

Top down or bottom up, designing and redesigning a Digital Campus...

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Introduction

Three years ago INHOLLAND university launched a learning scenario that required the latest in electronic communication and collaboration tools. A new "Digital Campus" was built. At the moment this campus is being redesigned, using Windows Vista and MS Sharepoint 2007. Ideas on what an electronic learning environment should be, are changing rapidly and so are the strategic views of further implementing ICT in education. As designers we are learning by doing... What did we learn during the past three years and what do we intend to achieve now?

A new learning scenario

INHOLLAND University is one of the largest institutes of higher learning in the Netherlands, with more than 38,000 students and 3,000 employees. The result of merging four major Dutch universities in 2002 comprises 16 campuses and learning centers throughout western Netherlands. The university offers a wide range of bachelor's and master's programs, including finance, information technology, business management, communications, economics, education, social work, health care, music and arts.

In the merging process the university launched a new learning scenario "Competence-based Education," with a strong emphasis on collaborative team projects and individual learning. In this educational setting projects help demonstrate real-world proficiency in selected disciplines and give students valuable hands-on experience in collaborative teamwork.

A new ICT infrastructure

For INHOLLAND university "Competence-based Education" requires the latest in electronic communication and collaboration tools. Therefore a new ICT architecture (Information and communication technology) has been built, connecting 16 campuses in 9 cities in the western part of Holland. Students must be able to work together, whether they are at an INHOLLAND campus, or at home.

Students and employers are addressed as "knowledge workers" working together in teams. Online access to all relevant information and applications by students and instructors is essential. But the educational approach also urges the ICT environment to support the more individual needs of the "Knowledge workers" to design their own personal and team working-environment.

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Top down and “Fit for all”

For the first phase of implementing the digital campus a topdown approach was used. “Fit for all”- applications were launched like a personalized corporate portal, Blackboard as learning environment and a Digital Portfolio (http://download.microsoft.com/documents/customerevidence/7453_INHOLLAND_Case_Study_Final_Draft.doc).

Students as “participating designers”

Implementing the Digital Campus was a challenge. Many available tools are not used. “Fit for all” applications, don’t not fit everybody. Students use tools and workspaces of their own, outside the Campus. After three years of use the environment is being redesigned. Students and employers are stimulated to design their own working environment using the MYsite of Sharepoint, their Digital portfolio, weblog, or videotools. They have become “participating designers” in a service oriented environment.

When you agree that modern society requires another kind of educational approach you also will agree that the ideas of what an ELO should be for that new approach, are changing too. Because of a new start caused by a merge, INHOLLAND took the advance of realizing a new ICT architecture to support its educational approach. Implementing the Digital Campus was a challenging experience. Many tools are available but are not used. “Fit for all” applications, did not fit everybody. Students used tools of their own, outside the Campus

This presentation will be interesting for strategy and policy makers on ICT and Education, educational designers, IT managers. We think that many strategy and policy makers, as well as experts in the field of IT and Education, can benefit of this experience and the lessons learned.