from IAC meeting



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

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