REPORT ON THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TECHNOLOGIES TO SUPPORT TEACHING AND TRAINING, "ONLIE-EDUCA", BERLIN, DECEMBER 2013

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The 19th meeting of the annual International Conference on Technologies to Support Teaching and Training ("Onlie-educa") took place in Berlin on 4–6 December 2013. The event attracted 2195 delegates from 91 countries. The focus of this year's conference was interdisciplinarity, particularly now that the teaching process is free from geographical and linguistic limitations. Participants talked about no-cost MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses), which are available without limits for anyone in the world who wants to deepen their knowledge.

Another widely discussed topic was 'Big Data' – large databases which, when properly utilised, can help greatly in both the learning process and the creation of new tools. As a material for AI (artificial intelligence), Big Data generates valuable results for researchers, teachers, and students, as well as commercial applications.

In addition, topics that dominated almost every session concerned the role of social networks in education, online identity, teamwork, and safety, and the opportunities such networks bring. Other topics covered:
- The role of technology in teaching;
- Serious games and virtual reality;
- Mobile learning;
- The age of knowledge;
- Courses tailored to student's needs and abilities;
- Security and data protection;
- E-books;
- The teacher's role in education with the use of new media;
- Education and business.

During the conference there was a session on "the best in telemedicine", during which the following works were presented:
- Herwig Rehatschek, Medical University of Graz, Austria: 'How to minimise teachers' administrative efforts to zero with virtual lessons';
- Monika Bombol-Lagha, Lech Sliwa, Krzysztof Kochanek, Henryk Skarzynski, Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing, Poland: 'The use of telemedicine and eHealth tools in diagnostics, treatment, rehabilitation and education in the activity of the World Hearing Center';
- Martine Oudenhoven, Leiden University Medical Center, The Netherlands: 'Towards user-centered communication: looking beyond the tools';
- Emanuela Ovcin, COREP, Italy: 'TASTE system: telepathological assessment of histopathological and cytological techniques';
- Kristina Jung, Kasseler Stottertherapie, Germany: 'Telemedical fluency-shaping treatment of stuttering: method, platform, case study and statistical results'.

Herwig Rehatschek and Emanuel Ovcin covered the use of 'virtual microscopy', which is a scanning microscopy device using the Internet and an e-learning platform to send scanned images to students. Apart from saving time, the benefits include the opportunity for groups of people to work together on a single preparation without risking its destruction.

Monika Bombol-Lagha gave a presentation on behalf of the Institute of Physiology and Pathology of Hearing, Poland. She outlined modern methods of education in the implementation of the Institute's training program, carried out in cooperation with national and international scientific and academic institutions. These training sessions are conducted in the form of both intramural training courses and distance learning via the Internet (so-called e-learning). The Institute has implemented a base training station and associated telemedical programs, both of which work together within the newly formed World Hearing Center. They form an effective education tool. The work presented methods, opportunities, and benefits offered by the use of these telemetry solutions in the World Hearing Center's teaching activities.

Martine Oudenhoven outlined the use of social networks in helping students at the Leiden University Medical Center to learn. Kristina Jung highlighted a commercial project on conducting therapy at a distance for people with stuttering problems; communication is over the Internet while participants can stay in their chosen environment, for example, at home. The moderator of the session was Martin Riemer, University Medical Center Hamburg-Eppendorf (UKE), Germany.

During the 'Talking head session' – a medical part of the conference – participants learnt about continuing medical education for the healthcare market, a project by Stefan Tippmann, Springer Medizin, Germany. Springer Medizin runs a comprehensive web portal which supports doctors fulfil their lifelong duty to improve their professional skills. The project is aimed at professionals, companies planning to use new technologies in education, and clients from other interested parties. The portal is in German, being targeted to the local market, and the courses offered are approved by the German Ministry of Education. Currently, Springer Medizin does not plan to expand the portal to international markets.