

Media & Learning Brussels 2012: Media as an Agent of Change in Education and Training

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The Media & Learning Brussels 2012 Conference was organised by the Flemish Ministry of Education and Training and media company ATiT with the support of the European Commission, DG Education and Culture. It took place on 14-15 November 2012 in the Ministry Headquarters in Brussels and involved 282 participants from 41 countries who came together to discuss the impact of media in teaching and learning.

The conference revolved around three main themes:

- *Mapping future trends and developments in media-enhanced learning in all sectors;*
- *Boosting skills and competences in media production and use and re-use of media-enhanced content;*
- *Tracking the importance of media literacy and wisdom as fundamental building blocks in the creation of innovative, inclusive and future-proof education and training.*



Based on the shared goal of understanding the role and impact of media in the teaching and learning process, the conference provided participants with an opportunity to *consider how media can play a role in enhancing the impact of education and training to better meet the needs and demands of learners*. A core objective of this conference is to support a growing community of people from different educational sectors interested in media-supported learning.

The organisation of the annual MEDEA Awards prize-giving ceremony to coincide with the Media & Learning Conference provided an opportunity for participants to see for themselves excellent examples of media-supported learning which include both professionally produced as well as user-generated examples from all over Europe.

Media & Learning 2012 was sponsored in part by Federica at the University of Naples, TechSmith, Microsoft, Adobe, Mediasite, Echo360, Promethean, Polycom and SignMedia.

The programme

The 2012 conference programme included *screenings* of educational media productions, *discussion opportunities* that began online before the conference and *presentation sessions* where leading experts and practitioners shared their experiences, insights and know-how. Several *workshops* were included which provided participants with an excellent opportunity to enhance their competence in specific relevant areas. A total of 112 people from 17 countries contributed to



the programme in 28 different sessions. *Networking* was supported by the Pigeon service which practically all participants signed up for. *Sessions in the main auditorium were streamed* and many people followed parts of the conference online.

All 9 finalists in this year's MEDEA Awards showcased their entries in screening sessions and many conference participants joined invited guests for the MEDEA Awards Ceremony where this year's winners were announced with '**And the Oscar goes to ...**' made by the 5th Primary School of Alexandroupolis in Greece winning the MEDEA Award for User-Generated Educational Media, and '**Quand la colère fait tomber les masques**' from Université Paris 1 in France winning the MEDEA Award for Professionally Produced Educational Media. Four special prizes including the Audience Favourite Prize were awarded as well.



The conference featured an *exhibition by agencies and projects active in the media and learning sector*, including KlasCement and Jonatan Academy, European Schoolnet, Lifelong Learning Programme Projects supported by the European Commission, iMinds, the Agence Wallonne des Télécommunications and EFQUEL. The conference *Play Area* where participants could try out products and services was particularly popular this year. It featured equipment and services from companies including Adobe, Microsoft, Promethean and Echo360 as well as examples of educational games, an educational 3D demonstration and an educational application based on the 'Internet of Things'.



There were two popular *pre-conference events*. The first, organised in collaboration with the Teaching and Learning Unit in KU Leuven was a *workshop on lecture capture* which attracted over 60 participants. The second was a visit to the *Future Classroom Lab* which was organised by European Schoolnet.

Discussion themes

The conference's keynote speakers presented a broad palette of views. During the opening, the role of government was described by **Micheline Scheys**, the Flemish Ministry's Secretary-General of the Department for Education & Training, and **Xavier Prats Monné**, the Deputy Director-General for Education at the European Commission. Both were cognizant of the fact that Europe needs to stay competitive in spite of the economic down-turn, and that financial investments need to be allocated to achieve the competitive strategies that can secure Europe's place on the educational world stage. **Guus Wijngaards** analysed trends in respect to educational technology as described in the specialised Horizon Report of the New Media Consortium and announced that talks were ongoing to create similar trend mapping reports for the European context.

The broad selection of keynote speakers included voices of warning, expressed in the views of controversial social media watcher and author **Andrew Keen**, who argued that democratisation of society is not necessarily a positive shift considering the disappearing middle-class. He pointed to the dangers of massive amounts of data and information that are un-curated and unverifiable, and are essentially shaping the end of education as we know it. Reputation is the score that teachers need to

distinguish themselves with in the flat, radically democratised world of the 21st century. **Edith Ackermann** from MIT gave a scholarly discourse on the merits of how children are helping us change the way we read and write, and how we adults can start to see through the misconceptions we have about children's development as digital natives.

Author and educational scientist **Pedro de Bruyckere** took an anecdotal bottom-up approach in analysing the current situation of mass online behaviour. He alerted us to consider if we are not in a state of chronocentrism, the feeling that we are living in special times. He cautioned that the debate on technology in education often talks about generations as homogenous blocks of people, thereby losing sight of the differences between individuals. **Anton Bollen** from TechSmith spoke about the concept of Flipping the Classroom, a model in which the student is tasked with going through the material on their own, often through video, and where classroom time is used to discuss and target the questions that students are confronted with in their study of the subject. **Marci Powell** from Polycom talked about the opportunities that have become available to teachers in the new world of media-supported mass collaboration while researcher **Brian O'Neill**, who works with EU Kids online, spoke about the role the European Commission can play in providing a safe environment for children on the Internet. He mentioned the policy space as a delicate balancing act between opportunities and risks.

Mapping Trends, Technology and Developments



One of the main topics discussed at the conference was *media literacy* and how it can be implemented into mainstream education. There was a clear tension between media literacy as a literacy of tools and applications and media literacy as a critical thinking skill related to media and media use. This brought up the topic that media literacy is in some ways all-pervasive, and needs to be implemented as such (across several subjects for example). A session *on transmedia* illustrated the increasingly popular concept of providing content through multiple channels.

The discussion led by the VISIR project team and EFQUEL mapped out the reasons for the *slow uptake of digital media and media literacy by the teaching community*. The discussion identified that the underlying fear of change, to fundamentally shift education to the 21st century, is due to the lack of appropriate infrastructures in schools; the lack of supportive initiatives that train teachers in technical skills; the lack of appropriate digital content for 21st century teaching, and the strict school standards that inhibit innovation.

Innovation was also the theme of the *Creative Classrooms* session. Upscaling the classroom seems to be one of the ways that the EU commission is planning on facilitating more innovative teaching practices. **Yves Punie** of IPTS explained that creativity in teaching is not limited to a few components but must be an all-encompassing approach, whereby the physical infrastructure is just one aspect amongst many. **Riina Vuorikari** of the European Schoolnet further explained how implementation of a future classroom must bridge a development from successful locally conducted projects to a large-scale European-wide phenomenon.



The conference indicated that digital media in education is currently converging on the use of video in a number of ways. Approaches that include *lecture capture* and *flipping the classroom* were demonstrated across primary, secondary and university education. The concept of flipping the classroom, or the inverted classroom, was taken to the next level by **Bram Faems** from the portal site KlasCement. He presented a project with special needs children who learned to use video to teach others what they know.



Similarly, peer-to-peer teaching was successfully applied by **Steven Ronsijn**, winner at the MEDEA Awards in 2008. His students at Sint-Lievenscollege, Belgium, who were about to graduate from the college, had a chance to design and create lessons for younger students entering the college. The use of video was one of the primary resources the students used to teach others. **Erik Woning** from Kennisnet, The Netherlands, an organisation that supports teachers in developing ICT applications

for the classroom, laid out the benefits of flipping the classroom as a form of blended learning, which provides better social engagement by freeing up time and encouraging one-to-one student-teacher communication. The conference further demonstrated that these innovative uses of video in the classroom are certainly not isolated incidences but follow a general trend that has been picked up on by keen software developers.

The discussion on *lecture capture in higher education environments* covered topics ranging from the availability of facilities to the extent of user control given to the individual teacher. For larger groups as in the universities of Leuven and Manchester, the inverted classroom model is proving to be successful, by extending the access of material to students outside traditional meeting hours. Different technical lecture capture technologies were discussed, from out-of-the-box systems to fully open source packages, including their related business models. Manufacturers of lecture capture systems indicated that they are working on extending the flexibility of their solutions to allow capturing other forms of teacher-student and peer-to-peer interaction.

The value of a *learning-by-doing pedagogical approach* came equally to the forefront as a trend in the current paradigm shift of how we educate. As already discussed, students' video production featured as part of the flipping the classroom concept, but also film, websites and social media factored into this approach. One of the most polished examples came from the film school Next Station, Denmark, where **Susanne Wad** and **Torben Larsen** teach hands-on film production via the project filmlinjen.dk, focussing on the "making-of" aspects, to practically learn principles of film-making. **Kate Shanahan** from the Dublin Institute of Technology, Ireland, presented Clicknews, a unique resource for and by students living in socially disadvantaged areas. Language played a role in **Andreas Sexauer's** presentation. Representing the Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany, he demonstrated the innovative use of mp3 players in a project with a local school where students produced their own audio clips to enhance and improve the study of English vocabulary.



Several games put students into producers' roles for added value by spanning across digital competence, reasoning skills and creativity. **Jeffrey Earp** from ITD.CNR, Italy and **Kristian Kiili** of the Tampere University, Finland, presented Magos, the game-authoring environment of MAGICAL while

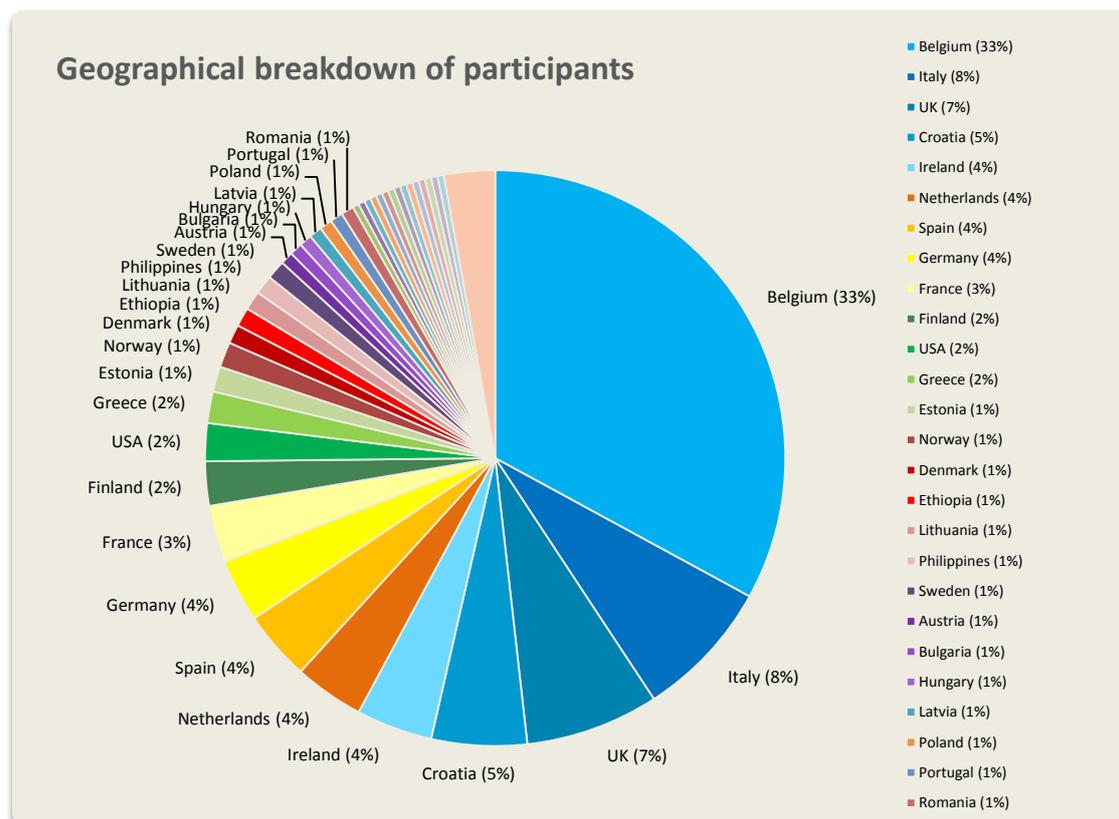
discussions led by **Lizzy Bleumers** of IBBT-SMIT and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium, tackled questions on the expectation of learning outcomes and how to best assess learning in this context.

In conclusion, integrating innovative educational approaches into existing teaching models and paradigms is a slow process. The conference showed the efforts of the educational community to integrate digital media into curricula on a large scale, in order to go past the stage of sporadic islands of excellence. The diverse target group of the Media and Learning conference provides an ideal starting environment for ongoing and effective knowledge sharing and creation around these issues and would benefit much from more interaction with researchers in media studies and human computer interaction.



The participants

Media & Learning 2012 attracted people from different backgrounds, with experience across all levels of acquaintance with digital media, ranging from novices to media-literate educators and broadcasters.



Participants were asked for their feedback after the conference and the responses have been very positive. When asked about the quality of the programme, 75% responded that it was excellent or very good and when invited to assess the quality of the organisation of the conference, 97% rated it as either excellent or very good.



Participants were also asked for their general comments about the conference and here are some of the comments they made:

"The organisation was great, but much more importantly, the quality of participants was exceptional again this year. M&L is the place where some of the most innovative EDU trends, ideas and initiatives are being discussed and presented in the European space. It was that way last year, and this year did not disappoint. I left with plenty of insights and inspirations as well as promising contacts", Anton Bollen, TechSmith

"For me it was a very enriching experience which offered new insights and excellent opportunities for networking", Jens Vermeersch, GO! Education of the Flemish Community, Belgium

"The organisation was simply perfect and the standard of the delegates was great", Michela Ott, ITD-CNR, Italy

"The friendliness of all. Great atmosphere. Excellent seminars" Theo Kuechel. TKC Education Consultancy, UK

"The whole atmosphere and range of topics available", David Seume, The Ashcombe School, UK

"I love to meet the experts for various fields and listen new technology and education", Jun Song, University of Luxembourg

"The friendly atmosphere and good care", Steffen Töppler, Freie Schule Kassel, Germany

Recordings and presentations available online

Most presentations of speakers, as well as recordings of all the keynote presentations and most of the presentations given in the Hadewych Auditorium over the two days of Media & Learning 2012 are now available for viewing in the [2012 programme](#).

Save the date! Media & Learning Conference 2013 on 12-13 December 2013

In 2013 the fourth Media & Learning Conference will take place on 12 and 13 December 2013 in the Headquarters of the Flemish Ministry of Education. To be notified of conference updates, you can subscribe to the monthly newsletter [Media & Learning News](#).

