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Virtual University: Model, Tools, Practice (11–12 June 2019)

Teaching children and adults at all levels of education of the last decade is synchronous with and pertinent to the development of new technologies. All aspects of transfer didactics, methodology, and the process of shaping the young generation using contemporary ICT tools and e-learning are in the centre of attention of researchers from various fields. They analyse and research e-learning and digital tools used in education and present the results at the conference fora visited by specialists from areas of study oscillating around the topic of digital education and digital society.

One of the most important events in Poland in this field is the annual Virtual University Conference: Model, Tools, Practice. The symposium has a rich, 19-year-old tradition. Every year, the conference is alternately organised by Warsaw higher education institutions: Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology, Warsaw University of Life Sciences, University of Warsaw, and Warsaw University of Technology.

A considerable participation of the Digital Competence Centre of the University of Warsaw and the Polish Scientific Association for Internet Education is also worth mentioning. The original idea of the conference in 2001 was directly related to the creation of study programmes implemented via the Internet and dedicated to lecturers at Warsaw University of Technology as an opportunity to learn more about distance learning tools and techniques from foreign scientists. Currently, the event serves as a place of polemics among the best specialists in

the field of digitally supported education from all over Poland. It is a tradition that the deadline for submitting papers is always mid-June. On June 11–12, 2019, the 19th edition of the conference under the slogan “Digital Labyrinths” took place. Chief coordinator of the Conference is professor Bogdan Galwas, the Head of the Organising Committee is professor Elżbieta Piwowarska from Warsaw University of Technology.

The conference offered a number of speeches, workshops, and poster sessions. The guests of the University of Warsaw were 45 speakers, representatives of universities from all over Poland, grouped into ten sessions, with (including two didactic and two workshop ones) dealt with the following problems:

- new trends in e-education in Poland, Europe, and the world;
- e-learning in schools, colleges, and companies;
- sociological, pedagogical, and psychological aspects of e-education;
- educational portals, e-learning platforms, virtual laboratories;
- applications of multimedia and artificial intelligence in e-education;
- open educational and scientific resources;
- the role of e-education in lifelong learning;
- knowledge management at the university through the electronic means;
- teaching management systems;
- educational platforms, e-learning and e-learning supporting software, virtual laboratories, Web 2.0 and E-Learning 2.0.

Ceremonial opening of the conference was held by Vice-Rector for Development, prof. UW dr hab. Anna Giza-Poleszczuk. Session one – “Contexts of the Digital Revolution” – was moderated by dr. Izabella Bednarczyk-Bochenek. Among the presenters were: prof. Jerzy Wilkin “University in the Time of Post-truth,” journalist Jacek Żakowski “Democracy or A.I.-ocracy,” Aleksander Pawlicki “Character Shaping in the Digital Age,” prof. Jerzy Mischke “A Slim University, or What University We Need.” After the session, there was time for discussion.

Session two – “Academic E-learning” – was run by dr. eng. Elżbieta Piwowarska and consisted of the following presentations, by prof. Bogdan Galwas “Tools and Models of Education,” prof. Arkadiusz Orłowski “The Reality of Virtual Teaching,” prof. Lech Banachowski, dr. Aldona Drabik, prof. Paweł Nowacki “Summary of Experiences in Conducting Online Classes at the Polish-Japanese Academy of Information Technology,” Anna Warda-Ritzen, “Blackboard – Building Accessibility and Cooperation at the University with the Use of E-learning,” and dr. Izabella Bednarczyk-Bochenek and Dorota Sidor “Change. Revolution or Evolution?”

In total, there were eight conference sessions devoted to such issues as open education, open science, digital humanities, tools and technologies of digital

education, research in e-learning and didactics, various projects. Additionally, posters related to each session were constantly available during the conference. Full conference programme was available on <https://vu2019.ckc.uw.edu.pl/node/17>.

One of the speeches in session 4b, which was devoted to the research in e-learning and in didactics, was the presentation of research results on “Digital Internet Resources in the Learning and Development of Future Educators – A Case Study” conducted under the program “Faculty Platform for Distance Education in Raising the Quality in Shaping the Competences of Future and Active Teachers” and delivered by Eugenia Smyrnova-Trybulska and Dominika Zegzuła from the Department of Humanities Education and Auxiliary Sciences of Pedagogy of the University of Silesia in Cieszyn, Poland. The speakers also referred to certain theoretical aspects of ICT competence and soft competences, including the use of IT tools in search for information.

The workshop sessions of the Centre of New Technologies (CeNT) of the University of Warsaw were abundant in practical knowledge. The participants had a choice of two workshops, namely:

- “The Use of Mobile Applications in Education – Mathematics and Natural Sciences”: a workshop session directly related to teaching mathematics, technically showing the possibilities of *Geogebra*. The session was run by Anna Łukomska and Beata Kotarba.
- “The Use of Mobile Applications in Education – The Humanities”: a workshop session which referred to teaching humanities and digital communication, technically showing an overview of the latest and best applications and programmes which can be used to plan work with the student. The session was run by dr. Kinga Białek and dr. Iwona Kołodziejek.

The whole event raised topics relevant to contemporary education: Which direction is it heading for and is this direction right? What are and should be the standards of digital society education? And also topics which touch upon the future of education in the context of continuous technological development. Those who did not have an opportunity to take advantage of direct participation in the conference are encouraged to read the summary entitled “On the Labyrinths of Digital Content at the Conference Virtual University VU’19” presented by Anna Pacholak on the e-mentor website (<http://www.e-mentor.edu.pl/artykul/index/numer/79/id/1415>) or the Facebook page of the Digital Competence Centre of the University of Warsaw (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=2327535897307796>) and the best speeches coming soon in the *E-mentor* journal, selected in the *Eduakcja* journal (<https://edukacja.eu/index.php/pl/>), *International Journal of Research in E-learning* (www.ijrel.us.edu.pl) and *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*. Issue on Logical, Statistical and Computer Methods in Medicine (2018) (<http://logika.uwb.edu.pl/studies/>).

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We would like to express our warmest thanks to all the Coordinators, Organisers, and Speakers for the opportunity to participate in this wonderful scientific event.

On behalf of the Organisers, we are looking forward to the 20th Jubilee Edition, which will be held online on December 14–15, 2020, <http://vu2020.okno.pw.edu.pl>.