



Media & Learning

D4.2 MLA Annual Conference 2023



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Where Pedagogy meets Media

Media & Learning 2023: Where pedagogy meets media was organised by the Media & Learning Association and KU Leuven in Provinciehuis, Leuven on 20-21 June 2023 and involved 267 participants from 18 countries and 111 different institutions, who came together to discuss best use of media in the teaching and learning process in higher education.

The aim of the conference was to highlight the latest pedagogical and technical developments, review institutional policies and learning strategies through a highly interactive agenda packed with inspiring talks, demos, discussions, best practice showcases and hands-on sessions accompanied by an exhibition showing the latest technologies, services and tools that universities and colleges can adopt to transform their use of media.

The following topics underpinned the conference programme:

- Sharing best practice amongst centres for teaching and learning on tackling the challenges of promoting effective and inclusive learning.
- Staff training and support including the tools and strategies applied across the campus to exploit the use of media for teaching and learning purposes.
- Technological advances in hybrid classrooms featuring the latest developments in audiovisual services to support teaching and learning.
- Higher education embracing or replacing XR? updated research findings, working practices that make sense, upscaling XR projects, IP and data privacy can no longer be ignored.
- Exploiting the power of podcasting for teaching and learning at scale and the support services that make podcasting happen.
- AI and how it can be applied to enhance media supported learning in higher education.
- Management and re-use of media based teaching and learning resources including the promotion of OER in higher education and the re-use and re-working of MOOCs.
- Interactive teaching formats and assessment practices in higher education that exploit the value and impact of media including a review of best practice in MOOCs.
- The use of media in teacher education and training including 360° recording, visualisations and modelling videos.
- Advances in audiovisual production practices designed to get the most out of media in teaching and learning settings.



Our theme *Media & Learning 2023: Where Pedagogy meets Media* took into account one of the most challenging tasks that educators face, namely, how to incorporate media in all its manifestations into the learning process in the most efficient and effective way.

This year's conference was sponsored by **Panopto, Biamp, Kaltura, Canon, Rapidmooc, Ubcast** and **Sony**. The exhibition space, where participants were invited to meet the sponsors, was open throughout the conference. Furthermore, every exhibitor was given the chance to present 1-minute inputs during the opening plenary session, introducing their workshops that were held over the course of two days in the Tech Track.



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THE PROGRAMME

The 2023 conference programme included presentation sessions where leading experts and practitioners shared their experiences, insights and know-how, screenings of MEDEA Awards finalists and educational media productions, workshops, discussion opportunities and demonstrations of different tools and services in the exhibition and demonstration area. Over 80 people from 17 countries contributed to the programme in 35 different sessions.



This year's plenary speakers were:

- **Jeremy Nelson**, University of Michigan, USA
- **Anneleen Cosemans**, KU Leuven, Belgium
- **Michel Beerens**, NewMedia Centre, TU Delft, The Netherlands
- **Alexandra Mihai**, Maastricht University, The Netherlands
- **Bart Rienties**, The Open University, UK
- **Carl Boel**, Thomas More University of Applied Sciences, Belgium

Nine hands-on 75 to 90-minute workshops included sessions on digital educational escape rooms, multimedia learning design frameworks, recording immersive 3D virtual twins of learning spaces, podcasting as a learning tool, strategies for working with academics, designing a HE course with the assistance of AI tools, Artificial Intelligence tools in the educational media production process, a research approach to Where Pedagogy meets Media, barrier-free design for teaching and learning. Moreover, seven 30 to 90 minute long workshops were run by our sponsors. A max of 35 people took part in each and the feedback about the hands-on nature of these workshops was really positive.

The press room was used for screenings on 20-21 June to showcase the entries of MEDEA Awards 2022 finalists, the EDIT Challenge 2022 winners, documentary shorts *Migrant Lives in Pandemic Times*, as well as showcases of best practice classroom videos, video resources created as part of teacher training activities by PDST, NTNU and FAU. In total 5 screening sessions were organised.



The organisation of the annual MEDEA Awards to coincide with the Media & Learning Conference provided an opportunity for participants to see for themselves excellent examples of how media is used to support learning at all levels of education. All 7 finalists in this year's MEDEA Awards showcased their entries and many



conference participants joined invited guests for the MEDEA Awards Ceremony which took place in Leuven City Hall. This year prizes were sponsored by **SONY** and presented by **Bieke Verlinden**, Alderman of care and welfare, community work and cemeteries, who welcomed everyone to the city of Leuven and to the historic town hall. This year the MEDEA Award went to *Mediajungle:Super Fake Safari* submitted by **Niels Bloembergen**, Mediajungle, The Netherlands. The great surprise of the evening was that both the Special Jury and Audience Favourite Prize were awarded to the



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same entry: *Stolpersteine NRW*, submitted by the Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Germany and represented by **Elena Riedlinger**.



CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Peter Lievens kicked off the conference's proceedings with a word of welcome and some notes on how media and learning fits in with the strategic priorities of KU Leuven on going digital and truly international.



The keynote of **Jeremy Nelson** delved into the challenges and opportunities of scaling up XR education in Higher Education. He talked about strategies they had employed at the University of Michigan to bring XR technologies campus-wide. Some key success factors he identified were the use of XR Innovation Projects (where lead faculty are involved with content development) and the integration of student fellows into the teams working on XR projects. He also looked at current actions to lower the threshold to work with XR technologies, such as platforms that allow people to create their own projects without developers. He insisted on the importance of building a network of champions in different faculties and across the organisation (such as legal, IT, Library, etc) so that XR becomes a viable option next to many others. One of the key success factors are the partnerships the university has created with industry leaders, allowing them to invest in and work with state-of-the-art on a long-term basis. Another key issue is to include accessibility considerations directly from the start.

Anneleen Cosemans presented the KU Leuven approach to offer first-line support for teachers to stimulate educational innovation, with contact points in the faculties. KU Leuven Learning Lab is the Learning-Action network for community building, and realising articulated policy decisions together. It offers a 3 layered support structure, with a website with co-created materials, an academy and support services. She also talked about KU Leuven's approach to staging innovation, through seed projects, scale-up projects and implementation projects.



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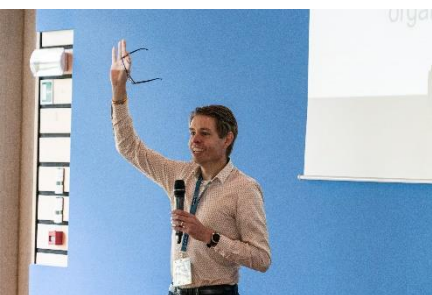


As the head of the New Media Centre at TU Delft, **Michel Beerens** reflected on the journey his university has taken through visual formats for knowledge clips. Starting off with Talking Heads where lecturers talk through content, more and more context was added to make the clips more engaging and visually appealing. However, this also involved higher productions costs and are more labour-intensive. He also talked about some challenges, including how to manage content storage, how quality control of the content can be maintained and how to deal with the variety of formats.

Alexandra Mihai talked about the changing role for Centres of Teaching and Learning (CLTs) at many universities. She talked about how these centres need to balance their target audience of academics with other actors at the university, and this under changing priorities set by university management - creating a neutral space. The strategies they are employing after the experience of the pandemic include taking up their role as bridge builders between groups at the university, offering a safe space for academics and others to talk together and reflect and take up a lighthouse function, where they signpost everything that is going on on-campus, and can be a first port of call for many.



She also highlighted their important role in offering space for innovation. Future challenges for CLTs are taking up their seat at the table with university administration, but maintaining their neutral role and accessibility to teachers and future-proofing themselves against changing priorities of university management. Alexandra also indicated opportunities to connect with other centres regionally, where resources can be pooled, and not everyone needs to develop the same expertise.



Bart Rientes talked about current research in learning design, learning analytics and the benefits of using learning analytics at scale. Describing its uptake at the Open University (UK), he identified the challenges of exploiting learning analytics as being in the actual adoption, and in sense-making. Prototype studies at the Open University have shown that using learning analytics can increase retention. LA dashboards are greatly useful for teachers, but they need to learn how to use them. Especially, linking learning analytics to learning design (where he quoted that 69% of what a student does in a week is determined by teachers!) seems to be very promising. Some questions he posed for

the future, is not only how to scale up LA, but also how to ensure that it remains beneficial for learning; he also wondered how we can use these analytics directly with students, and also make sure that ethical policies are in place to use learning analytics responsibly. He pointed to the learning analytics ethics policy created by the Open University that is [open](#) to be used by anyone.

Carl Boel presented the outcomes of his study on the potential of immersive technologies for soft skills, using an immersive environment from BodySwaps. He talked about use cases for training where immersive technologies were highly useful (e.g. where training is impossible, or impossible to do safely, where training can be unlimited and personalised with feedback). The outcomes of the study showed that students and instructors think these technologies have their place, where they are useful, easy to use and enjoyable - but that they need the right knowledge and resources needed. Some critical questions from the audience included if we should



be worried about industry players such as META who are funding this type of research.



The **closing panel** included Michel Janssen (SURF), Peter Ingle (Panopto), Carl Eltervaag (NTNU), Monika Theron (Leiden Learning & Innovation Centre (LLInC)) and an engaged audience.

Some reflections from the panel included that this conference brings together a real media and learning community, filling in a genuine need for conversation around these topics. This is apparent from the highly engaged audience throughout the @MandL conference, with space for good conversation and a good vibe.

Regarding technologies, the panel mentioned that whereas XR seemed to be a specialised topic with limited application in previous years, XR seems here to stay and will get bigger in the next few years. Video is pervasive and although minimal in this year's edition, it was expected that Generative AI will be more present next year.

Some critical reflections included the lack of focus at this year's conference on being creative, apart from being effective, where technology use seems to be primarily situated. Another critical point was that instructional designers seem to have been neglected. Also, the voice of policy makers seems to be missing.

Some potential topics for next year were already mentioned including copyright issues related to AI, some contributions from the SIGs, and a greater focus on vocational education.

Workshops and interactive sessions



One of the really popular features of the conference this year were the nine small group workshops that took place throughout the agenda. These sessions covered a variety of different subjects and were fully booked. One of the first of these led by **Evert Binnard & Hanne Tollenaere** from KU Leuven took participants through the **Co-creational Educational Multimedia Production Framework** developed under the European TransACTION! Project. Participants were invited to put their own course ideas together and try out the framework for themselves. At the same time, **Barbora Orlická & Roland Radlinger**, from the Center for Digital Teaching and Learning at the University of Graz, Austria kept a small but highly motivated group busy with the design of their own personal **Digital Educational Escape Room (DEER)**.

Rebecca Oldfield & Alex McGaughrin Cross from University of Manchester, UK brought along their own Matterport camera and used it to set up a demonstration and practice session on recording immersive 3D spaces. Workshop participants tried out the practice of recording using this camera for themselves and discussed the practicalities and challenges of doing so in educational settings. The workshop on **Podcasting** as a learning tool led by **Cecille Plomp Bogaard** from Saxion University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands was particularly popular where Cecille generated a great deal of discussion about the value and nature of podcasts by focusing on provocative topics such as whether creating podcasts in education requires a support team or not.



These popular workshops and interactive sessions continued on the second day. With the smile-provoking title of **'Let's have a Footnote at 2'33''**, experienced educational video producer **Carel Jansen** led a discussion on the trials and tribulations of working with scientists in making video content. As Carel pointed out, scientists are often not used to the media production workflow and can feel insecure - sometimes even stubborn! With a focus more on the soft skills that educational video producers need, this session provided lots of tips and tricks to others working in this area. At the same time, **Andrea Balz & Iris Nemec** from UAS Technikum Wien in Austria



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led a workshop on **Barrier-free design for teaching and learning** where they led participants through the different steps in the training provided to university employees to increase the sensitivity of employees with regard to the requirements and needs of people with disabilities – both staff and students. This training is made up of theoretical and practical parts including an introduction to how participants can experience different sensory and motor disabilities. The aptly named workshop ‘**A research approach to where Pedagogy meets Media**’ led by **Yvonne Crotty**, DCU, Ireland provided an opportunity to find out more about the Educational Entrepreneurial Approach (EEA) developed by Yvonne that enables practitioners to create multimedia resources for their workplace that are underpinned by sound pedagogical insights. EEA consists of four phases: Exploration, Understanding, Creating and Transforming and this session included a discussion into how educators can incorporate media into the learning process in the most efficient and effective way.

AI was never far from everyone’s thoughts over the two days of the conference and the two workshops specifically on AI were particularly successful. The first entitled **AI Tools in the educational media production process** was led by **Carlos Turro Ribalta** from Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, Spain. Carlos was joined by experienced educational media producers **Marco Toffanin, Dom Pates, Steven McCombe & Markus Tischner** who shared their first-hand experiences of using various generative AI tools in the educational media production

process. While many of these tools are still in the development phase, its clear this is a topic that we will be coming back to in the future according as tools mature and our knowledge of how to use them best increases. The second AI session entitled ‘**Designing a HE course with the assistance of AI tools**’ took a somewhat broader approach. Moderator **Janne Länsitie** from Oulu University of Applied Sciences in Finland along with **Sonia Hetzner, Adel Qaddoumi & Monika Theron** led an exchange amongst participants to share experiences and discuss how AI tools can assist productivity in designing new courses and learning materials as well as exploring the process of prompt engineering.



Demo sessions

Participants of the conference were invited to walk around our demo area, on both days of the conference, to ‘visit’ teams demonstrating a variety of different learning tools, environments and services making the most of recent developments including advances in XR. Most of these demos were of pre-market, tools and. In total 7 different tools were presented. These sessions were interactive and allowed participants to meet developers and learn more about their educational tools, their development, and ask questions.



Presentations available online

Many of the presentations given, along with supplementary materials, conference impressions and photos, are available for viewing on the [website](#).



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PARTICIPANTS

The Media & Learning Conference 2023 attracted 267 people from different backgrounds, with experience across all levels of using media in higher education, ranging from newcomers to highly experienced practitioners. They included educational technologists, heads of university media departments, academics, researchers, service developers and providers, innovation experts and a host of specialists from all across the university spectrum.

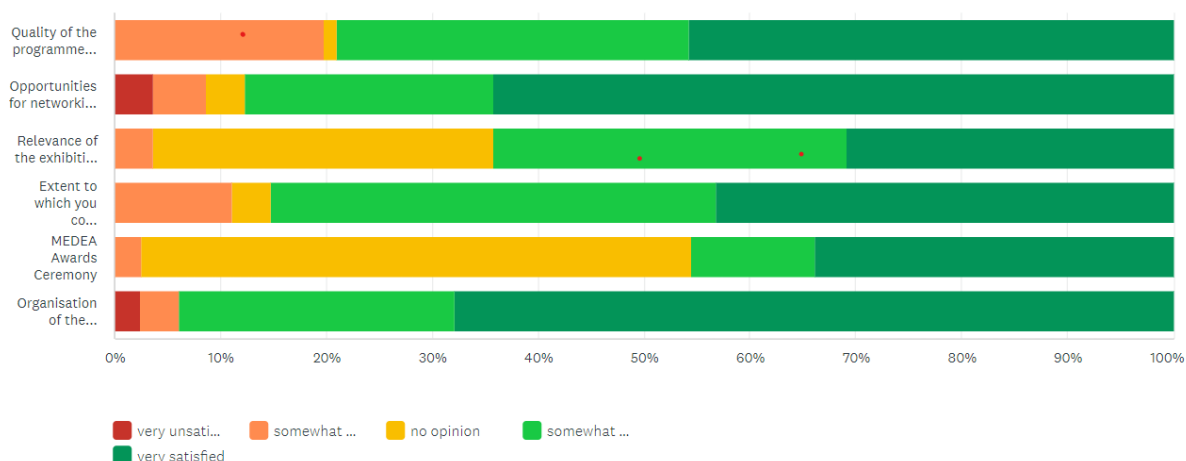
Participants came from 18 different countries from 111 different institutions.

Participants were asked for their feedback after the conference and the responses have been very positive based on a response from almost one third of participants (81 out of 267).

When asked about the quality of the programme, 79,01% responded that they were either very satisfied or somewhat satisfied. When asked to rate the extent to which they could gather new information and skills, 85.19 % they were satisfied or somewhat satisfied.

Please rate your level of satisfaction on a scale of 1-5 where 1 = very unsatisfied and 5 = very satisfied

Answered: 81 Skipped: 0



When invited to assess the opportunities for networking during the conference, 87,66% of the attendees indicated that they were somewhat satisfied or very satisfied.

We asked the participants which aspect they liked the best and here are here are a few comments from them:

- *The collegiate network, the organisation, and the warm welcome.*
- *Everything. Can I say that? :) The M&L community is large and very diverse, and hosts an immense amount of experience and knowledge - many people are literally operating at the cutting edge. Bringing this vast pool of talent together is a feat in itself, and the atmosphere is always extremely friendly and open. It is a really great and fun meeting to network in. Leuven is a wonderful location.*
- *Broad variety of topics and speakers and very good networking opportunities.*
- *Inspiring keynotes about use of media technology, examples of best practice. General friendliness of everyone involved.*
- *The impressive range of topics available within the range of this year's theme. I also enjoyed the different formats : conference & workshops.*
- *I really enjoyed the practical workshops I attended, like the barrier free education one and the one about the escape room.*
- *The networking, some workshops. It was a mixture of great content and then not so great. The staff was lovely. The food was great.*



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MEDIA AND LEARNING ASSOCIATION AGM

The Media and Learning Association launched in 2012 had its Annual General Meeting during the conference. This AGM was open to all and included a summary of activities carried out by the Media & Learning Association (MLA) in 2022 as well as an overview of the activities that are either underway or planned for 2023. While everyone was welcome, only registered and paid-up members could vote. The Association voted unanimously to accept the report and financial figures for 2022. Furthermore, our board members, **Yvonne Crotty** and **Janne Länsitie**, have completed their terms and **Marco Toffanin** was unanimously voted in to join the Board.



FIGURE 1. MEDIA & LEARNING BOARD MEMBERS

Earlier on the same day, a closed discussion session took place to enable members of the association to discuss future collaboration and cross border projects.

The organisers of Media & Learning 2023 would like to thank their sponsors and exhibitors most sincerely for their help and support without which the conference would simply not be possible.



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