



Motion on Digital media in Higher Education & Research with a European perspective.

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6 Today's use of digital media has become a natural routine in almost every aspect of our
7 professional activities, increasingly touching upon our private lives. This digital
8 revolution has brought about immense increases in effectiveness and led to other
9 significant synergies. Most importantly were digital media, especially the manifold use of
10 the internet by the broader public a precondition for the globalised world as we know it
11 today. Thus a large number of transnational companies have rebuilt their administrative
12 structures to fully take advantage of the new technologies' potential. In Higher Education
13 this development has only started. The potential resting in these structures is immense -
14 with respect to access to higher education, to the flexibility for students and staff alike,
15 to the efficiency of funds and research materials.

16 ***Libraries & Journals***

17 Libraries are part of the very core of a University. Without a well equipped library
18 research is unthinkable. The definition of a library has evolved with technological
19 progress over the last two decades and today oftentimes the existing libraries do not
20 conform to the new requirements. At the same time the various fields have become
21 increasingly complex and are facing internationalization and international competition.
22 Keeping pace with the extra-university world demands the use of digital media. That is
23 for a couple of reasons: Identifying and accessing sources needs to be as swift and
24 uncomplicated as possible - time is money, this principle, slightly modified, also applies
25 to research in higher education institutions. Books and journals in print require room,
26 money and are additionally bound to a single location, to a single user and are
27 furthermore oftentimes lost. The necessity for digital media use in libraries encompasses
28 not only the creation of an intra-university digital catalogue combined with a software
29 system for borrowing administration. It goes far beyond. Especially the European
30 dimension is vastly neglected. Many Universities still have isolated systems, that are not
31 connected with those of other institutions, frequently not even with those in the same
32 country.

33 The establishment of a European university-library register would contribute greatly to
34 the efficiency and depth of research. EDS calls upon the EU-commission and the
35 ministers responsible for higher education & research of all countries that are part of the
36 European higher education area to develop and implement such a register as soon as
37 possible In the long term solutions for the digitalization of books and journals and their
38 availability for research purposes must be developed in order to further strengthen
39 research output, stimulate innovation and ensure economic growth.

40 ***Lectures***

41 For centuries have students gone to lectures to take down what professors told them in
42 order to have a feasible study book. This self production obviously bonded students
43 attention to taking notes instead of paying attention to the content, instead of thinking
44 along with the professor, instead of actively participating in discussions. This necessity
45 has disappeared. Digital media - the internet at the forefront - provide us with the
46 technology to provide students with these documents at zero additional costs. The focus
47 of lectures provided to students needs to shift to a student centered perspective where
48 anything that is conducive to learning achievements is arranged for. Providing lecture
49 scripts for participants online is most definitely such a measure conducive to learning
50 achievements.

51 Educating students for a working environment where flexibility and extra-curricular
52 activity is demanded as a prerequisite, it is only natural that also the institutions
53 providing the education provide a system that displays a similar amount of flexibility.
54 This includes the recording or streaming of lectures for students who, for whatever
55 reason cannot be present in the lecture hall. Of course, a tool for interaction and for
56 asking questions also from the distance will need to be integrated in order to make the
57 system complete.

58 Such a system must not be put in place as a complete replacement of actual lectures.
59 Distant learning cannot substitute everything. Social skills, presentation skills and
60 networking can only evolve when students are present and have the opportunity to
61 interact.

62 ***Online Discussion Platforms / Intra-University social platforms***

63 Quasi as an extension of lectures an official digital space for continuing debates and
64 unanswered questions should be provided by the university. Professors and other staff
65 should monitor the big discussions taking place there and, if necessary set wrong
66 approaches straight.

67 Students at Universities often have great motivation and ideas for projects they would
68 like to put into practice, but fail when it comes to the realization, either because they
69 don't have the required funds, or even more trivial, because they cannot find anyone else
70 ready to contribute. A closed social network, focused on semi professional student
71 networking and project development will do much to bring students of larger faculties
72 closer together and to increase the success rate of good projects in development.

73 Universities should therefore strive to adapt an integrated system like fronter.com (e.g.
74 University of Tromsø, Kingo, of Norway) or itslearning.net combining at least the
75 essential necessities in digital education:

- 76 • Time Schedules
- 77 • Forums
- 78 • Lecture notes
- 79 • Exercise hand-in
- 80 • Important messages from professors
- 81 • Digital exercises (e.g. tick tests)

82 ***University e-government***

83 It works for states, it works for some universities in some fields, yet the use of e-
84 government in many fields of Higher Education Institutions is still far behind. It is simply
85 a question of efficiency and unbureaucratic administration. Signing up for classes and
86 exams, the printing of certificates and diplomas are all tasks that can be made available
87 without an employee with speaking hours. That simplifies the lives of students and young
88 graduates and helps HEI save money in the long term.

89 European Democrat students (EDS), the official student organisation of the EPP, Thus, for
90 all the aforementioned reasons, emphasises the necessity for the implementation of
91 digital media into the practice of and administration of higher education. Aware of the
92 legal situation of intellectual property law and the growing global competition, EDS
93 proposes the following concrete projects to be implemented into all HEI wherever this is
94 not already the case:

- 95 1. Implementation of e-government for the University- administration
- 96 2. Enlarge and modify information sources (especially for prospective students and
97 freshmen)

- 98 3. Create academic intra- and inter institutional social networks
- 99 4. Create an academic online discussion platform, monitored by professors & other
100 staff
- 101 5. Recording and streaming of lectures for students that cannot be present,
102 including interaction tools (cf "i-tunes U")
- 103 6. Providing students with lecture scripts (student centered teaching)
- 104 Europe has set in the Lisbon strategy the target to become "the most competitive and
105 dynamic knowledge based economy in the world". This target was reiterated in the EU
106 2020 strategy. However to date no significant step towards achieving this goal has been
107 taken. This is one small but important proposal. Let's start acting and implement it.