



Human Rights and Democracy – promoting European Values SEMINAR OF EUROPEAN DEMOCRAT STUDENTS

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RESOLUTION ON

Digital Media in Higher Education & Research with a European perspective:

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

Libraries & Journals

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

The establishment of a european university-library register would contribute greatly to the efficiency and depth of research. EDS calls upon the EU-commission and the ministers responsible for higher education & research of all countries that are part of the european higher education area to develop and implement such a register until 2015 the very latest. In the long term solutions for the digitalization of books and journals and their availability for research purposes must be developed in order to further strengthen research output, stimulate innovation and ensure economic growth.

Lectures

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

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

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

Online Discussion Platforms / Intra-University social platforms

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

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

University e-government

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

European Democrat students (EDS), the official student organization of the EPP, Thus, for all the aforementioned reasons, emphasizes the necessity for the implementation of digital media into the practice of and administration of higher education. Aware of the legal situation of intellectual

property law and the growing global competition EDS proposes the following concrete projects to be implemented into all HEI wherever this is not already the case:

1. Recording and streaming of lectures for students that cannot be present, including interaction tools (cf "i-tunes U")
2. Providing students with lecture scripts (student centered teaching)
3. Create academic intra- and inter institutional social networks
4. Create an academic online discussion platform, monitored by professors & other staff
5. Implementation of e-government for the University- administration
6. Enlarge and modify information sources (especially for prospective students and freshmen)

Europe has set in the Lisbon strategy the target to become "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world". This target was reiterated in the EU 2020 strategy. However to date no significant step towards achieving this goal has been taken. This is one small but important proposal. Let's start acting and implement it!