eLearning Present Activity in Hungary

This document gathers the answers facilitated by the Hungarian member of the ICT and education in the acceding countries working group of the European Commission, Andrea Kárpáti, karpatian@axelero.hu to the questionnaire created by the portal elearningeuropa.info http://www.elearningeuropa.info

Preliminary remark: issues addressed below require substantial research and analysis that I was unable to do, given the time constraints in answering the questionnaire. All the answers reflect my personal opinion only. They do not necessarily coincide with Hungarian official positions. My answers to the questions may be quoted exclusively when this condition is mentioned.

1. **Which are the leading institutions related to e-learning in your country and their websites?**

   All major Hungarian *universities* have centres for distance education that also act as research centres. Some examples:
   - Budapest Technical University, Budapest http://www.universities.com/Schools/T/Technical_University_of_Budapest.asp
   - Eötvös University http://www.edutech.elte.hu
   - Lajos Kossuth University, Debrecen http://www.klte.hu/
   - Szeged University http://www.universities.com/Schools/S/Szeged_University.asp

   Research and development centres for e-learning, e.g.:
   - Institute for Automation and Computing, http://www.sztaki.hu/

2. **In order to help the international audience to identify the key issues in the e-learning (or ICT) strategies of your country, could you please mention the main documents about surveys, studies, Action Plans, etcetera?**

   - *Hungarian Information Society Strategy* (original title: Magyar Információs Társadalom Stratégia, http://www.mits.hu (in Hungarian)
   - *Ministry of Telecommunication and Information,* Mission, actions and sponsored projects, http://www.ihm.gov.hu/ (partly in English)
   - *Ministry of Education,* mission and projects on ICT in public and high education, http://www.om.hu/, (English pages)
   - *Hungarian Schoolnet,* Mission and projects (original name: Sulinet Programiroda), http://www.sulinet.hu/ (English pages)
   - *Hungarian TEMPUS Office*, reports on vocational education projects funded by ICT-related EU grants, http://www.tpf.hu/ (English pages)
   - *Association of Hungarian Telecottages,* (original name: Magyar Teleházak Szövetsége), mission, task description and activities, http://www.telehaz.hu/ (in Hungarian)

   Research reports:

   - Information Society Research Centre, (original name: Információs Társadalom és Trendkutató Központ) http://www.ittk.hu/ (English version)

- Institute for Educational Research (original name: Oktatáskutató Intézet) http://www.oi.hu/ (partly in English)
- Institute for Public Education (original name: Közoktatási Intézet) http://www.oki.hu/ (partly in English)
- UNESCO Centre for ICT in Education, Eötvös University, Faculty of Sciences, http://edutech.elte.hu/ict (full English version)

3. **Where should other European countries willing to collaborate with your country in educational matters be addressed?**

Proposal for a Network of Clearinghouses for Educational Content (excerpts from a text developed by the Hungarian Ministry of Education, Department of Information Technology, May 15, 2004, and presented by Ádám Horváth, adam.horvath@om.hu Senior Executive of the Department at the ICT Conference of the EU Irish Presidency, Dublin, May 15-16, 2004

"Content development efforts could be more targeted and efficient if a *network of clearinghouses for educational content* was set up to monitor and evaluate products, publicise best practice and catalyse further development in the field. Through building up a European repository of high quality digital teaching materials, we may reduce highly expensive parallel development, considerably accelerate the dissemination of best practice in computer-supported education, enable under financed schools to make full use of educational computing, and ultimately contribute to the democratisation of ICT culture in the schools of Europe.

The Hungarian approach
Hungary entered the Age of Digital Teaching Aids with a national *learning content management software project* launched in 2003. It makes high quality digital teaching aids freely available for both students and teachers. We hope to establish an internationally unique *Digital Knowledge Base* that covers the whole of our secondary curriculum. *Expandable and reusable multimedia and interactive tools* in this pool incorporates all areas of learning. They may be customised and adapted by ICT-oriented teachers to suit their own learning philosophies. The Hungarian Schoolnet is currently developing high quality digital teaching materials available for students, teachers and parents through this searchable Internet database. - From 1st of September 2004 all the secondary school, students in Hungary will be able to reach digital content from most of their curriculum. Content development however is a never-ending process. We would like to continue with developing content for primary schools as well.

We have found that there are many ways to get digital educational content:
- Developing by ourselves
- Having developed by content developers, educational publishing companies
- Buying ready made content (translating if necessary)
- Buying ready made content can be much cheaper due to a wider consumption potential, but you can find many problems, for example:
  - Unfinished property right management problems,
  - Unfitting technical requirements and standards,
  - Different pedagogical methodology, etc.

We would like to provide a solution for solving these problems through the **establishment of the Hungarian Clearinghouse for Educational Content** as a part of the eCampus Program of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of

Telecommunication and Informatics, that will **collect, catalogue, clear for copyright, evaluate, and eventually translate** best examples of digital teaching aids into different languages. This centre will serve as a non-profit brokerage system, an archive, a research institute and an educational facility at the same time. Experts associated with the Clearinghouse would search for high quality products, negotiate copyrights for sharing, provide a translation, organize local field tests and in-service (distance education) courses for teachers and policy makers on most efficient use. Regular web-based and hard copy publications would feature selections of shared software complete with assessment results and indications for use.

We would like to invite governments and major commercial software producers in the area to consider the exchange of some of their products for the mutual benefit of establishing a large array of tried and tested, reliable software and content for schools and adults alike according to the 4th Recommendation of Euorpean eLearning Summit Declaration[1].

We are also preparing an independent national accreditation system which would be able to qualify different educational contents from different sources whether those are compatible with the Hungarian educational system or not. This means: not only the Ministry of Education or the Hungarian Schoolnet will be able to develop or to buy and publish appropriate content, but there would be a chance for the national online educational content market.

Initiative for EU member countries

We invite member states of the European Union to consider launching this initiative and initiate the establishment of a range of similar centers. If educational software development becomes a co-ordinated international effort, ICT will stand a better chance to realize its potential and modernize education.

We propose to set up the European Centre for Exchange of Digital Educational Content (ECEDOC) under the European Council of the European Union. This Centre should provide the EU member states with recommendations:

- on defining and classifying educational content,
- on suggested technical standards
- on suggested meta data system
- on managing property right issues
- on international accreditation of digital educational content
- on sharing best practices about learning content management systems and content
- on unified applying for eContent tenders
- on establishing national clearinghouses.

The Centre should provide the Council with:

- recommendations on eContent tenders
- recommendations on eLearning tenders

[1] „Budgets for learning resources must allow institutions to make substantial purchases of digital content. Digital content, no less than traditional resources, must also be seen as essential elements in effective learning delivery that deserve to make equal demands on institutional budgets. The creation of small learning 'objects' (based on open standards) could facilitate the development of new business models for content development and encourage innovative procurement mechanisms. To ensure that a critical mass of quality content is readily available in all Member States, the private sector should pursue design and development models that facilitate content localisation and adaptation; commercial platforms for exchanging metadata tagged content produced by educators, institutions and publishers could support this process. New approaches should be explored to copyright and IPR for collaborative content development involving public private partnerships." (europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/ elearning/doc_en.html)

We propose that all educational digital database and content, developed by EU and state funding, should be accessed by EU citizens for free for non commercial and educational use. **If we all pay for it, we all should be able to reach it.**

Sharing of content will also help to close the digital divide and increase the equity of opportunities for less advantaged countries in making full use of the potentials of info-communication technology to reach the goals of the Lisbon Strategy."

4. **What are your short-term expectations in terms of education and ICT after joining the EU?**

   Through regular and systematic sharing of information, we hope to make methods of digital pedagogy and educational content accessible for all.

5. **What do you think are the main obstacles for e-learning in your country? What are the strong points?**

Obstacles:
pre- and in-service teacher education does not yet substantially incorporate methods of digital pedagogy. Schools lack system managers and other technical support. Finances insufficient for PC and software upgrade and maintenance.

Strong points:

promising, large national projects that promote good pedagogy as well as increase equity of access. Two examples:

Example 1: The ***Digital Knowledge Base***, a searchable database of about 6000 (!!!) tried and tested digital learning objects (LOs) encompassing all school disciplines and managed by the Hungarian School Net (SULINET) Office is a service that facilitated most the proliferation of ICT-based methods in education. This government sponsored, ever expanding free, Internet-based software repository is complete with user notes (teachers explaining how to make best use of the LOs), lesson plans and supplementary materials (e.g. handouts and exercises) provides a unique chance

- For teachers of less affluent schools to access high quality, reliable and suited to special Hungarian needs digital teaching aids free of charge;
- For novice ICT users, a well-organised set of ICT-supported teaching options to try and adapt;
- For students and parents, a large pool of amusing and educational learning materials that can be used as a supplementary knowledge base, help with homework or an opportunity

Example 2: Successful functioning of a Hungarian invention: the network of ***telecottages*** or telehouses. A telecottage is a community and service organisation that ensures access to information and communications tools, information and services, provides users professional and trained help and addresses additional local community needs. It is a multifunction ICT service centre with open profile designed for small villages, in other words it is 'a community telecommunications service house'. Tele-houses in Hungary emerged from active civil initiations resulting in mass movements. At present there are more than 400 telehouses in operation. www.telehaz.hu