



EC e-Learning Programme

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<http://www.edugi.net/eduGI>

February 1, 2006 – July 31, 2007

eduGI Final Report – Executive Summary

In recent years, many funding opportunities on European and national levels resulted in numerous e-learning initiatives. Their success was described, for example, by the contributions to the EUGISES conference 2004. The interesting point was: Successes were reported in papers and presentations; however, most of the obstacles turned out during the discussions afterwards:

- a. E-learning can provide high-level teaching and learning, although not all expectations were fulfilled, e.g., there is a tendency from pure online-learning to blended learning.
- b. High-quality e-learning means high costs.
- c. The years of extensive funding for new e-learning projects are over.
- d. Many funded project lack a business model for the “time after the funding”.

The development and provision of high-quality e-learning courses is expensive and hardly manageable for single institutions. Our approach is to re-use and share existing resources: each partner of a consortium develops an e-learning course, which bases on an existing regular course and (digital) teaching materials. Each partner provides this course – including teachers – without charging a fee to the partners’ students. In return, each partner receives courses on a non-fee basis. The eduGI consortium consists of the following partners providing the following e-Learning courses:

1. University of Münster, Institute for Geoinformatics, Germany (Coordinator; Course: Project management)
2. ISEGI- Instituto Superior de Estatistica e Gestao de Informacao – Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal (Course: Geospatial data mining)
3. BW University München, Germany (Course: GI standards)
4. University of West Hungary (Course: Data acquisition)
5. ITC Enschede, Netherlands (Course: Visualization)
6. Harokopio University, Athens, Greece (Course: Geospatial databases)
7. Uppsala University, Sweden (Course: Virtual excursions in earth sciences)
8. TU Vienna, Austria (Course: Data quality)

All e-Learning courses have been developed by the eight partners. In general, the quality of course concept, teaching materials, and course performance were appreciated by the students and the receiving institutions. Due to different semester schedules, the courses were performed and exchanged in a wide range of time, before, after, or within the foreseen time framework. One course (U Uppsala) has started in Feb 2007, but due to organizational problems and an expedition of the teacher to the Artic, it will be terminated in Oct 2007. All teaching materials are published at the project website www.eduGI.net/eduGI.

The most important and positive result was the validation of the business model for virtual mobility. We were able to develop and teach eight e-Learning courses with limited resources. Further positive experiences were:

1. Each partner developed a course where he/she is an expert in. So the development time was rather short, and the content was up-to-date.
2. The students' motivation was high.
3. Most of the partners will be able to re-use the courses and materials within their own institution.

Some issues caused problems and some require improvements:

1. New technology and didactics evoked some effort to get accustomed with it.
2. Students' evaluations of the e-Learning courses were mostly positive but quite heterogeneous, depending on the varying performance of the provided courses and the different acceptance of handling a new way of learning and different learning/teaching styles.
3. Simple but crucial problems were different semester schedules in different partner countries.
4. A better integration of the external courses into the own study program is required.

The key project result is the validation of the business model and sustainability of partner network and its exchange of e-Learning courses. Seven of eight partners (except Uppsala) agreed on going on with the provision and exchange of courses for a minimum of three years – without further funding. The content of e-Learning courses in the area of geographic information is NOT relevant for the presented core idea of a business model for virtual mobility. Our business model is an organizational approach for inter-institutional cooperation, which can be transferred to ALL scientific areas in Higher Education.

The final project phase focused on dissemination activities. We think these activities crucial, because the core idea of a new e-Learning business model can be applied in all scientific areas and is definitely not limited to the Geoinformatics area of the project consortium. Therefore, we addressed decision makers and teachers in all fields of Education. The eduGI partners performed the following dissemination activities:

1. 16 publications and presentations (instead of 9) in national and international conferences and journals, see annex 6.
2. 8 dissemination workshops (reports see annex 6): Each partner was responsible to organize one workshop, to be supported by another eduGI partner. The partners chose different options: one day or 1,5 days, stand-alone-workshops or embedded in another event, e.g., conference. All workshops organized an detailed program in the context of e-Learning and eduGI. The workshops were widely announced to national audience, in some cases additionally to an international audience. The result was three-folded:
 - i. The feedback of the workshop participants was very positive, i.e. participants were very interested in the business model of exchanging e-Learning courses with international partners.
 - ii. The workshops were attended by less participants than expected – two workshops even had to be cancelled due to a low number of participants. We assume two main reasons for the low number of registered participants: a. Duration of 1,5 days instead of 1 day b. General overflow of e-Learning events.
 - iii. The workshops were announced widely by email, flyers, and websites. Therefore, the eduGI project was disseminated even to non-participants due to the information about the project.
3. Additional dissemination activities were the provision of a project website, distribution of project flyers at events, e.g., AGILE 2006, AGILE 2007, EUGISES 2006, IADIS 2007, and personal contacts to institutions and networks, e.g., the European AGILE Education Working Group (<http://plone.itc.nl/agile-edu/>) and the Latin-American GI organization GILA (www.gilanet.org).

Further information: www.eduGI.net/eduGI

Contact: Christoph Brox, broxc@uni-muenster.de