

How digital is the media professor?

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We live in a very interesting era. We should call ourselves lucky, I guess.

Every Tesla learns from the mistakes of any other Tesla. This is what we call Artificial Intelligence. What will be the effect of Artificial Intelligence when it is deployed in the planning, cost estimation and imposition of print work?

Scientists predict that in 2050 AI will represent the equivalent of what all human brains know. And this because of its exponential growth. We can image growth and development, we see it happening every day. But can we image exponential growth of human intelligence? What role will we, the academic intelligentsia, play in this?

We see a lot of things taking place before our eyes, but do we always grasp the long-term consequences, do we fully understand the structural changes that are taking place silently and often stealthily?

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New technologies, new job specializations and a continuously changing lifestyle present serious but also attractive challenges in the field of education and media education in particular. Classical educational methods and teaching skills are challenged in a society where personalization, collaboration and e-learning are slowly but surely taking over. Courses need annual updates to ensure they remain up to par with recent societal developments, new media technology and the demands of hiring companies. Educational professionals and lecturers are continuously required to update their skills and schools need new tools and solutions to deal with these changes and make them manageable. How future proof are our media education programs? How future proof are our media education professionals? How can conferences like this one help education to cope with these challenges and inspire people to tackle these challenges in a creative and

sustainable way? The best way to follow the changes, is to adapt to the changes, but even better, is to be one of the game changers.

I am convinced that this 50th Annual Conference of the IC will be commemorated as a landmark in the history of our organization. For a diversity of reasons. First of all, because this lustrum edition is a joint effort of the IC and iarigai, made possible by our distinguished hosts: the Warsaw University of Technology. What lies at the base of this joint effort? What brought these three protagonists together?

The International Circle of Educational Institutes for Graphic Media Technologies and Management, better known under its abbreviation the International Circle, is an informal network of about 90 active member institutions from all over the world. Founded in 1957 in Europe the IC has grown tremendously and not only in terms of scientific expansion but also in terms of its international geographical expansion. Its member universities are now scattered all over the world. The main focus of the IC has not changed and remains in the field of the graphic arts industry. However, it seems that most of its members have added the electronic media to their portfolios, just as the corresponding industries have done. iarigai, the International Association of Research Organizations for the Information, Media and Graphic Arts Industries, features members from over 20 countries. iarigai is a worldwide Association in the field of print and media bringing together research organizations, institutes, companies and universities. Apart from a predilection for long and sophisticated names, the IC and iarigai have a lot in common. In these times of globalization and increased interconnectivity, the two organizations were predestined to join hands and find ways to reinforce their collaboration.

A gentle nudge was all it took for the two organizations to join hands. The celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the education of graphic arts engineers at the Warsaw University of Technology provided that opportunity. We are very grate-

ful for this initiative and the University's offer to host both conferences simultaneously in its compound.

Besides the desire to meet and socialize with colleagues from all over the world, what other incentive is there for us to spend so many time and resources in organizing these conferences and meetings? At the end of the conference, what will have made it all worthwhile?

The topics of the presentations..... Besides a great number of very technical and interesting topics on some recent developments in media technology, many speakers will also touch upon stringent questions in the field of media management, media economics and media training. How can we improve our media education? How can we enhance the interactions with our students? How can we increase their involvement with their educational program? How can we ensure that we remain relevant? That they continue to attend our classes?

Let me elaborate on this by tackling a very contemporary topic and hot issue in many faculty rooms: online education and the use of social media in and outside the classroom.

Universities were quick at using the Internet as a means to exchange information. They also actively engaged in introducing email to facilitate communication among colleagues and students even to the extent that today we cannot imagine an academic world without the Internet and email. The Internet blockbuster was followed by bestselling sequels such as mobile computing, cloud computing, IOT, WOT, blockchain, etc. Luckily, none of them were as volatile and capricious as the bitcoin. The presumed nothingness of these early innovations in the digital world was unfounded. They came to stay and grew steadily. Surely, our colleagues of the digital communication technologies department were given plenty of opportunities to contribute to innovative, groundbreaking and pioneering research.

The last decade, academics have been encouraged to embrace online learning and social media as proper tools for effective teaching of today's generation of students. Courses are made available as open educational resources and can be consulted freely by students, peers and critics from Juneau in Alaska to Christchurch in New Zealand. With the advent of the Internet, our research and education, our academic world is part of a globalized working place and market. Many courses and programs are already exclusively available online and we see a lot of start-ups with new business models targeting paid online education. We might dislike it or favor this, the point is that online education and communication is happening, and this is only the beginning.

As long as students have access to the internet, nothing prevents them from accessing this information day and night, seven days a week, everywhere in the world. There

was a time when kids and youngsters were trained, educated.... Now, they educate themselves with the assistance of YouTube and games. This has a lot of advantages but also goes hand in hand with some disadvantages. Let me share some of my concerns. Data driven learning systems are increasingly deployed to customize the study program of the individual student and the automated feedback ensures timely guidance and back-up support. Software tools such as Google Scholar, Web of Science or Scope measure the scientific contributions of the professionals and monitor the discussions on social media, downloads, etc. Publishers promote the continuation of the work after classes, they like it when you are working late in the evening for your students, when you join the lively discussions on the social media and add another page to your blog to feed the debates on your research findings. ResearchGate, Mendeley, just to name a few are thriving thanks to the researchers who are using the platform to engage in online exchanges on their topic of interest. Students know how to find you after your teaching hours and expect a reply soonest. And don't forget to send out a tweet once your next blog page is on the air!

Allow me here to utter some critical reflections on these developments. To be perfectly clear, let me state this upfront: I am a strong believer of blended learning. Blended learning concerns a deliberated use of various online and offline learning tools to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning. I am in favor of the application of these tools in our department. Therefore, I am not against these new developments and approaches as long as they have proven to be effective in increasing student performance.... but we should not fall into the trap of blind and dogmatic belief either. It is not because some teaching takes place online that they generate and support a more effective, powerful, sustainable and conducive learning environment for the learner and the teacher. However, it is a fact that the digitalization of our communication has facilitated the sharing of information. It triggered our knowledge society and at the same time opened up the academic world to the global market.

As professionals in the use of media, media production and management, we are very appreciative for these new developments in our domain however many expect us to be familiar with their usage in the educational field as well. But is this the case? Is the old-fashioned professor – take me f.i. as I am speaking ex cathedra - the next victim on the list of species threatened by extinction? Do we have to fear for our jobs? Are assessment software, digitally recorded lessons and artificial intelligence taking over soon? As educational professionals we are continuously confronted with the emergence and omnipresence of these technologies in our digitized academic habitat. We notice their effect on our

professional and personal life. Surely, the debate lives. It certainly does at our institution.

Allow me to expand on two issues in particular: the use of social media in a learning context and the development of online courses for formal teaching at universities.

At our university and probably also at yours, quite often the discussions regarding the use of social media in the classroom are brightened up with mocking references to 'old school' and 'new school adepts' herewith illustrating the controversy and the disagreement in the academic circles about the role and the importance of the use of new media in the classroom versus the advantages of the old-school lecture. Some of these discussions are trivial others are well documented, but the discourse raises some interesting questions about our contemporary communication with our colleagues and students, and the way our research and educational activities are influenced by these new digital technologies and possibilities.

However, exploring new scientific horizons in media technology or focusing on the integration of new media tools into your daily education are two different but equally challenging things. Many will argue that our education and especially the way we transfer our knowledge and expertise, how we coach and guide our students, will be affected profoundly by these new developments online and might undergo drastic changes in a very near future. Some even go as far as stating that future education will be mainly taking place online. Quod erat demonstrandum. And here is the catch. These new communication tools and online education require enormous efforts of the educational professional and - don't forget them! - the administrative staff. Forsey and Page speak of the 'hidden iceberg of academic labour'. A bold statement to underline the often unrecognized and unsupported costs of creating and managing online education. We have to ensure that the academic world is not the Titanic encountering the iceberg. Many believers of the future online hegemony fail to include that the development and maintenance of online courses comes with a huge human cost. Often un(der)paid and un(der)valued by its users. Labor not only from the content providers who draft the courses, but also the technicians holding the camera and the administrative staff behind the scene, all saw the exponential growth of their workload. What many educational professionals initially perceived as part of their professional responsibility or pride, what they produced often out of idealism, personal enthusiasm or personal interest, became quickly a commodity and a possible source of income for others.

And these efforts, dear colleagues, come on top of the continuous struggle to keep up with the fast and various structural changes and technical developments that are taking

place in our professional field and oblige us to update our courses regularly. Sometimes, we wish we were the department of ancient languages, Latin, Greek, Sanskrit, ...where you can publish your course and keep it as it is for some years.....

Open resources, online education and social media show a great promise for future research and education and bears great potential for reshaping the academic work itself and its interaction with the audience but also has implications on the daily workload of professional educators. We need events like the IC conferences to act as exchange platforms where the effects of these new developments are shared and discussed (I am looking forward to your presentation Volker!), where we can learn from each other's experience as not all is green on the other side of the hill. We need discussions like the one with the JPTMR and irigai, in order to emphasize our relevance as a publisher of a scientific magazine. Who will be our readers tomorrow? What will they prefer to know? How would they like to learn about our research findings? How would they like to receive our articles, blogs and other postings?

When you cast a look at the overall picture, two things become clear. One, you cannot escape the digitization of our education. Two, the digitization of our education is a complex and often ambiguous but progressing story. The perceived and proven advantages are countered by perceived and proven disadvantages, turning this into a topic that requires attention and consideration but also cautiousness due to the many tones and nuances. For the individual teacher it will be crucial to ascertain how these tools can increase the learning effect of his teaching without renouncing on his specific personal teaching style and approach, without infliction on his personal life and the other demands of his/her work. For the academic institutions, they will have to determine and communicate their vision and strategy. How they appreciate ownership and control of knowledge productions, how they aim to uphold the values and practices of teaching in the digital era. In my opinion, conferences such as this one, will need to focus more and more, not only on the hard data output and methodology of our research but also on how we will share this with our target audiences through our changing educational systems and communication. Especially as the EU is opposing paywalls for articles and report written with their funding. The IC with its spotlight on technology, education and management of media will definitely have a distinctive role to play here.

Another significant novelty of this edition of the IC is the launching of the young researcher's award. Thanks to the support of AGFA Graphics and ESKO we could also extend

the opportunity to participate in this conference to young talented researchers. I am very happy to announce here that both companies have agreed to continue they support.

This, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues, these are some good reason to assert that this conference will be memorable. We are very grateful for the initiative taken by the Warsaw University of Technology to host this year annual conference and to give us the opportunity to discuss these issues of common interest.

I wish you a very productive and informative conference with a lot of networking and new and renewed contacts.

I thank you.

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