

ICETA 2008

6th International Conference on Emerging eLearning Technologies and Applications

and

5th year of competition “eLearning in Praxis”

Specialized event focused on propagation and support of development and implementation of new communication technologies in educational praxis.

The 6th International Conference on Emerging eLearning Technologies and Applications, ICETA 2008, was held on September 11 and 12, 2008 in Congress Center Academia (Slovak Academy of Sciences). Full of fresh memories, we can state that the Conference has maintained its high standard and this year's event certainly is one of the most successful in the history of the Conference. According to the presented opinions of participants the ICETA 2008 Conference is thought to be one of the most important events in Slovakia focused on progressive communication technologies and their utilization in the field of Education.

More than 90 contributions from authors from 15 countries (USA, Russia, Finland, Poland, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, UK, Latvia, Egypt, Portugal, Canada, Hungary, Romania, Netherlands and Slovakia) were presented at the conference.

The present intensive development of information and communication technologies has a strong influence on Education at its all levels. Several contributions from Slovakian and foreign experts were presented at the conference about perspectives of further development of education in an ICT Network environment. The programme of the Conference had also offered contributions oriented on theoretical, practical and methodological aspects of presented solutions. During the Conference, many very interesting contributions were presented by professionals. Representatives of public institutions were talking about strategic purposes; global leaders in IT presented their solutions and Academic institutions' representatives discussed the actual situation and their practical experiences. Presentations dedicated to new roles of teachers in an ICT environment where new communication technologies based on internet and Web 2.0 solutions are becoming more current.

In preparation of the Conference Final Programme the main emphasis was put on practical experience in using the ICT and its presentation and this was highly appreciated by the conference participants.

The Conference was organized under the patronage of: Mr. Ján Figel', Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, Ján Mikolaj, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Slovakia and Anton Čižmár, Rector of the Technical University in Košice.

Rector of the Technical University in Košice, Mr. Anton Čižmár had in his Conference Opening Speech appreciated the topicality and importance of the Conference. Mr. Ján

Michálek, General Director, Section of Informatics of Ministry of Education, Jake Slegers, Executive Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic and Mr. Marcel Rebroš, General Manager, CISCO Systems Slovakia took part in the Opening Ceremony and made a speech to the participants.

Mr. Ján Mikolaj, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Slovakia dedicated his speech to EU Operational Programme funding and projects within the operational programme Education, Science and Research under the gesture of Ministry of Education. An overview of national projects and demand-oriented appeals planned for the year 2008 was the most important part of the speech. A discussion during the business lunch organized for invited guests by the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic as a part of the ICETA 2008 Conference was also dedicated to this topic.

The international importance of the Conference was emphasised by presence of many well-known scientists and experts. One of them, prof. Harvey Newman from the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena USA, who is not only an expert in Physics but is also well known for his activities in experiments in development of extremely powerful communication infrastructure, communication services and new generation solutions (videoconferencing system EVO is an example of this technology) was also a Conference guest. Prof. Newman is a participating person in the project of the Large Hadron Collider, which was launched on September 10, 2008 in Geneva. Only one day after this he joined the Conference, where he made the first presentation about the LHC project and gave an interview to numerous journalists.

Conference Programme was divided into plenary sections and thematic parallel sections. In plenary sections invited speakers from several countries had presented their contributions. Parallel sections were intended for professionals to present their suggestions and recommendations about using progressive ICT solutions. As a part of the Conference all the time presentations and a multimedia presentation of solution from the area of education were presented at the Conference venue.

The ICETA Conferences are known among the professionals for their high-tech communication infrastructure. In the past, unique pilot experimental solutions were used for the first time in Slovakia and Middle Europe right at the ICETA conferences. This year's event has certainly not stayed behind the previous year's events when talking about technological support of the conference. The whole Conference programme could be seen also on the internet using video-streaming technology based on IP streaming (<http://videosever.cnl.tuke.sk>) and it was also possible to join the discussion through videoconference transmission based on videoconferencing technology EVO (<http://evo.caltech.edu/>). One of the contributions (from UK) was realized through this system. Contributions from the Congress Hall were transmitted to the whole conference venue and free WIFI connection was available for participants.

The Conference was organized in a close cooperation with the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic and in cooperation with a number of University

departments, institutions and firms: Technical university in Košice, Association Košice IT Valley, STU in Bratislava, Communication Technology Forum, IT Association of Slovakia, SANET, Slovenská sporiteľňa, a.s., Cisco Systems Slovakia, global leader in computer networking, which was also the General Partner of the Conference, HP Slovakia, T-Com, T-Systems, Microsoft, IBM Slovakia, Agemsoft, Alef0, elfa, GTEC, U.S. Steel Košice and media partners PC REVUE, INFOWARE, Computer Press and EurActiv.sk.

The 5th year of the “eLearning in Praxis” competition was a simultaneous event to the conference where 20 projects from Portugal, Latvia, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia were presented. Members of the competition jury were experts from Czech Republic and Slovakia and were experienced in implementation of new forms of education using ICT. Main goals of the competition were: evaluate the level of present state in utilization of ICT for education, enhance the quality of eLearning, support interest in design, implementation and dissemination of new form of education on basis of eLearning solutions, and support the production of web-based educational materials.

The presentation of projects took place on September 10, 2008 and the results were presented during the Conference Closing Ceremony on September 12, 2008. Projects were competing in two categories: On-line Course and Supporting materials for On-line course and in each category 3 best solutions were awarded. Results:

Category: “On-line course”

1. place: „Planéta vedomostí“, Agemsoft, s.r.o., Bratislava, Slovakia
2. place: „Počítačová grafika“, Ľ. Mikuš, University of Žilina, Slovakia
3. place: „Škola za školou“, J. Sýkorová, Center for Modern Education, Bratislava, Slovakia

Category: „Supporting materials for On-line course”

1. place: „Laboratories of Instrumentation for Measurement, Maria. T. Restivo, University of Porto, Portugal
2. place: „Súbor eLearningových materiálov“, V. Pirč, TU Košice
3. place: „P.A. Test 3.0“, R. Ondra, Procesná automatizácia, a.s. Košice

Special awards supported by Conference partners were pronounced:

- Special award from the Rector of the Technical university in Košice for a project with an “Outstanding multimedia processing” was given to Secondary Grammar School P. O. Hviezdoslava, Kežmarok for project “Funkcie – elektronická zbierka úloh”,
- Special award from the General Manager of Cisco Systems Slovakia for the most innovative project was given to Department of Computers and Informatics, Technical university of Košice for project “Videoserver”,

- Special award from the IT Association of Slovakia was given to B. Pazár, Innovamed Ltd., Hungary for project „Development of virtual Classroom for Vocational training of Healthcare Professionals“,
- Special awards from the General Manager of Microsoft Slovakia for projects based on Microsoft Corp. products were given to:
 - 1) Mrs. L. Válková from University of Trnava, Slovakia for project “Elektrochemický článok“
 - 2) Mr. R. Hrušecký, University of J. A. Komenský, Bratislava, Slovakia for the project “Kurz Princípy Internetu”
- Special awards from the American Chamber of Commerce in the Slovak Republic were given to the following projects:
 - 1) „P.A.Test 3.0“, R. Ondra, Procesná automatizácia, a.s. Košice, Slovakia
 - 2) „Planéta vedomostí“, Agemsoft, s.r.o., Bratislava, Slovakia

More than 200 participants, including important representatives from public and private sector from Slovakia and abroad, were interested in participation in the ICETA 2008 Conference. For more information and Photo Gallery visit the Conference website www.iceta.sk.

The communication infrastructure of the Conference, using latest technologies and solutions was provided within a close cooperation with the Laboratory of Computer Sciences, Department of Computers and Informatics, Technical university of Košice and the CALTECH Team from the University of P. J. Šafárik (Videoconferencing based on EVO Technology).

The Conference Organizers tried to create a processing atmosphere during the Conference, where know-how and practical experiences can be presented, where an international multidisciplinary platform for exchange of information in research and development of multimedia and hypermedia applications in a complex computer supported education and in new communication services can be created. Due to the participants' opinions, the ICETA 2008 Conference was the right place for this.

“The present development of information and telecommunication technologies is supporting a creation of a huge number of new communication services, which are going to belong among the most important public services in the future. Our goal was to organize an event, where the progress in this area can be presented and it is clear from the reactions of the participants that the ICETA 2008 Conference had become a platform for exchange of experience.” said prof. Ing. Anton Čižmár, CSc., Rector of the Technical University of Košice and Honorary Committee Chairman.

František Jakab
 ICETA 2008 Conference Organizing Committee Chairman