

GUEST EDITORIAL PREFACE

IADIS 2012 Mobile Learning Conference: Mobile Learning – Where to Next? Accelerometers and Motion Sensors Will Tell

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Welcome to a special editorial of the International Journal of Mobile and Blended Learning devoted to the 2012 IADIS Mobile Learning conference which was held in March 2012 in Berlin, Germany. This conference series was inaugurated in Malta in 2005 and it is the longest standing annual international mobile learning conference after MLearn. The Berlin edition was the 9th and received 146 submissions from authors from 34 countries representing most European nations and every other continent. The conference theme was ‘Mobile Learning –Where to Next?’

The conference call was set against the background of the developments of mobile learning as a field of research. In particular, emphasising how developments in mobile learning research and practice have been triggered by technological innovation. To name but a few examples, the arrival of laptops afforded new models of technology integration and accessibil-

ity within the classroom and freed technology from the ‘imprisonment’ of computer rooms. The appearance of handheld devices offered potential for the exploitation of contextual outdoor learning and freed learners and technologies from the confinement of classrooms. The emergence of mobile phones democratized access to technology, revolutionized the concept of user generated content and freed learners and technologies to experiment with technologies outside classrooms and schools.

The incursion of multi-touch tablets into the mobile learning scene is the latest technological ‘wave’. Though in its early stages, sensationalist reporting of the iPads *for Learning*¹ initiatives already advocates that iPads will displace playdough and finger painting in Kindergartens, and the Horizon report 2011 states ‘electronic books are beginning to demonstrate capabilities that challenge the very definition of reading’².

In light of these somewhat 'over optimistic' forecasts, the organisers of IADIS 2011 Mobile Learning Conference intended to focus on the relevance and need for mobile learning research and practice founded upon learning theories, focused on pedagogically meaningful approaches to mobile learning and systematically evaluated with appropriate data collection and analysis tools.

The topics of the conference included pedagogical methods and theories for mlearning, social software for mlearning, gaming, simulations and augmented reality for mlearning, mlearning in diverse settings ranging from formal to informal, educational and work based, user studies, the development of tools, technologies and platforms, as well as speculative ideas regarding the future of mlearning.

Two contributions of this issue are revised and extended versions of papers presented at the 2012 IADIS Mobile Learning conference. The first article, 'An interactive mobile lecturing model: enhancing student engagement with face-to-face sessions' by Olutayo Boyinbode, Dick Ng'ambi, and Antoine Bagula, presents the MOBILect tool. This is a lecturing tool that offers students 'vodcasts' (video casts) of lectures and the facility to comment on the vodcasts and aggregate the comments. Thus, the authors argue it facilitates three types of interactions: 1) Student to teacher; 2) student to content; 3) student to student. The premise for the development of MOBILect is the difficulties encountered for interaction in large lectures. The work continues by presenting the evaluation of MOBILect with nine students and concludes that the tool has the capacity to engage students with the lecturers' vodcasts to foster deep learning.

The second paper, by Helen Sissons, Danielle Mulrennan, Thomas Cochrane and Richard Pamatatau, is entitled 'Journalism 2.0: Exploring the impact of mobile and social media on journalism education'. The article provides a detailed description of an intervention aimed at exploring the pedagogical changes in journalism education that web 2.0 and mobile devices enable and the changes in journalism that social

media bring about. The work describes a four-stage process: 1) establishment of a community of practice of journalism lecturers; 2) exploration of pedagogical applications of mobile social media; 3) mobile learning projects undertaken by students; 4) publication of the experiences by the lecturers. The paper provides a good overview of the work conducted in a number of courses and institutions over a few years. It concludes by claiming that the integration of social media in the studies of journalism reported: a) has had a significant impact on the classroom experience; and b) their four-stage model is an example of how to implement pedagogical change supported by mobile social media.

Two other revised and extended papers from the conference were published in the previous issue of IJMBL (volume 5 number 1). These were 'Professional Development Enhanced in Numerical Methods Course Based on B-Learning: Design and Follow Up', by Francisco Javier Delgado Cepeda and 'Development of a Browser-Based Mobile Audience Response System for Large Classrooms', by Monika Andergassen, Victor Guerra, Karl Ledermüller and Gustaf Neumann. Commentary on these papers is included in the editorial for that issue.

The four papers arising from the IADIS 2012 mobile learning conference seem to share a number of commonalities they all: describe experiences aimed at third level education; are concerned with enhancing face-to-face lecturing scenarios/experiences; and use the lecture theatre/traditional scenario as the epicentre of the experiences reported. Although, the previous is not representative of the overall work presented at the conference it makes one wonder whether mobile learning is becoming less mobile and more classroom/teacher centred. Inmaculada Arnedillo-Sánchez Guest Editor IJMBL

ENDNOTES

- ¹ <http://www.ipadsforeducation.vic.edu.au/>
- ² <http://wp.nmc.org/horizon2011/sections/electronic-books/>