Virtual Seminars
Creating new opportunities for universities
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Experience and Best Practice from the VENUS Seminars and Summer School
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Universities nowadays have a mission to provide knowledge not only to their on-campus students but also beyond the “walls” of the institution. Lectures or seminars that have relevance for a wider audience and that go beyond the campus boundaries are often held in public and are open to all citizens. There are probably several different reasons for why this is happening. Perhaps it is due to a thirst for new learning opportunities in the wider community. Or maybe it is linked to pressure from society to expect more from universities in terms of what they deliver and to put an end to the notion of academic exclusivity. Or perhaps it is to do with seismic shifts in the way in which we work and live, in how we build up and share knowledge, causing fundamental changes in the institutions traditionally linked to learning?

Whatever the causes might be, what we are seeing in many universities nowadays is a strong desire to open up the campus, to break down the barriers that have traditionally kept out those not directly involved in full-time courses and to invite the citizen in to share the academic richness of the modern-day university. For some, this implies a far more service-oriented approach, where the emphasis lies in providing knowledge services including the possibility for networking and collaboration and the creation of shared knowledge. This is aimed not only at the current community of campus based students but also the wider community of alumni as well as those concerned with lifelong learning in the catchment area, however wide this might be.

Lifelong learning encompasses professional learners who need not only to maintain their existing qualifications, but also to keep abreast of current developments in their respective fields. It also includes those citizens who wish to find new interests and add to their portfolio of skills, many of whom look to their local university as a source not only of expertise but also of learning services of which they can avail. This ‘opening-up’ is not just a passive concept with the citizen sitting quietly at the back of the lecture hall, but in many instances it also represents a far greater involvement of the citizen in discussions taking place on campus. Links to local industry and other socio-economic endeavours in the region are positively encouraged, reality checks in relation to employment norms and expectations have become the order of the day and regional cultural and arts endeavours increasingly involve alliances with centres of learning including universities.
Universities are not only opening up their borders to local citizens, internationalisation is also high on the agenda of all educational institutions. New media and ICT have made it possible to involve citizens from virtually anywhere and universities are increasingly seeing their role within a far wider regional and national context than in the past. Not only can the modern-day university open its physical gates and invite citizens in to listen and partake of academic discussion and debate, but with the support of technology, this opening up can be taken a step further, placing the notion of a university clearly in the virtual world.

This handbook has been written in the context of these developments and takes as a starting point the willingness of the modern day university to see itself as a purveyor of learning services. Our brief is a modest one, to take the experience that we have been privileged to have built up as a network of partners based largely in European universities and to share it with others interested in similar activities.

Our task in writing this handbook has been to place our work in the organisation of virtual European seminars and a virtual summer school in a wider pedagogical context to clearly show how and where we see these activities in the wider educational context. We then placed on record how in very practical terms these seminars were realized in our specific circumstances. Finally we gathered the collective experience we have gained in the form of recommendations aimed at helping others who are interested in learning not only from our successes but also from our mistakes. We hope you find it both practical and useful and a genuine source of inspiration as you set about the task of organising these types of virtual activities in your university.
The purpose of this first chapter is to provide a short introduction to the VENUS project, its objectives, approach and main outcomes. It also serves to introduce the partners involved in this initiative. It also provides some background to this handbook and describes how the book is organised and what the reader can expect to find.

1.1 The VENUS project

VENUS – Virtual and e-Mobility for Networking Universities in Society, was a 2-year project supported under the European Commission’s eLearning programme (DG Education and Culture). During the 2006-2007 academic year, VENUS organised nine seminars featuring international experts in a range of domains. The topics of these nine seminars focused on issues that are relevant for European Society today. The seminars were delivered virtually and simultaneously at all European locations by means of videoconferencing and live streaming. Each lecture was followed by interactive discussions at all participating sites as well as online. These lectures and the discussions that followed were then made available for a wide audience on the project web site. Then, at the end of the summer in 2007, VENUS organised its Summer School on the subject of Social Software entitled “Application of Social Software in Education and Business”. This summer school involved a mix of face-to-face events and virtual seminars supported by videoconferencing linking the partner universities.

1.1.1 Objectives

VENUS aimed at enhancing international clusters of educational institutions, each strongly embedded in regional networks, in order to stimulate the inclusion of citizens. Through the elaboration of the contents at two levels (general European and region specific), we aimed at enhancing European identity, while at the same time making sure that local aspects were valued.

Aiming to be a world-class example of cross-border collaboration between higher education organisations, businesses and citizens, the overall objective of VENUS was to create a sustainable best-practice example of the “Faculty of Extension”, extended both in the sense of methods and the target public.
1.1.2 Approach

The organisational approach in VENUS to the seminar series was that the project partners selected a range of broad themes that had a “European focus” and that contributed more in general to the education of all students, citizens and employees rather than a narrow set of academic topics. The partnership then invited top experts to deliver the seminar together with a content expert from within their own institutions. For the Summer School, the approach was to take a single topic close to the specific interests of many of the participating institutions and to organise a blended learning opportunity spread over 5 days composed of a variety of local and collaborative activities, some involving all sites linked via videoconferencing and others not. In order to reach a wide and diverse target audience, each partner formed an international and regional cluster by linking up with their own partners and networks (in the region and on an international level). The seminars consisted of 3 main parts: interactive preparatory activities, seminar delivery (presentation, localisation and debate), and interactive activities. The Summer School was made up of local hands-on learning activities and follow-up actions in each participating site along with virtual seminars linking all participating locations for the purposes of delivering a central presentation and supporting the ensuing discussion.

1.1.3 Target Audience

The VENUS project was aimed mostly at those teaching and management staff in educational institutions who are interested in gaining the specific organisational skills needed for implementing virtual mobility schemes like virtual seminars and virtual summer schools. The aim of the project is to share best practice in instructional design for the establishment of virtual schemes like those established in VENUS and to help others become familiar with the different challenges involved in international and/or virtual collaboration based on the experience we gained. It is also aimed at so-called ‘Stakeholders’ those rectors, principals, deans, International Relations Officers and managers of universities who are interested in finding out more about best practices and sustainability strategies to integrate and exploit virtual schemes in their mainstream offer.

1.1.4 Results

The main outcomes of VENUS are knowledge resources that can be used by others interested in setting up virtual seminars and summer schools in their own institutions and networks. Steps towards the creation of a virtual “Faculty of Extension” have been taken in each university involved in VENUS as well as the preparation of training materials (including this handbook). The partners have also created a model in this handbook for higher education institutions and their partners in education to successfully organise self-sustainable, high-quality and certified virtual mobility schemes and an online module entitled “Europe in Focus” that contains recordings and learning materials that were derived from the seminar series. The outcomes also include the set-up of a sustainable virtual mobility scheme accepted in the mainstream educational offer of the partners and outside the partnership and three training workshops set up for interested parties outside the partnership.
1.2 Partners

 EuroPACE

 EuroPACE ivzw is a European non-profit association of universities and their partners in education and training, e.g. private companies, international networks and governmental institutions. The main objective of EuroPACE is to foster networked e-learning for virtual mobility, for internationalisation of higher education, for knowledge creation and sharing and for lifelong learning. Its main interests are innovation in education, new educational technologies, quality in e-learning and e-learning competences and skills. Its target groups are higher education institutions, private companies and policy-making bodies. The main activities of EuroPACE are research and development through projects, networking, expert advice, events and publishing of reports, papers and presentations.

 AVNet

 The AVNet Department of the Catholic University of Leuven, K.U.Leuven, is a university interface that aims to support networked e-learning in an international context, i.e. to support local university teachers in the internationalisation of their education by using ICT. It does this by providing advice, design, development, implementation, and training services. AVNet also assesses (inter)national trends in order to encourage local university teachers to participate in (inter)national activities and to translate (inter)national initiatives to the local and/or regional setting. AVNet has participated in a number of research projects on virtual education, e-learning and technology-enhanced learning in general.

 ATiT

 ATiT is a Belgian audiovisual and IT company, active in the field of education and culture. Its mission is to support the effective integration of technology into the learning context. ATiT staff have significant expertise and experience in mediating between technology providers and educational users. ATiT has several specific areas of expertise including audiovisual and multimedia production, the set-up and management of cross-border trials and projects, the implementation of ICT based systems for educational networks, assessment as well as evaluation and review of technology enhanced learning systems. Furthermore, ATiT provides services in the area of training and staff development and support to ICT supported learning initiatives in the development context, including consultancy to agencies like the World Bank, DfID (UK) and UNESCO.
University of Cologne

University of Cologne - Faculty of Management, Economics, and Social Sciences - “WISO-Fakultät” is a dynamic player in societal development. It is one of six faculties of the University of Cologne. The university takes pride in continuing its tradition of outstanding academic quality and maintains the highest standards in research and education. Its institutional memberships in leading international networks, as well as the numerous quality partnerships world-wide, are unique in Germany. Besides the many individual relationships, which faculty members have established with foreign colleagues, the international relations of the Cologne WiSo-Fakultät are institutionalised in the “Zentrum für Internationale Beziehungen - ZIB” (the International Relations Center).

Helsinki University of Technology

Teknillinen korkeakoulu (TKK) (Helsinki University of Technology) is the oldest and largest university of technology in Finland. Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli (TKK Dipoli), an adult education unit of Helsinki University of Technology, is one of the largest continuing education providers among universities in its field in Europe. Making use of its international networks, the technological know-how of the university staff and the business experience of industries, TKK Dipoli seeks to support business management, technological development and lifelong learning. TKK Dipoli is also a major contributor to internationally recognized learning and research programmes. By developing methods and utilising e-learning technologies, TKK Dipoli has established itself as a forerunner in the field of continuing education programmes on national and international levels.

University of West Hungary

Nyugat-magyarországi Egyetem (University of West Hungary) is one of the most significant centres of higher education in the Transdanubia region. It consists of ten faculties which are spread across five cities in Hungary. The Faculty of Geoinformatics in Székesfehérvár, the partner institution in the VENUS project, is a leading institution in Hungary in continuing professional education on Land Surveying, Geoinformatics and Land Management. The Faculty is involved in various flexible education programmes for land management giving professional development services to engineers, technicians, and executives. The Faculty has accumulated considerable experience in the UNIGIS and similar international networks of universities, which offer a common set of courses by open and distance learning to in-service professionals in the area of Geographical Information Systems and Land Management. International co-operation of the Faculty is oriented towards the development of education. The Faculty has participated in several projects aimed at issues relating to the interactive use of GIS, development of distance learning courses, education for continuing professional development, development of knowledge in land administration matters, and development of networking between universities.
West Pomeranian Business School
The West Pomeranian Business School in Szczecin, Poland is the first private institution of higher education in West Pomerania, established in March 1993. The West Pomeranian Business School is a non-government and a not-for-profit organisation. The School offers two faculties of instruction: the Faculty of Economy and Information Science and the Faculty of Social Sciences. Within these frameworks, students take specialised courses to match their interests and satisfy the needs observed in the labour market. Students and citizens can also take part in postgraduate courses or an MBA programme as well as in numerous short courses, training, seminars, conferences, etc. The School has always been very interested in incorporating modern technologies into its teaching activities and therefore provides students with state-of-the-art computer laboratories, broadband connectivity and expanding e-learning opportunities. The West Pomeranian Business School has implemented and participated in various EU projects designed to improve the quality, accessibility and technological advancement of its educational services. Efforts to establish and maintain cooperation with international networks in the areas of education and business support are ongoing.

Technical University of Kosice
The Department of Computers and Informatics (DCI) within the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics in the Technical University of Kosice is a principal element of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics, teaching more than one thousand students on BSc. and MSc. courses every year. Research activities are concentrated on new programming and specification paradigms for automated software development, software engineering methodologies and tools, advanced approaches in computer networks, computer graphics and virtual reality, concentrating on the integration of background theory and application praxis in information technologies. DCI has considerable experience with the development of web-based courses and is actively involved in international projects.

NETTUNO
NETTUNO - Network per l’Università Ovunque is the first television and telematic University in Europe, using two satellite television channels RAI NETTUNO SAT 1 and RAI NETTUNO SAT 2, and an Internet-based Didactic Portal (www.consorzionettuno.it). Promoted in 1992 by the Italian Ministry of the University and Scientific and Technological Research, NETTUNO is a consortium of 38 prestigious Italian and foreign universities, technological companies and bodies such as Telecom Italia, RAI and Confindustria. NETTUNO offers 27 Distance Course degrees in a variety of fields: Engineering, Economics, Cultural Heritage, Architecture, Sociology, Psychology and Communication Sciences. NETTUNO’s didactic model aims at realising a distance teaching method which involves teachers from traditional universities and at producing a didactic offer which is able to meet different educational needs.
1.3 Background to this Handbook

Through our work in the VENUS project, consortium partners have jointly developed an approach to setting up and delivering virtual European seminars. This approach has been made concrete through the creation of a set of materials including guidelines, training materials, check-lists and other materials created and adapted during the course of the project. These materials are brought together in this handbook which aims to provide the reader with all the materials he or she will need to set up similar seminars. The contents of this handbook are complemented by tutorials.

This handbook was developed out of a perceived need to provide guidelines, best-practices and recommendations to those interested in setting up sustainable virtual seminar schemes in their own university. It is clear, that in order to set up a virtual seminar or summer school certain technical requirements need to be met. However there is also a more fundamental series of questions to be considered, why set up such activities in the first place? How do they fit within the modern university’s place in society at a local, national and international level and how do they fit within the broader pedagogical offer made by the university in terms of technology supported learning? How can such seminars fit within the so-called Faculty of Extension?

This handbook seeks to answer these questions while at the same time offering the practical advice necessary to those interested in setting up a seminar series and a summer school along the lines of those managed by the VENUS team.

1.4 Outline of this Handbook

The handbook is divided into several distinct chapters. Beginning with this introductory chapter, the second chapter addresses the broad topic of virtual seminars and summer schools and places them within a wider theoretical framework, as well as looking at the various pedagogical alternatives which the academic community faces when considering the use of technology in furthering educational objectives. Chapter 3 describes the model used for the VENUS activities. Chapter 4 describes the VENUS experience from a practical point of view and provides the reader with several guidelines and sets of recommendations. In Chapter 5 we have taken a look at future developments and addressed the topic of how these seminars might fit within a Faculty of Extension organised by a single university or a network of universities. In Chapter 6, we provide a short glossary of some of the more common terms used in the handbook and Chapter 7 contains a suggested list of further reading. Finally in the annexes we include several of the documents used during the VENUS project which we hope will be useful to the reader.
Given the nature of this publication which is intended as a handbook, we have chosen not to include footnotes, but rather have included in Chapter 7 a list of publications that the reader can use for further information should this be required. Given the nature of the World Wide Web, access to web sites can be unpredictable and so we will maintain a list of web sites referenced in this handbook on the VENUS site for more up-to-date reference purposes should this be necessary.

### 1.5 Editorial Information

A Creative Commons approach is promoted in the partnership with regards to the contents of the seminars as well as to the public documentation created by the project (for further information see http://creativecommons.org). The project focuses on interoperability of the developed systems, tools and procedures not only from a technical point of view but also from a pedagogical and organizational point of view. The contents are shared and re-used and therefore standard-compliant (to IEEE LOM or IMS) so they can be brokered in some of the main educational brokerage systems of today (e.g. EducaNext and Merlot).

#### 1.5.1 Editors

This handbook is compiled from the VENUS partnership experience, and was edited by Sally Reynolds (ATiT), Kamakshi Rajagopal (K.U.Leuven-AVNet) and Bieke Schreurs (EuroPACE).

#### 1.5.2 Authors

Input to the handbook was provided by members of the VENUS partnership. They were Mathy Vanbuel (ATiT), Peter Andries (ATiT), Marie Bijnens (ATiT), Machteld Boussemaere (EuroPACE), Anna-Kaarina Kairamo (TKK), Matti Sinko (TKK), Seija Hämäläinen (HUT), Miika Melama (TKK), Veronika Bleyerova (University of West Hungary), Andrea Pödör (University of West Hungary), Gregory Lucas (University of West Hungary), Bela Markus (University of West Hungary), Dietrich Seibt (University of Cologne), Carsten Klenner (University of Cologne), Anna Kiriaikou (West Pomeranian Business School), Magdalena Markiewicz (West Pomeranian Business School), Ladislav Samuelis (Technical University of Kosice) and Cristina Stefanelli (NETTUNO).
The purpose of this chapter is to provide a framework for the VENUS Seminar and Summer School activities, to place them in the wider context of technology enhanced learning in higher education and to address some aspects that are important to consider when deciding to organise similar activities. It includes a description of telepresence and an overview of how instructional design can be approached when setting up virtual seminars and summer schools. Evaluation is introduced as an important aspect to be considered and various technology options are discussed. Another important aspect addressed in this chapter is content copyright and options and considerations worth taking into account when considering how best to utilise learning content in a virtual seminar or summer school.

2.1 Breaking Down the Walls

Universities today are changing. No longer is the focus solely upon traditional campus-based students, even in traditional research universities. There has been a massive shift in terms of students’ profile, educational strategies and the expectations society has of the modern university. Many universities have launched initiatives aimed at opening up to the wider community and adapting to the changing needs of their students and citizens at large. For some this has led to a significant effort, even to the extent of setting up a dedicated Faculty of Extension or Continuing Education Centres, whereby courses and services are made available to the wider public. For quite a considerable number, the use of some form of ICT has become the norm.

Today’s university is a very different place from the traditional university of even 20 years ago. European Universities in particular are facing many challenges and significant change is underway, much of it taking place as a result of higher education reform linked to the Bologna Process and the implementation of the European Higher Education Area. Considerable pressure is being applied to the university to contribute more significantly to the knowledge economy and to make available learning opportunities for all citizens. In the Trends V report published recently by the European University Association, this point is emphasised: *Institutions need to develop their capacity to respond strategically to the lifelong*
learning agenda, taking advantage of the opportunities provided by the structural changes and tools that have been developed through the Bologna Process.

The ways in which universities are opening their campuses to local citizens are manifold and diverse, and a cursory look at the public web site of almost any European University nowadays reveals the many different ways in which such access is being achieved. Public conferences on topical issues represent one approach, often linked to research and teaching themes within the university, the hosting of cultural events another. The contribution of speakers and experts to debates and discussions taking place in the public media is yet another, with many universities consciously vying with one another to ‘field’ their experts in an effort to emphasise their own particular expertise and achievements.

Opening up opportunities for citizens to partake of public lectures given by University staff is one increasingly popular means of ensuring access to the wider community and large numbers of European Universities now offer such lectures as either single, high profile events, or as part of a systematic public service offer to the wider community. At the University of London, for example, staff members are invited to indicate if they would like specific lectures made available to the public. In addition, there are a number of initiatives underway offering lectures either in the form of downloadable and on-demand events from universities or live streamed events featuring university lecturers giving traditional lectures online. Admittedly, many of these initiatives originated in the US, but there is an increased incidence of these offers in Europe helped by the availability of tools to make the job of posting such lectures online infinitely easier.

The notion of a virtual seminar arises against this background and is used in our context to describe the idea of a seminar – the bringing together of a group of people to find out more about and discuss a specific subject - that takes place virtually – in virtual space as opposed to face-to-face. It is an attractive idea that provides the university with a mechanism whereby they can combine any one of a number of settings and approaches in order to achieve the openness and access demanded of practically all universities nowadays.

2.2 Pedagogical Approach and Instructional Design

Although the original plan for VENUS was to address the wider community of citizens and to draw them into the university through the VENUS Seminars, in reality, the team found themselves having to provide meaningful learning experiences for two different groups of people: students and citizens. For the basis of the pedagogical approach and the instructional design it is worth highlighting certain common features of adult learning.
2.2.1 Adult Learners

The traditional teacher-centred way of instruction, or *transfer of information* has little effect on the adult learner’s conceptions and skills. It is the learner’s own awareness of his or her learning process and way of working which are now considered significant. Also concentrating on issues close to the learner’s own expertise, on things he or she takes for granted is important. An efficient way to acquire knowledge, as befits the adult learner, can be described as follows:

1. **Any new knowledge builds on previous knowledge**
   Learning something new never begins from the beginning. The adult learner has a wealth of earlier experience and knowledge which determine how he or she interprets new information. It is therefore important to know the basis of our conceptions. The objective is to be aware of our values and their origins and of those things we might consider self-evident.

2. **Emphasising comprehension is a meaningful way of building on our fund of knowledge**
   Understanding, argumentation and application are closely related to each other. Once we comprehend a problem or a situation, we can defend our conception of it. We can discuss it, make pertinent comments and ask relevant questions. At the same time, applying our knowledge in practice, nurtures, and serves as a measure of our understanding.

3. **We try to comprehend and evaluate theoretical information through practice**
   People participating in adult or company personnel education often possess a lot of practical experience. Education is required in order to acquire models and theories that provide a framework for their thinking and working. On the other hand, an adult learner has the advantage of being able to assess theories on the basis of his or her previous experience, thereby acquiring a critical, evaluating attitude to the information offered.

4. **Learning is based on the learner’s own activity**
   Learning something new is most meaningful when one is active and curious to learn. The role of the learner, therefore, is one of an active person, resolute and full of initiative.

5. **Social interaction has a central role in learning**
   We can support and create flexible ways for people to interact through the application of information and communication technologies.

6. **Flexibility in training arrangements supports the adult learner’s level of autonomy**
   At present, the normal workday includes frequent alternation between work and study and the adult learner often finds himself or herself in a new situation. It is therefore important to create new ways of working and learning, ways that are as flexible as possible.

The VENUS team used these pedagogical principles when setting up the model that was used for the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School, and tried to reach a realistic and working approach that took them into account while bearing in mind the realities of the given context.
2.2.2 Pedagogical Model

The pedagogical model selected for the VENUS activities took into account certain abstract concepts related to the learning and teaching process. The following section introduces two models into which most of the VENUS learning arrangements fit. These models, the Participation Model and the Acquisition Model were introduced by Anna Sfard. In the Participation Model, the focus of the activities is on how to encourage the learner to learn from a community and to contribute to it. In the Acquisition Model the focus is on the acquisition of pre-specified knowledge and to develop predetermined concepts. In the following table various features of these models adopted from the work of Collis and Moonen are summarised.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Participation Model</th>
<th>Acquisition Model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Definition of Learning</strong></td>
<td>Learning as participation, the process of becoming a member of a community</td>
<td>Learning as knowledge acquisition and concept development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key Words</strong></td>
<td>Apprenticeship, situatedness, contextuality, cultural embeddedness, discourse, communication, social constructivism, co-operative learning</td>
<td>Knowledge, concept, misconception, meaning, fact, contents, acquisition, construction, internalization, transmission, attainment, accumulation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emphasis on</strong></td>
<td>The evolving bonds between the individual and others; the dialectic nature of the learning interaction: the whole and the parts affect and inform each other</td>
<td>The individual mind and what goes into it; the 'inward' movement of knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ideal</strong></td>
<td>Mutuality; community building</td>
<td>Individualised learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role of Instructor</strong></td>
<td>Facilitator, mentor, expert participant, preserver of practice/discourse</td>
<td>Delivering, conveying, facilitating, clarifying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The main message of Sfard is that it is not about choosing one model but about balancing both models, as there is space for both of them.

For the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School, a blended teaching approach was used with face-to-face tutoring at each partner institution by a local moderator (as well as a content expert in the particular domain of the seminar) together with the virtual presence of guest lecturers from the partner institutions via videoconferencing and online tools. The seminars were built in a format that stimulated preparatory and follow-up activities and that contained both internationally and regionally networked elements.

2.2.3 Suitable Instructional Design Models

The term *instructional design* is used in this handbook to indicate the manner in which the teaching and learning process in the VENUS project was organised, although there are other terms which could be used, like didactics.
Sfard’s message not to choose one pedagogical approach but about balancing acquisition and participation, as there is space for both of them, led the VENUS team to the pedagogical approach used in VENUS, adapted from Collis and Moonen.

This approach is called the Flexibility-Activity Framework. The flexibility dimension, important not only for adult learners but also to the institutions involved in the VENUS activities, is added to the model.

Collis and Moonen address learning activities as a central activity. The strategy introduced by them includes an idea of a course (or seminar series) as a series of cycles of before, during and after activities. The activity taking place in the middle is typically a lecture, a group meeting or synchronous virtual meeting, an activity that requires preparation. The before activities are those with which the learners prepare for the during activity. The after activities are, as the name implies, follow-up activities.

As can be expected in these kinds of activities, both the before and after activities are often rather flexible in terms of timing while the during activities are more likely to be time-bound involving as they may some form of synchronous activity. The cycles of the activities are illustrated in the following diagram.
The strength of this approach is its granularity. Looking at the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School it is clear that the during activities were the international videoconferencing elements when the participants gathered together, either in a certain location or in a virtual meeting. From the individual seminar point of view and looking from the local organiser’s point of view, the lecture of the internationally renowned expert and the interaction involving all the sites linked together synchronously for the discussion following this lecture, is the more fixed during activity. This provides the necessary flexibility to take into account the localisation aspects, taking into account cultural and language issues. Activities that are heavily localised before and after can help in adapting the concept to local circumstances.

The pedagogical and instructional approach chosen by the VENUS partners can be summarised in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities taking place before the synchronous event</th>
<th>during the synchronous event</th>
<th>after the synchronous event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read background reading material before the seminar.</td>
<td>Participation in live session, listening to the lecture given by the international expert and engaging in discussion with other sites.</td>
<td>Visit the seminar or summer school recording and make a summary of the session as an assignment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2.3 Localisation: Multiculturalism and Multilingualism

The objective of this section is to highlight the importance of multiculturalism and multilingualism in events like the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School. First, we will give a general overview of the concepts of multiculturalism and multilingualism and the main European policy trends in this area. Then in the following paragraphs, we will discuss aspects that need to be considered when multilingual and multicultural projects are implemented, as in the case of the VENUS Seminars and of the Summer School. Finally, we will analyse the different possibilities and methods to introduce multiculturalism and multilingualism in the framework of international events.

As affirmed by Dr. Derrick de Kerckhove in his remarks on *l’Europa di qui a cinquant’anni* Europe is the best example of what we can define as Continentalism: a union that is not only economic and political, but also psychological and linked to new behaviours. Nowadays, Europe, which before represented multiculturalism, is a pacific cohabitation within a new mosaic.
2.3.1 European Policies on Multiculturalism and Multilingualism

The European Union (EU) is based on the principle of unity within diversity: diversity of cultures, traditions, beliefs and languages. Cultural and linguistic differences represent one of the most precious foundations of the EU identity that attributes equal importance to all European languages and cultures. Multilingualism – a concept that is strictly linked to that of multiculturalism – refers to the capacity of everybody to use more than one language and to the coexistence of different linguistic communities in the same geographical area.

Article 22 of the Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the EU, adopted by the most important representatives of the EU in 2000, states that the EU respects cultural, religious and linguistic diversity; and article 21 forbids all forms of discrimination based on any grounds, among them language. Respect for linguistic diversity is one of the EU’s key values. This principle applies not only to the 23 official languages of the EU, but also to the many regional and minority languages spoken by large sectors of the population.

In March 2002, the Heads of State of the EU who met in Barcelona fixed the objective of “mother tongue + 2” since childhood as a central pillar in their linguistic policy. In 2003 the European Commission (EC) committed itself, by means of a plan entitled Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: An Action Plan 2004-2006 to initiate 45 new actions aimed at encouraging national, regional and local authorities to cooperate with the EC to promote language learning and foster linguistic diversity.

Elements of these policies were made concrete in the New Framework Strategy for Multilingualism: Communication of the Commission which identifies the objectives to be attained in order to promote the full expression of all languages in Europe and to create conditions favouring the teaching and learning of different languages. The objectives set by the EC regarding multilingualism are:

1. Encourage the learning of languages and promote linguistic diversity in society;
2. Promote a fair multilingual economy;
3. Grant citizens access to laws, procedures and information about the European Union in their respective mother tongues.

In practical terms, this means that the EC has had to commit itself to the provision of multilingual web sites in order to allow citizens to access EU information particularly in the area of law in their own languages. It has also meant the creation of an internal network to ensure linguistic coherence in the practice of its services and to implement a proactive policy of multilingual communication with citizens. To meet the challenges such a commitment implies, the EC has invested considerably in research projects in the field of language in order to identify ways in which linguistic barriers can be overcome with the support of information and communication technologies.
During a recent meeting of the Culture and Education Committee of the European Parliament, Leonard Orban, European Commissioner for Multilingualism, pointed out that multilingualism is "inscribed since the beginning in the genetic code of the Union" referring to Regulation Nr. 1 in 1958, the regulation establishing the official language of Europe which gave all official languages the same relevance and which was the first regulation adopted by the then European Economic Community (EEC).

The following figure shows how the official languages of the European Union have changed since 1957.

Of course, the more languages we know, the wider is our access to international information. Since the 2001 European Year for Languages, Community institutions have promoted the objective of plurilingualism "to enhance the access to a huge scientific and humanistic heritage", underlining how, beyond the benefits on the human, cultural and political level, a lifelong multilingual education represents "a significant economic potential". Such a policy is yielding positive results, according to a recent survey made by Eurobarometer half of the citizens of the EU can speak at least one language apart from their mother tongue. In addition, the Commission has created a High-level Group on multilingualism including independent experts to review the progress made by the member states to bring new ideas, support and suggestions for future initiatives.
2.3.2 Adopting an Approach to Multiculturalism and Multilingualism

Taking these policies into account, the most coherent choice is clearly to adopt an approach which promotes dynamic multilingualism with different skill levels that meet citizens’ needs. This means we should avoid privileging a language or a few languages and in particular reject linguistic policies that hinder the creation of a community of shared rights and values. Above all it is clear that we need to revise the hypothesis of using in some situations only the so-called strong languages which simply opens the way to discrimination, division and conflict and to the simplification of values and cultural components conveyed by each language. Multilingualism should be encouraged and fostered and should remain a free and conscious choice respecting the foundations of the EU and the principle of cultural pluralism and linguistic democracy.

So, when it comes to activities like those carried out within the VENUS project, which language should we choose? As pointed out in the portal The Languages of Europe (for further information see http://europa.eu/languages) the language spoken by most people in the EU is German, however it is not very popular outside Germany and Austria. The EU languages that are most widely spoken worldwide are Spanish and Portuguese, but most of those who speak them do not live in Europe. French is the official language or one of the official languages of three EU member states; it is spoken in many areas of the world and it is taught in many schools across Europe; however it is more widely known in southern and western European countries than in the Northern or Eastern ones. This leads us to the question of adopting English as the common language when only one language needs to be chosen for practical and logistical reasons. Among the EU languages, English is the most widely spoken, both as first and second language; however, recent surveys showed that less than half of the EU population is able to express itself in English.

An alternative approach is to use some form of “global language”. Several attempts have been made to create new auxiliary languages without particular cultural ties, such as Esperanto and Globish (which is a simplified version of English that uses words and phrases that are the commonest and simplest of the English language). Common features of these languages are that they have basic vocabularies and simple grammatical structures. None of these languages have however gained world-wide popularity.

Consequently, English is on the foreground as the lingua franca in international settings. Over the past 250 years, English has evolved into the most commonly used means of communication in international cooperation. It is the most widely used language in the fields of science, communications, business and diplomacy. With the extending reach of the Internet, English has gained even more prominence. Even though not everyone may be equally proficient in English, it can generally be assumed that they will have a working knowledge of the language.

Within the European setting of the VENUS seminars and summer school, it was therefore an
obvious choice to include English in the multilingual set-up of the activities, next to a range of other local European languages.

2.4 Approaches to Evaluation

As the whole idea of introducing virtual seminars and summer schools is a rather new educational activity, it is worth considering some form of evaluation. In this context we refer of course to evaluation of the process rather than student evaluation or assessment. There are different ways in which evaluation can be tackled so it is worthwhile considering the various options available.

Different evaluation possibilities include formative evaluation, summative evaluation, process evaluation, product evaluation, and usability evaluation. Here is a short description of each:

- Formative evaluation is used in the development stage of an activity. It enables immediate reflection on user needs and the improvement of activities to make them even more effective.
- Summative evaluation is used for assessment at the final stage of an activity. Organisers of virtual seminars, for example, using this sort of evaluation would be able to find out what participants have actually learned during such seminars.
- Process evaluation is the monitoring of the overall organisation of an activity. In the case of a seminar series this includes the quality of the content, the performance of speakers, the quality of the technology, timing, the topic selected, etc.
- Product evaluation is used for assessment of the outcome, and mainly checks whether the pre-defined objectives were met or not.
- Usability evaluation checks whether users can use a product easily and if it meets their needs. In the case of a virtual seminar series, this type of evaluation relates mainly to the usability of online services like streaming.

In the education field, process and product evaluation are quite commonly used, however for activities like those carried out in VENUS practically all these types of evaluation can be used and combined to provide a very comprehensive and useful evaluation approach.

2.4.1 Evaluation Models

Evaluation should be seen as a process and it is important to start with a list of steps to be taken. In situations like virtual seminars and summer schools, evaluation is usually a relatively long-term activity. Therefore it is very useful to develop a conceptual model of the project and to identify key evaluation points. An effective evaluation model paves the way for successful and effective evaluation. There are a number of models for evaluation available and the following section provides a short overview of some of them which might be applicable for these kinds of activities. In VENUS we chose a hybrid approach which will be outlined in Chapter 4.
The EFQM Excellence model was developed by the European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) (for further information see http://www.efqm.org/). It is a practical tool which can be used to evaluate and develop operations.

The model can be used in five different ways:
- as a tool for self-assessment;
- as a way to benchmark with other organisations;
- as a guide to identify areas for improvement;
- as the basis for a common vocabulary and a way of thinking and/or
- as a way to structure the organisation’s management system.

Educational organisations can use the EFQM model for the following purposes:
- as a framework for self-evaluation that enables an educational organisation to identify its strengths and areas for improvement and the extent to which its operations and results are in line with the characteristics of an excellent organisation;
- as a framework for the educational organisation’s management system and/or
- as a way to identify individual areas for improvement.

The EFQM Excellence Model is a non-prescriptive framework based on 9 criteria. Five of these are Enablers and four are Results. The Enabler criteria cover what an organisation does. The Results criteria cover what an organisation achieves. Results are caused by Enablers and Enablers are improved using feedback from Results.

The EFQM Model is presented in the following figure. The arrows emphasise the dynamic nature of the model. They show innovation and learning helping to improve enablers that in turn lead to improved results. This model, which recognises there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in all aspects of performance, is based on the premise that excellent results with respect to Performance, Customers, People and Society are achieved through Leadership driving Policy and Strategy which is delivered through People, Partnerships and Resources, and Processes.

![EFQM Model Diagram](image-url)
**Kirkpatrick’s Training Evaluation Model**

Donald L. Kirkpatrick’s training evaluation model is made up of four levels of evaluation. It was designed to assess training effectiveness.

These four models essentially measure:
- reaction of student - what they thought and felt about the training;
- learning - the resulting increase in knowledge or capability;
- behaviour - extent of behaviour and capability improvement and implementation/application; and
- results - the effects on the business or environment resulting from the trainee’s performance.

Several other models are derived from Kirkpatrick’s four level model. They also aim to assess levels of learning.

**Jack Phillips’ Five Level ROI Model**

The ROI model aims to evaluate the Return On Investment (ROI). Developing a ROI model for training requires a key modification of a classic model. The four-level framework developed by Donald Kirkpatrick does not focus directly on the ROI issue. This level of evaluation does not require a specific monetary value (cost savings) to be determined. To obtain a true ROI evaluation, the monetary benefits of the programme should be compared to the cost of implementation in order to value the investment. In effect, this process moves evaluation to the further level – level 5 in the revised Kirkpatrick model. Thus, the fifth level of evaluation is developed by collecting Level 4 data, converting the data to monetary values, and comparing them to the costs of the programme to represent the return on training investment.

In practice, many organisations are taking evaluation to this new level for a few selected courses, often using some form of sampling. When the ROI formula is developed, evaluation is conducted at all five levels.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reaction and Planned Action</td>
<td>What are participants’ reactions to the programme, and what do they plan to do with the material?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Learning</td>
<td>What skills, knowledge, or attitudes have changed and by how much?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. On-the-job application</td>
<td>Did the participants apply what they learned on the job?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Business Results</td>
<td>Did the on-the-job application produce measurable results?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Return on Investment</td>
<td>Did the monetary value of the results exceed the cost for the programme?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other ROI Models include:
- Kaufman’s Five Levels of Evaluation
- CIRO (context, input, reaction, and outcome)
- Alkins UCLA model

**Daniel Stufflebeam’s CIPP Model**

CIPP is the acronym of Context, Input, Process, and Product evaluation. In general, these four parts of an evaluation ask:
- What needs to be done?
- How should it be done?
- Is it being done?
- Did it succeed?

The CIPP Evaluation Model (for further information see [http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/cippchecklist.htm](http://www.wmich.edu/evalctr/checklists/cippchecklist.htm)) is a comprehensive framework for guiding evaluations of programmes, projects, personnel, products, institutions and systems. It is supported with a check-list. In this check-list, the *Did it succeed?* or product evaluation part is divided into impact, effectiveness, sustainability, and transportability evaluations. Respectively, these four product evaluation subparts ask:
- Were the right beneficiaries reached?
- Were their needs met?
- Were the gains for the beneficiaries sustained?
- Did the processes that produced the gains prove transportable and adaptable for effective use in other settings?

### 2.5 Technology Choices

In the following section we will begin by considering the concept of *Telepresence* as this was at the basis of our ideas in setting up the VENUS project and we will introduce the various technologies which can be used to support telepresence. We will then provide a short comparative study of these technologies to help you find a solution that suits the requirements of your specific situation.
2.5.1 Telepresence

One form of distance learning which has emerged in groups of universities and/or large companies has been based around the use of videoconferencing to dispersed groups of learners. Typically, this involves providing so-called “tele-lectures”. This method can be characterised as an attempt to provide a similar style of teaching or training for learners at a distance to that provided in conventional classroom learning.

This method has some specific uses:
- where there is a need to reach scattered groups of staff on a trans-national or global basis e.g. small groups of staff working for multinational companies;
- where organisations are providing joint learning initiatives across national boundaries;
- where large numbers need to be reached and other options are not viable.

The presence of the lecturer obviously translates into the talking head on a (TV or computer) screen, speaking live (synchronous, same time) to an audience that is remotely present (different place) as groups or individuals. Telepresence refers to a set of technologies which allow a person to feel as if they were present, to give the appearance that they were present, or to have an effect, at a location other than their true location. Synchronous telepresence technologies are becoming more and more part of our everyday life, as bandwidth is generally increasing and communication tools like Skype or Messenger are becoming easily and freely available.

The following figure shows where and how videoconferencing fits into an overall model that considers various types of delivery methods in terms of location and synchronicity.

Fig.6 Any Time, Any Place Model of Learning: The Martini Model (Vanbuel 1998)
We can categorise telepresence delivery methods involving live picture (video) by different settings and by the numbers of sites involved in a session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience and Place</th>
<th>Point-to-Point</th>
<th>Multipoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals at home or at workplace (mainly from desktop)</td>
<td>Skype, Netmeeting (for further information see <a href="http://www.netmeetinghq.com">http://www.netmeetinghq.com</a>)</td>
<td>Web conferencing Desktop VC software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of people in a meeting room</td>
<td>Group VC equipment</td>
<td>Bridging and group videoconferencing equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Large group of people in a lecture hall</td>
<td>High-quality VC equipment</td>
<td>Bridging and high-quality videoconferencing equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Telepresence as an adaptation of a traditional didactical model is typically the first level of transposition of classroom based teaching to some form of distance education. It respects the nature of the live event (real time), provides opportunities for natural interaction (speech, vision and body language) and normally does not require large adaptation or modification of the teaching and learning support materials. This approach does not normally require a lot of adaptation for the lecturer in his/her teaching style (except maybe that he/she may be restricted in his/her mobility and the presence of the audience is two-dimensional rather than the typical classroom presence) nor does it require a particular learning behaviour or set of skills from the learner.

The organisational model chosen for the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School is based on a telepresence model. The decision to opt for a telepresence model of video-based group conferencing does not imply a qualitative assessment of the model as being superior: the many different models and teaching and learning methodologies using ICT are considered equally valid. However given the circumstances faced by the project team, it was agreed that it best suited our needs allowing for as natural as possible interaction between lecturer and participants where the emphasis was on the (tele- or pseudo-)presence of an expert within a group of participants.

There are several possible ways to provide a form of telepresence for VENUS type activities. This section will provide an introduction to several of those explored by the VENUS team and in use in different educational applications around the world.

From the start of television, it was clear that television had (and still has) terrific potential for addressing teachers and learners at home, at school or at work. The many dedicated programmes developed by public television broadcasters all over the world bear testament to this fact. Nowadays, in many countries these programmes are exiled to late night or early morning broadcasts or even abandoned. However, one of the inherent features of television is the fact that it is essentially a one-way communications medium (although applications of interactive digital television are now emerging). Since two-way communication or interactivity is of utmost importance in an educational context, especially with regard to collaboration, other video-based technologies have emerged in recent years including
videoconferencing (VC). The first VC systems started to appear in the market as ISDN (digital telephony) networks were expanding throughout the world in the 1980’s. In the 1990’s, IP (Internet Protocol) based videoconferencing became possible, and more efficient video compression technologies were developed, permitting desktop, or personal computer (PC)-based videoconferencing. In this way VC systems rapidly evolved from requiring highly expensive proprietary equipment, software and network requirements to standards-based technology that is readily available to the general public at a reasonable cost, and therefore used a lot in education. As we move towards the end of 2010, serious competitors for traditional VC technology are the rapidly improving web conferencing tools and technologies, which allow transfer of audio and video in combination with sharing documents among a group of participants, each using their own PC equipped with a (web) camera and a microphone. The promising feature of these technologies is that they free the learners from fixed space while allowing them to be connected synchronously.

2.5.2 Introduction to Video-based Technologies

All video-based technologies can be viewed from a common set of aspects, how content is produced, what the distribution channel is and the extent to which they can be considered interactive.

**Production**

The first element is the creation of sound and vision at the originating site: the capturing of what the actor/participant shows, says and does. This requires (a) camera(s), PC display converter or scanner, as well as sound capturing devices: microphones. Depending on the quality requirements of the whole conferencing event from beginning to end, the technical and quality requirements for these devices will differ considerably.

**Distribution**

The captured sound and vision must be transferred to the participants at the receiving end of the conferencing chain: this requires there to be some form of transmission technology. Again there are different technologies available, each with their own specific qualities and limitations.

The selection of the transmission or distribution chain is crucial: it dictates the choice of the server and client technology for the transmitting and the receiving sites. These have to match one another in order to display the content reliably. The selection of the distribution technology is also almost always a longer term decision as it is not easy to build up a loyal audience when they are forced to change receive technology often. The selection of the distribution mechanism almost always involves economical or financial factors: it may require investment on the part of a partner or group of stakeholders. It is therefore really important to carefully consider the options and to make the best possible choice. It is important to remember that all choices taken need to take into account not only the contribution or server side (where production takes place) but also the participant or client side.
Interactivity

Some distribution technologies integrate return channels that allow participants to engage interactivity with the main actor. In other cases, additional interaction or return channels need to be put in place, sometimes making the operation more complicated, more demanding on the support side or more expensive for other participants or stakeholders.

The following sections address TV, videoconferencing, web conferencing, streaming and podcasting, all of which can be used for the distribution of lectures. We have also included a description of chatting which, although not a video-based technology, is used very often as a support technology to some of the other technologies described in this section.

2.5.3 TV and Interactive TV

With television we mean the high-quality images and sound that come into our houses, schools, institutions or companies via aerials, cable distribution, satellite or broadband Internet IPTV (Internet Protocol Television) networks. The service model of television is simple: a centralised structure (the broadcaster) creates and aggregates TV programmes and feeds them into a high-quality network in order to reach as many viewers as possible. Programmes are created by the broadcaster himself or by independent production companies that supply the broadcaster with content.

Production

After the 1950s TV quickly became common. Television set the standard for our perception and acceptance of image and sound quality. TV production has a tradition of aiming for high production standards: quality images that are sharp, well lit, natural colour and stable; sound that is clear and noiseless, without disturbing background sounds, etc. When producing TV programmes, it is normal to look for good recording conditions: to look for a quiet room with good acoustics, maybe even a recording studio or specially equipped room, with proper lighting, attractive backgrounds and well designed graphics and other support materials, all in order to satisfy the expectations of the television viewer. Although the tools needed for TV production have become much cheaper over the last 10 years, for example video cameras of professional or broadcast quality nowadays cost 10 times less than 10 years ago, production of TV programmes still has the reputation of being quite expensive.

Distribution and server side

The common trend is that broadcasters do not own the transmission channel over which they transmit (broadcast) their programmes. Normally the cable network or the TV transmission antennas, the IP network or the satellites on which the programmes run, are owned by corporations that specialise in transmitting content (programmes) to their customers. For the programme maker, who is not a regular TV broadcaster such as BBC, RAI, YLE, MTV, etc. it is not easy to get access to distribution channels. This means that it can be difficult for an educational institution to gain access to public transmission networks. An exception to this is VENUS partner NETTUNO, who have two dedicated
satellite television channels for distance education.
Another problem is that all transmission networks suffer from a restricted geographical coverage, limited to the reach of the transmitter network. That is why, for geographically large areas, television is often broadcast via satellite.

Interactivity

TV is traditionally a passive medium. Higher level interactive TV adds the possibility to interact with the TV content itself: by ordering content as in Video on Demand, or by altering the content (for example time lapse videoing or skipping TV advertisements).

A more advanced possibility in relation to interaction is where viewers can interact with the content itself. Interactive TV can allow the most advanced levels of interactivity when a return channel sends the user-generated input or information back to the transmitter, in order to interact at that level with the content. For example where the viewer can control the cameras remotely in order to see exactly what he/she wants. Another example is where the viewer can interact directly with the people on screen or behind the scenes: for example during quizzes, polls, games.

When there is no integrated return possibility, like 2-way cable, additional technology may need to be implemented or added. There have been experiments with return channels on terrestrial and satellite TV broadcast (where the combination home aerial and TV set was equipped with some additional transmission technology). Other possibilities include the use of the telephone line (by incorporating a modem into the interactive TV terminal or by the use of the phone as a voice terminal), or by using the Internet as the communication channel. This type of interactive TV is not new and has been used over the last decades in various distance education applications. The Sacramento City College in the US, for example, broadcasts its Interactive Television Courses as a live classroom presentation via the city’s cable TV network. Students view the lectures from home and use the telephone to participate in the live class by asking questions or giving comments. The operational cost of running this type of TV programme is high however and means there has not been a great deal of large-scale uptake.
2.5.4 Videoconferencing

A videoconference or video teleconference uses interactive telecommunication technologies to connect two or more locations simultaneously via two-way video and audio. This can be as simple as a conversation between two people at their desks (point-to-point) using a low-cost desktop computer-based videoconferencing system or as complex as multiple sites (multi-point) with groups of people communicating amongst themselves in large rooms at different sites, all at the same time. As well as audio and visual transmission, videoconferencing can be used to share documents, computer-displayed information, and whiteboards.

The first videoconferences used closed-circuit television systems connected via cable. Later, to cover longer distances, satellite TV-transmission was used in both directions, but this technology was too expensive. It was only with the introduction of ISDN, the digital telephone network, and only when sufficient progress was made in image and sound compression, that videoconferencing started to become possible for regular use for distance education. ISDN assured a guaranteed minimum bit rate (usually 128 kilobits/s or multiples thereof) for compressed video and audio transmission.

Later, IP (Internet Protocol) based videoconferencing became possible, replacing ISDN based communications where sufficient bandwidth was available. Further development in compression technology has allowed for further migration of personal videoconferencing to the desktop, or personal computer. Desktop videoconferencing is now becoming cheap, relatively reliable and easy enough to be taken up by other than professional users thanks to free services, web plug-ins and software, such as NetMeeting and Skype.

Production

Videoconferencing requires as a minimum the installation of the following in all participating sites:

- camera(s) (to capture the image of the local participants present in the room);
- microphone(s) (to capture the speech and sound of local participants in the room);
- video display (a monitor or video projector with a screen where those present can see remote participants);
- audio display (or public address, playing back the audio that arrives from the remote site);
- a codec (compressor-decompressor) that compresses and encodes video and audio into digital data so it can be transmitted over the available network, and that decodes the digital data stream that is arriving from remote sites into sound and images; and
- connection to a transmission network to send and receive the stream of data that contains the heavily compressed video and audio. This network is usually IP (the Internet) or ISDN.

These systems are all relatively cheap compared to TV production equipment and usually within reach of educational institutions and companies. These systems are also primarily designed for ease of use rather than for high video and audio quality. They are also designed to minimise operational costs, thereby avoiding the need for highly skilled
professional staff. Although additional equipment and even some room adaptation may be recommended to ensure the success of a videoconference, normally this does not require large investment and existing classrooms or conference rooms are suitable. Furthermore, the most basic transition from traditional classroom practise of lecturing and learning is simple: well designed teaching and learning materials can be used without much adaptation and the teacher/tutor can start video-lecturing without too much training, once some basic guidelines are respected. The system does not impede or preclude innovative pedagogical methods with enhanced learner and group activity and with the use of other supporting teaching and learning technologies, and may even have functionalities embedded that enable some of these, such as shared applications and whiteboard.

Distribution
Videoconferencing makes use of publically available networks: the ISDN digital telephone network (using the H.320 standard), or increasingly the IP-based network (or Internet) using the H.323 standard, now that high-speed Internet connections, such as DSL, are becoming widely available. This means that most educational institutions can use their high-speed research Internet access for high-quality videoconferencing. The use of the Internet is not only cheaper but also makes it easier to set-up videoconferencing with simultaneous collaboration on whiteboards, chat channels, shared applications, etc. The combination of these technologies enriches the user experience. These networks have no geographical restrictions and allow teachers, lecturers, resource people and students from all over the world to be brought into classes in even the remotest places.
Interactivity

Interactivity is technically inherent in a videoconferencing system: just like during an ordinary telephone call, participants can speak freely, discuss, and interrupt in almost the same way as in a normal face-to-face discussion. The video functionality allows participants to show materials (slides, media, objects...) and even to communicate via body language. The introduction of dual screen technology (where one screen is used for live transmission of the speaker, while a second screen displays the subject, a slide, a graph, a visual element, or even the shared screen of a PC, a shared application, etc.) has increased the appeal of videoconferencing especially for teaching at a distance.

2.5.5 Streaming

Streaming media is multimedia that is received and displayed by the end-user (via the streaming client) while it is being delivered by the server (provider). The name refers to media that are distributed over the Internet. Streaming compares to a certain extent to TV or radio broadcasting: to put it simply: the media are only displayed as long as the stream (the live transmission and simultaneous reception) is not interrupted.

Production

Streaming does not address the production side of the chain; the term refers only to the distribution method of the media rather than to the media itself.

In theory, all linear audio and video content can be streamed, no matter how the content is produced, no matter how high or low the technical quality of the content. The source of the content can include professional as well as amateur material and even instant or candid recordings made with a web camera on top of a desktop computer. Live classrooms like those used during a videoconferencing session, can also be streamed.

Streaming can be live (while it happens – or with a minimal delay, the time it takes to encode the video and audio content and to start serving) or postponed (using previously recorded materials) and downloaded later (see following section). Real time streaming also prevents the client from recording the media and from keeping a copy on a local computer.
Distribution

Streaming media is a typical client-server application: the media are prepared (this means almost always compressed and encoded) and uploaded to a streaming server. The person wishing to view certain streaming media will need to have the appropriate client to address the streaming media content. This client is a piece of software, installed on their personal computer, which combines the procedures of requesting, buffering, and playing content. Suitable clients are usually freely available.

What happens is that the client sends a specific content request to the streaming server, the server starts reading and sending the requested file until all the content has arrived at the client side, then the stream stops.

Media servers need to be well dimensioned (multimedia can be quite large) and connected in order to be able to serve the expected demand. Setting up and running a media server can be demanding and expensive, much depends on the volume of streaming expected.

Interactivity

There is no intrinsic interactivity within a stream, unless, for example, the publisher adds control functions to fast-forward, rewind, jog, pause, etc. as with video recorders. Obviously, this is only possible with pre-recorded streams, not with live streams. However, because streams are usually embedded inside a web page or a web site, it is not too difficult to complement the stream with elements of interactivity. This is also possible within the media itself, using, for example, SMIL (Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language).

2.5.6 Downloading or Podcasting

Podcasting is a term that derives its name from the iPod manufactured by Apple. The iPod is an electronic device that makes it possible to download files in MP3 or similar format (Apple actually uses its own AAC or “iTunes” format). The iPod is only one of a huge range of audio players that enable the user to download, carry around and play back audio.

Podcasting involves producing an audio file, usually in the popular MP3 format, of, for example, a radio programme or a lecture, and to make it available for download so that users can listen to it at their own convenience, even while on the move. Users can subscribe and receive new files automatically over the Internet (using syndication feeds such as RSS) so that it looks like these files are “broadcast” to the listener: iPod + broadcast = Podcast. However podcasts are not limited to the iPod! Podcasts can be transmitted to and played on any MP3 player, and can also be played on PCs. Vodcasts are similar but make use of video files instead of audio.

Production

Podcasting only minimally addresses the production side of the chain; the term refers mainly to the distribution method of the media rather than to the media itself and all properly encoded forms of material can be down-loaded or podcast: for example: audio needs to be encoded so that it can be played with an MP3 player. The production process is therefore quite simple: create an audio file and then encode it in MP3 format (using e.g. Audacity, see www.audacity.sourceforge.net and LAME, see www.lame.sourceforge.net, two Open Source tools for audio content creation).
Distribution

To distribute Podcasts you need to create an RSS feed file, which is basically a text file with the extension .rss and that will be read by RSS readers at the user side. Inside this file there will be some XML code containing some information about the files you want to podcast: per item you will need a title, location, length, author, date and time, etc. The RSS file (that contains this programme list) as well as the MP3 files is then posted on a web server, where they can be accessed by users.

Interactivity

The interactivity is really one way: users subscribe to the RSS feed by loading the feed into their own reader, from then on, every time that the producer adds another item to the programme list, the user will download this item automatically into his/her familiar mp3 player. There is no immediate interaction between the creator and the user. Interaction can be built in to the content (for example: the author can request the user to write back) but is not possible within this technology platform itself.

2.5.7 Chat

Online chat refers to instant (real-time) short text communication over the Internet: either one-to-one or group-based (see also web conferencing below). Once a chat has been initiated, either user can enter text by typing on the keyboard and the entered text will appear on the other user’s display. Chat uses software tools such as Internet Relay Chat. Many of the Internet’s well-known services (e.g. Skype) offer free online chat and messaging services (for example portals, helpdesks) or in return for payment (for example adult content sites). Online chat is starting to replace telephony as a means of communication especially amongst teenage users.

Production

Chat uses chat servers and chat clients: special servers that allow messages to be instantaneously received and posted to all destinations, so that the chat clients in turn receive the messages and display them in the chat window on the users’ computers. Chat clients are freeware or relatively inexpensive shareware programmes. There are a number of chat servers on the market at a relatively low cost (a few hundred €s) or for free (sometimes called FLOSS (Free/Libre/Open Source Software)). Some learning (content) management systems have a chat server built in (e.g. FirstClass); some design frameworks have a chat service functionality built in (e.g. Drupal). Some portals or Internet services offer free use of chat channels (e.g. Skype, MSN). In some cases there is no need for a chat server as the chat can take place between clients directly (in a peer-to-peer network). Chat is very inexpensive and popular, because it is easy and immediate. Chat sessions can usually be run by themselves, supported as they are by the user community. The only cost to the provider is for making the service available. A chat service does not require specific hardware, any large network capacity, any intensive maintenance or support, hardly any training for the provider (or user). Some chat applications can use video and/or audio (for example Skype). These applications obviously require higher connection quality.
Distribution
Chat sessions run on the Internet. Because they do not require large amounts of data traffic, they can run in parallel with other activities and in that manner support other activities. Chat does not enable transfer of large amounts of content (e.g. learning and teaching support materials), as it is essentially a communication tool and not a distribution tool.

Interactivity
Online chat can be an alternative to meeting in a traditional classroom. In education however, chat is more often used to support a parallel activity (e.g. sharing an application, broadcasting a presentation, holding a videoconference). Chats can be moderated in order to be effective teaching and learning activities. Un-moderated chat sessions can support peer-to-peer learning as well as social activities within the learning environment.

2.5.8 Web conferencing
Web conferencing (sometimes called a webinar) is the term used for live meetings or presentations conducted over the Internet. The availability of broadband connectivity to the Internet, has allowed traditional computer conferences or group discussions using text messages in pseudo-synchronous message board, to evolve to live meetings, where synchronous exchanges of text, audio, and/or video messages supported with slides and/or other presentation materials can be held.

In a web conference, each participant sits at their own computer, and is connected to other participants via the Internet, the direction of the presentation is primarily one way from presenter to the audience. Often web conferences make combined use of telephone and Internet, where the presenter speaks over a standard telephone line (and where all participants call into a conference telephone call), while presenting information on screen. The audience can respond via their own telephones. This option is often chosen because voice telephony still guarantees better quality of service and reliability, the disadvantage being that the use of telephone shifts a certain amount of cost to the participants.
A web conference can include a number of features such as: slide presentations, live video (via webcam or digital video camera), real time audio, recording for viewing at a later time, shared whiteboard with annotation, live text chat, polls and surveys, screen sharing and application sharing.

Production

Web conferencing is mostly offered as a commercial service. Web conferences are hosted on a web server, controlled by the vendor, either on a cost per user per minute basis or for a cost per seat. Conferencing software is available and can be installed on an institution's or company's own servers. Conducting a web conference is a natural transition from holding a meeting or a conference to a virtual format. In this case, learning and teaching materials don't need to undergo drastic adaptations to be suitable for a web conference, the high degree of usability of web conferencing applications, makes it easy for participants to be at ease and effective in a web conference without much training or preparation. Examples of web conferencing applications include: FlashMeeting, WebEx MeetMeNow, Acrobat Connect, Microsoft Office Live Meeting, GoToMeeting and Netviewer one2meet. The web site www.webconferencing-test.com/site/eng/home.html provides an excellent overview of the different functionalities, advantages and disadvantages of web conferencing, as well as a cost analysis.

Distribution

Web conferencing requires there to be a suitable Internet connection for each participant, the more sophisticated the web conference (when for example live audio, live video or application sharing is integrated), the better the connection should be: broadband connectivity (DSL or Cable) is required in all cases. Some systems make use of ordinary voice telephony to distribute the audio (at least for the time being and for the foreseeable future until VoIP or Voice over the Internet becomes more reliable). This means that the participant also has to connect via telephone to the conference and also pay for this service.
Interactivity

Of themselves, web conferences enable interactivity in text form, and possibly also in audio and even video. When complemented with screen sharing or application sharing functionalities, they are ideal tools for learning-by-doing training, for example in software training. But web conferences can be very effective even in less hands-on types of learning and training: the immediacy and the familiarity of the interactive modes can support all types of learners and learning or conferencing activities.

2.6 Intellectual Property Rights Issues

Many university staff are largely uninformed when it comes to the topic of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). While expertise will normally be available in relation to the broad use of intellectual property especially among library staff, many lack basic information about how to deal with IPR when organising virtual seminars or summer schools. For this reason we include a description here of IPR and what university staff need to know in this respect as part of our description of the options available and context in which the VENUS events took place.

2.6.1 What is IPR?

Alongside the protection of physical properties (i.e. tangible items like a house) a series of laws have been developed to protect intellectual property (i.e. immaterial assets like the authorship of a text). Intellectual property (IP) occurs in various forms, with copyrights, trademarks and patents being the most publicly known and used. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are the rights allocated to prevent unauthorised use of an immaterial asset (e.g. an MP3 file, a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation).

Depending on the type of immaterial assets created, the IPR are either instigated automatically upon creation of the asset by the original author (e.g. copyright), or they have to be registered with the appropriate registration facility in charge of a given asset type (e.g. patent claims have to be filed in a national or supranational patent office). IPR can be transferred between parties. The transfer typically takes the form of a license, in which a licensor grants a subset of rights to a licensee.

As with legal issues in general, IPR can be rather a complex matter. IPR questions in particular may require a multinational perspective involving different national legal frameworks with different histories and often conflicting rules and principles. This means that important issues related to IPR are usually best left to legal experts. The following paragraphs merely provide a number of rough guidelines that indicate, based on our experiences, where and when you should take extra care of IPR issues in any VENUS type activities.
2.6.2 IPR in Learning Scenarios

In VENUS and similar learning scenarios, the main issues related to IPR involve the copyright of the learning content. Just as in a traditional face-to-face learning scenario, it is important to remember that the rights have to be obtained for third-party content used in the learning session (so-called inbound licensing). In virtual seminars and summer schools, the third-party content from the organiser point of view is mainly the presentations of the experts and the presentation material used by the expert or participants. However, in an online scenario, possibly with the learning session being recorded and being made publicly available, potential and assumingly unwitting copyright violations are much more visible and therefore more likely to be a problem.

A significant value-added aspect of VENUS and similar learning scenarios is the fact that learning sessions can be recorded and made available online for participants who would like to rerun the session later or for people that were not able to attend the live session. The recorded session itself can be considered as a newly created learning content object. This raises a second copyright question which usually does not apply in traditional classroom learning scenarios: to whom and under which conditions shall the recorded sessions be made available (so-called outbound licensing)? This question cannot be answered in isolation, since potential restrictions attached to the learning content used in the learning session have to be considered. For example some licenses do not allow the use of the license object in commercial contexts. Another important point is that certain license agreements allow the use of learning material in a defined and closed group like a physical classroom, but may not allow the use for a potentially large and rather undefined target audience of Internet users. If such an object is used inside another learning object (i.e. a recorded learning session), it may poison the surrounding learning object in a way that it cannot be commercially exploited unless the parts with the learning object in question are removed. The latter option seems to be quite difficult or even impossible if the inside learning object in question comprises a substantial part of the surrounding learning object. Inbound licensing therefore has an impact on the options available for outbound licensing.

2.6.3 All Rights Reserved

Usually when one comes across stranded goods on the beach, maritime law states in general that it is safe to assume that the goods do not belong to anyone and can be taken home. However, this is not the case with intellectual property: if not otherwise stated, all rights are reserved! This means you can only issue those rights that have been explicitly granted to you by the rights holder. To put it another way: something you find on the web that does not have an authorship or copyright notice attached to it, is not automatically yours (note the fundamental difference between Internet and maritime law!). If you come across such an object, assume the default all rights reserved. Note that the copyright notification is optional in many countries. This means that even without an explicit copyright notice, in general somebody owns the copyright. The only way to acquire the legal rights to use a content object is to contact the copyright holder and acquire a license (that may or may not be free of charge).
2.6.4 Fair Use

You may argue now that the all rights reserved copyright legislation described here may render journalism, research and education completely impossible, if one had to acquire explicitly the rights for all the hundreds of bits and pieces for an article or a teaching lesson reference. Fortunately legislators defined a number of exceptions for usage scenarios that do not require explicit permission of the copyright holder for the use of a content object. Nomenclature and the concrete legal framework differ among national legislations. In the USA, a rather general exemption called fair use has been established. In Germany the constitution limits the applicability of copyright with regard to freedom of speech and freedom of the press. In addition a number of well defined exceptions for purposes of research and education are set out in German copyright law. If you want to invoke the corresponding legal clause for a virtual seminar series or summer school in your own country, make sure that you understand and apply the relevant national legislation correctly. If there are several sites with potentially different legal parameters involved, make sure that you comply at least with the applicable national legal framework of the main site. For a live event facilitated for example via videoconferencing, the site where the moderator and/or the multisite control unit (MCU) are hosted can be considered the main site. For a replay or download of the recorded session, the site where the files are physically stored on the server can be considered the main site.

2.6.5 Creative Commons

Having to contact the copyright holders or thoroughly investigate whether a given scenario fulfills the prerequisites of fair use or a similar exception defined in the applicable legal framework may still seem to be tedious. It is obviously preferable to have a stock of content objects like text documents, photos, audio files and movies already available with a rather permissive license attached to them. This would mean that such objects could be freely used in a virtual seminar or summer school without having to investigate the applicability of fair use and potentially negotiate with the respective copyright holders.

Creative Commons is one such an initiative and released as its first project in December 2002 a set of copyright licenses free for public use. The rationale behind the Creative Commons is described as follows by its originators: Too often the debate over creative control tends to the extremes. At one pole is a vision of total control — a world in which every last use of a work is regulated and in which “all rights reserved” (and then some) is the norm. At the other end is a vision of anarchy — a world in which creators enjoy a wide range of freedom but are left vulnerable to exploitation. Balance, compromise, and moderation — once the driving forces of a copyright system that valued innovation and protection equally — have become endangered species. Creative Commons is working to revive them. We use private rights to create public goods: creative works set free for certain uses. Like the free software and open-source movements, our ends are cooperative and community-minded, but our means are voluntary and libertarian. We work to offer creators a best-of-both-worlds way to protect their works while encouraging certain uses of them — to declare “some rights reserved.” (for further
Today, more than five years after the initial release, the Creative Commons (CC) movement has become mainstream. Non-profit sites like the Internet Archive (See http://www.archive.org) as well as commercial sites like flickr.com and slideshare.net offer access to and extended search functionalities for content licensed under Creative Commons. It is interesting to note that the prominent Wikipedia Project (see http://www.wikipedia.org) uses the GNU Free Documentation License for its articles. This license shares the same spirit with Creative Commons but has a different origin. It was developed by the Free Software Foundation for documenting software. When the Wikipedia project started in the year 2000, the CC licenses had yet to be developed. However, multimedia content on Wikipedia including still images is published under a CC license.

The following text by CreativeCommons.org describes the options a copyright holder can choose from to customzie a CC license for a given purpose:

**Attribution**

You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your copyrighted work – and derivative works based upon it – but only if they give credit the way you request.

**Example:** Jane publishes her photograph with an Attribution license, because she wants the world to use her pictures provided they give her credit. Bob finds her photograph online and wants to display it on the front page of his website. Bob puts Jane’s picture on his site, and clearly indicates Jane’s authorship.

**Noncommercial**

You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform your work – and derivative works based upon it – but for noncommercial purposes only.

**Examples:** Gus publishes his photograph on his website with a Noncommercial license. Camille prints Gus’ photograph. Camille is not allowed to sell the print photograph without Gus’ permission.

**No Derivative Works**

You let others copy, distribute, display, and perform only verbatim copies of your work, not derivative works based upon it.

**Example:** Sara licenses a recording of her song with a No Derivative Works license. Joe would like to cut Sara’s track and mix it with his own to produce an entirely new song. Joe cannot do this without Sara’s permission (unless his song amounts to fair use).
Share Alike

You allow others to distribute derivative works only under a license identical to the license that governs your work.

Note: A license cannot feature both the Share Alike and No Derivative Works options. The Share Alike requirement applies only to derivative works.

Example: Gus’ online photo is licensed under the Noncommercial and Share Alike terms. Camille is an amateur collage artist, and she takes Gus’ photo and puts it into one of her collages. This Share Alike language requires Camille to make her collage available on a Noncommercial plus Share Alike license. It makes her offer her work back to the world on the same terms Gus gave her.
The purpose of this chapter is to explain the model that was the basis for the virtual seminars and summer school organised within the VENUS project over an 18-month time period from April 2006 to October 2007. It is built on the theoretical perspective from which the project began as outlined in Chapter 2. In this chapter we will describe each step taken by the VENUS partnership in their application of this model and point out how its application led to the successful realisation of the partnership’s objectives.

3.1 A Phased Model for Setting up Educational Activities

The VENUS model, tailored to setting up an educational activity providing virtual seminars and a virtual summer School, was divided into four phases:

- Phase 1 = Defining the Goals
- Phase 2 = Planning
- Phase 3 = Delivery
- Phase 4 = Follow-up

![Fig. 7 The VENUS Phased Approach](image-url)
The goal-setting phase is the basis upon which the decision is taken as to whether or not it is worthwhile to go ahead with a project. In the case of VENUS, this was dependent on a European Commission (EC) decision to approve funding for the project. The key elements of this phase are what kind of content the team wish to deliver, for whom it is intended and what is the added value for the participants, as well as for the organisers and the different stakeholders. In the planning, delivery and follow-up phases, the project team operated with two kinds of activities: those which are clearly adding value and those which enabled the value-creating activities to occur. In seminars of the type proposed by the VENUS consortium, when internationalising the existing content of learning activities to both students in other higher education institutes as well as to citizens, the content is closely linked to curriculum development. The learning design, often called the pedagogical approach, leads to a certain kind of instructional design, suited to the needs of the audience but also to the limitations of the setting: what kind of technology is in use, what are the time constraints of the participants, what are the overall local circumstances in each participating site, which includes cultural and language issues.

3.1.1 Defining the Goals: Why, What and Who

*In life, as in football, you won’t go far unless you know where the goalposts are.*

(Arnold H. Glasgow)

Initiating a project, like the launch of a virtual seminar usually starts with a vision, an attractive but rather diffuse idea about the potential benefits of such a seminar. As a first step, it is essential to clarify this vision and elaborate on the specific goals of the project. Defining specific goals makes it easier:
- to set up a project plan;
- to make the seminar concept sound appealing to the potential participants and raise their interest; and
- to win support from required stakeholders (e.g. people in the organisation responsible for the allocation of resources).

The process of mapping the goals of a project can be quite lengthy and painful. This is particularly true when more than one party is involved in the goal-setting process, since conflicting interests of the partners involved will almost certainly arise when goals are being discussed. However, agreeing on concrete goals right at the beginning of a project like VENUS is worth the effort. It is fairly obvious that having opposing goals or no substantial goals at all, will certainly jeopardise the project by causing disorientation and even serious disputes among the project stakeholders at a later stage.

Based on our work in the VENUS project and the VENUS project partners’ prior experiences in similar project contexts, the application of the following heuristic method – the “Goal-Setting Triangle” – has proven successful as a way of pinpointing the objectives of a project:
In the case of VENUS, each side of the triangle represented a dimension related to the objectives of the planned virtual seminars and summer school. These objectives needed to be approached from the participants’ point of view in order to obtain valuable answers. The dimensions are each represented by a question that served as a guideline to elaborate the project goals covering the given dimension. The goal-setting process can be considered complete, if and only if the question for each dimension can be answered sufficiently and unambiguously from the participants’ point of view. Coming up with no or insufficient answers to one dimension indicates a major problem with any planned project. If that is the case, extensive dialogue with the potential learners and among the project stakeholders is recommended in order to clarify the goals of the project. It might even be advisable to delay or abandon the project completely if no consensus on the project goals can be reached.

**Why? (Purpose)**

The use of technology costs money and usually increases the organisational complexity of an activity like a virtual seminar series or summer school. The costs and organisational complexity of conducting these kinds of activities can only be justified (especially in the eyes of the organisation responsible for allocating the resources) if it provides plausible and tangible benefits that outweigh the costs and additional complexity incurred. In our opinion, overcoming the boundaries of a physical seminar location constitutes one of the most important attributes of a virtual seminar series or summer school. Depending on the individual context and preconditions of a virtual seminar series or summer school, this increased spatial flexibility may lead to savings in both travelling time and travelling costs for the people who otherwise would have travelled to the actual seminar location. Moreover, it can serve as an enabler for people who otherwise could not have come to the physical seminar location at all, due to spatiotemporal or other restrictions and obligations. This enabler function may in turn provide a higher degree of choice regarding the composition of the audience and the selection of speakers. A higher degree of choice can be utilized to improve the overall quality of the seminar, e.g. by increasing the effectiveness of the learning processes and the learners’ motivation.

In the VENUS project the increased choice was used as a lever to improve the overall quality of the seminars and summer school in the following ways:

- It was relatively easy to recruit prominent experts for a defined subject area, since the overall time slot to be allocated to such a presentation within a seminar is significantly shorter without travelling time. The presence of well-known experts gave the VENUS
activities a higher degree of authenticity leading to a more positive overall impression and higher learner motivation.

- It was possible to include students and citizens from all over Europe in the audience who otherwise could not have invested the time and effort to come to the central location. The inclusion of people from outside the VENUS partner universities led to richer and more holistic discussions during the events.
- The presence of groups at several locations at the same time that were connected live via videoconferencing made it possible to include country-specific aspects in the discussion. This live connection prepared the ground for comparative and cross-cultural perspectives in the discussions, which provided significant added value, notably in one of the VENUS Seminars, when the future of European integration was the theme being discussed.

Our experience in respect to goal-setting shows that it is advisable to focus on a small number of core benefits that are particularly evident and likely to be attained. The inclusion of too many potential benefits, in particular the ones that are uncertain to be reached, may put the project at risk by raising expectations and blurring the focus of the project.

- **What? (Content)**
The aim of the VENUS Project was to internationalise prestigious courses with international scope and importance through virtual mobility. As will be described in more detail later, we chose topics with a variety of cross-cultural perspectives to make the international discussion as rich as possible. Given the possibility of bringing people from different countries into one room, the topics and discussions needed to give participants an opportunity to gain expertise in the chosen topic and to develop interpersonal skills and cultural understanding. At the same time, we tried to make the technology aspect of the virtual seminars as transparent as possible, so the audience was not distracted from the content. However the virtual seminars also give the audience an opportunity to learn to use ICT for collaboration.

As already mentioned, two different types of sessions were implemented: those which were part of the seminar series that took place during the academic year and those which were part of a one-week summer school. The VENUS Seminar Series, made up of 9 seminars was based on the broad, general topic: Global Issues for the European Citizen, this was in order to create a dialogue around several broad issues. The team took a different approach for the one-week Venus Summer School and opted to work around one specific topic, for a more in-depth analysis. The topic of the summer school was: The Use of Social Software in Education and Business. In the summer school, the objective was to teach participants how they could use new so-called Web 2.0 tools to set up a European network or to work on an international level.

- **Who? (Target Group)**
Before fixing the agenda for your virtual educational activities, it is very important to think about the target group. Who do you want to reach, teach or inform? Who will participate? How can you best describe the audience you expect to take part?

The main aim of the VENUS project was to open up the university and make it more
accessible to the citizen. Therefore the target group was not exclusively traditional on-campus students but also citizens and employees who are interested in continuing their personal development and staying up-to-date in respect to certain relevant societal issues. The idea behind VENUS was to promote the principles of the Faculty of Extension acting as an open learning centre, open to students, citizens and employees.

For the seminar series, the original plan was to primarily target citizens as indicated in the original project proposal, although students were not excluded. The summer school was intended more for students. In reality, the opposite was in fact the outcome, with a higher number of students taking part in the seminar series while there were significant numbers of citizens involved in the summer school. This had a significant impact on the decisions that were taken during the project lifetime in respect to timing and other matters as well as on the choice of topic and dissemination strategies, which will be discussed in the following section.

### 3.1.2 Set-up, Delivery and Follow-up Phases

As soon as we clarified our goals, we then reached the planning phase of the project, followed by the implementation and follow-up phases. We used value chain thinking to help organise the activities into manageable entities. The tasks to be implemented in order to be successful with these types of activities can be divided into those that create value for the initiative and those that enable these activities. Any or all of the value-creating activities may be vital in developing a competitive advantage for the project.

![Fig.9 Phases II, III, IV](image-url)
For the VENUS activities, these value-creating activities were naturally the content (the overall topic, the specific topics of the individual seminars, the excellence of the expert) and the curriculum (if the provision of accreditation and certification was to be considered), the pedagogical approach leading to certain instructional design, choice of technology and the multicultural and localisation issues, very essential in the international context. These components are again interconnected and influence each other. When setting up an initiative like the VENUS Seminar Series or Summer School, it is clear that the different activities are there throughout the whole project. However, specific tasks and their relative importance have naturally varied during the different phases of the project.

The enabling activities are also critical for the success of a project like VENUS, even though from the VENUS perspective they can be seen as normal procedures for setting up learning activity in general. The nature of enabling activities is that they support the development of a competitive advantage for the project.

The enabling activities which were essential for VENUS were:
- Project management and financial planning
- Event planning and scheduling
- Marketing, PR and communication
- Support services
- Management of IPR issues
- Evaluation and quality management

### 3.1 The VENUS Approach

Taking this overall model into account, the VENUS team implemented two different models of virtual educational activities, a virtual seminar series (regular seminars during the academic year) and a virtual summer school (1 week during September 2007). Both focused on providing the audience (students as well as citizens) with access to knowledge of common and current interest, given by high level experts that would otherwise not be accessible to them. Moreover, the aim was to connect groups of participants across borders with strong local support, to enable participation from the participant’s own desktop if required by providing streaming and the possibility to participate in chat sessions, to ask the expert challenging questions, and even to provide the possibility to come back to the presentation and discussion later by making recordings of the live sessions available.

To achieve these objectives, we had to take into account somewhat opposing concepts in order to come up with a final approach for both a virtual seminar series and summer school; these were virtual vs. real activities, passive, receptive participants vs. (inter)active participants, and local vs. European/international dimensions.
The following diagram provides an overview of the approach that was taken to realise both the seminar series and summer school.

![VENUS Seminar Model](image)

**Fig.10 VENUS Seminar Model**

### 3.2.1 Virtual Seminar Series

The definition of virtual seminars used in VENUS was one of seminars that take place entirely on-line or through videoconferencing technology. In the VENUS Seminars, the lecturer and participants were not necessarily at the same location, for a large part, the communication between lecturer and participant took place synchronously.

The VENUS Seminars can be considered an extension of the model of the traditional on-campus seminar or guest lecture where teachers or lecturers and learners meet physically within the boundaries of space and time, and where there is an asymmetric transfer of knowledge: this means that learners are for a large part of the seminar receptive, for a smaller part of the seminar actively engaged in discussion with one another, and for another part they interact with the speaker.

Activities corresponding to many of those undertaken in VENUS already exist in various parts of the world. Live sessions are commonly used in blended learning, when several different delivery media are used for an entire course or training programme. There are lots of examples of videoconferencing seminars within mainstream education, when two or more institutions collaborate in arranging learning activities, connecting groups of students together. There are also publicly available recordings of seminars organised by educational institutions in different countries. Many conferences nowadays provide key presentations via streaming. In companies, live e-learning systems are popular for sales or channel training, particularly with organisations where their products have short product life cycles and where the sales force or channels are geographically dispersed. Professional associations and publishing companies provide live sessions with web conferencing tools for individual
participants, sometimes called webinars (short for web-based seminar, a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the web; a key feature is its interactive elements).

One of the experiences which had an influence on the early development of VENUS was the continuous medical education project Pentalfa (for more information visit http://med.kuleuven.be/pentalfa). Pentalfa has been successfully in operation at K.U.Leuven for the past 5 years, and has involved some of the key partners of the VENUS project who have demonstrated their ability to organise, deploy and operate virtual seminars on a larger scale in Pentalfa. Similar types of seminars using group videoconferencing connecting several sites have been organised in other parts of the world including Finland within the Finnish Virtual University context. In the US, MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) World is a free, open streaming media web site of the most significant public events at MIT. It features the most recent speakers and guests from across the campus and around the world. It is linked to the Professional Education Programmes at MIT’s School of Engineering, for further information including examples, see http://mitworld.mit.edu/about.php. Sometimes these seminars are called mega conferences, as they connect large numbers of sites together. What is rather unique about VENUS is the fact that it combined several aspects of these different approaches.

The VENUS Seminars were supported with lecture materials (background reading materials, biography and possibly the lecture support materials) before the lectures, during the lectures the learners could participate in parallel discussions (via chat), and afterwards the possibility was provided to extend the discussion in a forum, and to re-visit the seminar by looking at the recorded seminar again.

Each seminar of the VENUS series consisted of 3 main parts:

- Interactive preparatory activities: these were run virtually following different instructional design models and supported by different technologies.
- Seminar delivery: A presentation from an internationally recognised top expert was delivered virtually (using videoconferencing and live streaming,) and distributed to other partners in the network backed up with interaction possibilities. The topic was presented from a European perspective. In addition, the topic was discussed locally by participants in each region. Then a debate took place between all partner sites based on the main conclusions of each region. The videoconferencing sessions were recorded and were available afterwards to all those interested.
- Interactive follow-up activities: These were run virtually following different instructional design models and supported by different technologies.

Technically, there are two sides to the VENUS Seminars: on the one side there is the *contribution or server* side, where the lecture takes place physically, from where the content is distributed to the participating sites and where the various modes of interactivity are implemented and operated. The other side of the technical organization is at the participant’s side, the *client or receiver* side. The word receiver is used in the widest sense here as these sites were also partially contributing during the interactive parts of the seminar.
There were in general two different types of client site for VENUS participants. There were the ones for participants who come together in the VENUS Seminar locations, which were housed in the VENUS partner institutions, and there were those for individual participants who preferred to participate from a location of their own choice. Both options required a different setting:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Technical set-up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals at home or at their workplace</td>
<td>Internet connected PC equipped with standard software (browser with plug-ins)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group of people in partner institution</td>
<td>IP or ISDN-based videoconferencing terminal, audio and video displays that were adapted to the size of the audience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.2 Virtual Summer School

Within VENUS, a Virtual Summer School was defined as being a summer school held over a limited period of time that included virtual activities supported via videoconferencing or other online technology.

In realising a Virtual Summer School, we agreed that it was imperative to keep the essential characteristic of a summer school, which is in-depth research and discussion of a relevant topic complemented with practical sessions (working with tools and software). Intensive interaction with and between participants is a key feature of a summer school.

The VENUS Summer School was held simultaneously at 7 different partner sites. It lasted 5 days (one working week), and each day consisted of face-to-face, local activities and virtual/online, international activities. The topic of the summer school was *The Use of Social Software in Business and Higher Education* and it was targeted at academics (students, teachers, and tutors), professionals and citizens in general. The face-to-face, local activities included introductory presentations to the subject (sometimes with local experts), presentations of tools, hands-on practice sessions and discussion groups in the form of learning cafés. All these activities were conducted in the local language and the focus was on local/regional/national issues.

The international activities were conducted virtually via videoconference. These presentations by experts in the field were structured in a similar way to the VENUS Seminar Series: there was a short round-up of the participating sites, a lecture by the expert (20-25min or 40-45min), a short local discussion followed by a discussion involving all the sites connected via videoconference. Further international and online activities were encouraged in the hands-on practice sessions, where online tools were used to collaborate and record the work done during the summer school.

The concept of a virtual summer school is not new: virtual means have been used to extend
the summer school beyond spatial and temporal restrictions for quite some time. Most of the existing initiatives however concentrate on the virtual/online availability of course material, lectures and presentations, with limited face-to-face guidance. Examples of these are summer schools that offer fully accredited courses which can complement or even replace standard semester-based courses.

The VENUS Summer School model is different in that it offered a mix of working methods, virtual and face-to-face. This created a much richer experience for the participant who not only became acquainted with virtual interaction methods, but who was also part of the local (physical) community. As such, this represented the best of both worlds: the physical contact with peers in the local setting was not sacrificed to individual online (international) participation.

This organisational model was designed on the basis of the partners’ own experiences with different working and learning methods where we chose to integrate the VENUS Seminars model into the VENUS Summer School, in the form of daily videoconference lectures. This meant the integration of an expert speaker’s presentation, a short local discussion in the local language (sometimes under the guidance of a local expert) and an international discussion with the expert speaker across all sites. The VENUS Seminars model was validated in the Summer School, as the local discussion (however short) proved to be an essential part of the model (and was badly missed when it was omitted at the beginning of the Summer School).

Another working method that was chosen was the local group discussions in the form of learning cafés, a model that the partnership has often used in the framework of other collaborations. It was also effective in the VENUS Summer School; more so as the resulting reports of the discussions were recorded on online shared collaborative spaces. This made asynchronous, international discussions possible. The learning café method itself was experimented with and adapted into an international learning café enabled through online web conferencing. One table at each participating site was connected to a virtual room in which a moderated international learning café took place.

Finally, a deliberate choice was made to include many practical hands-on sessions (based on requests made by participants in previous events). The sessions were always introduced locally through short presentations and guided by experts in the subject from the project team. Technically, the seminars in the VENUS Summer School were very similar to the VENUS Seminars. One major difference is the fact that online discussion during the seminars (through chat) was not possible.

All other technical infrastructure used during the VENUS Summer School can be characterised as lightweight and low-threshold. Social software tools such as weblogs, wikis, shared collaborative spaces and browser-based web conferencing tools were used. These can be accessed from anywhere at any time, with few technical requirements (only broadband Internet and browsers with required plug-ins; with the possible need for a webcam and microphone for web conferencing).
In this chapter, we will describe how we organised the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School. We will also include recommendations and suggestions that relate to different aspects of the way in which these activities were organised which may be useful if you would like to organise similar activities.

4.1 Finding Networks and Partners

The VENUS partnership arose as a result of existing relationships amongst the participating institutions, mainly as a result of their membership of the EuroPACE network. One of the roles of EuroPACE is in fact to stimulate active collaboration amongst the member universities in the manner achieved in VENUS. This meant that the first step of finding active partner institutions for collaboration in practical ways like the establishment of a virtual seminar series or summer school was not necessary in the VENUS situation.

For others however, this may not be the case, and so the first step in organising activities of this type will be to identify partners.

You may find the following suggestions useful if you need to find partners for setting up virtual seminars or a summer school:

- Look for an existing network in your field of expertise. Most educational institutions have an International Relations Office, where you can find networks or universities which already have bilateral agreements with your institution.
- Look for existing European or Trans-European networks of universities, e.g.
  - www.europace.org
  - www.leru.org
  - www.coimbra-group.eu/
- Make sure you have a clear and explicit plan of action, particularly when describing to potential partners exactly what their roles and responsibilities will be.
4.2 Curriculum and Content

Content and speaker are the main attraction points for any seminar or summer school. A relevant topic, an innovative view and an engaging speaker are all essential for a successful seminar. A lot of time was spent during the VENUS project selecting the right content and speakers for the events.

4.2.1 Content for Seminar Series

For the seminar series, the organisational approach taken within VENUS was that each partner institution was asked to select a topic that had a European focus and that contributed more in general to the education of all students, citizens and employees (taking, as a start, general topics like Ethics, Citizenship, Entrepreneurship, etc.). The most appealing and interesting topics were obviously those promoting European citizenship, collaboration and personal development. The project team therefore looked for high-profile names in a variety of fields including Politics, Economics, Science, Arts and New Media.

A content working group was set up 6 months before the start of the seminar series. The task of this group was to define criteria for the selection of content and speakers for the whole series. Eventually, after considerable discussion amongst the team, speakers were selected all of whom were world-renowned experts in their field. They were chosen not only because they would be informative, but also because they were considered to be sufficiently attractive in terms of their style and delivery. From the initial shortlist of about 30 names, the team ended up with nine suitable speakers. The final speakers were Prof. Riccardo Petrella, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Th. Wessels, Prof. Joanne Ciulla, Prof. Jean-Jacques Cassiman, Stephen Downes, Jan Hoet, Risto Linturi, Nathan Shedroff and Dr. Derrick de Kerckhove. Of this list, one lecture had to be cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances (speaker was ill). For a short biography of each speaker, please see Annex 4.
Although the team did not choose to include only academics, in the end most of the speakers chosen were working either full or part-time as an academic. In their selection, the team also ensured that those selected represented a broad selection of backgrounds and nationalities to ensure that the series was not dominated by speakers from any single field of endeavour or country. We also tried as far as possible to take gender considerations into account.

The selection of content also depended on its potential appeal to a wider audience. This meant that speakers were always urged to keep their lectures open enough to engage the attention of the full audience and not only specialists in the field. For each speaker, the challenge was to present their ideas to a mixed audience of citizens, students and experts in their own field. The impact of new developments in the expert speaker’s field on society in general, and European society in particular, was therefore an obvious starting point for each.

4.2.2 Content for Summer School

The selection of content for the summer school was somewhat different. Whereas during the seminar series, the focus was on a variety of currently relevant topics, the Summer School focused on just one topic and its impact on society. The VENUS project team choose a topic with which many of the project team were already familiar, Web 2.0 and Social Software. In the same way as in the seminar series, the focus was on how these new developments can have an impact on society, and on professional life and higher education in particular.

The target audience for the summer school was very varied. As the chosen topic was relatively new, the audience ranged from complete newcomers to the topic with limited or no knowledge of social software to others who could be considered relative expert users of social software. The team chose this topic particularly because it enabled them to plan a programme with very practical, hands-on sessions (introduction and practice with tools) as well as including an investigation into the impact this new wave of tools can have on work, education, life and society in general.

Two types of speakers took part: international expert speakers (who spoke about trends in society, the business world or higher education or who presented working cases in the business world or higher education) and local expert speakers, who introduced local participants to social software tools and guided the practical hands-on sessions. The 7 international expert speakers chosen for the VENUS Summer School were Teemu Arina, Dr. Yael Ravin, Dr. Detlef Schoder, Daniel Oster, Dr. Peter Scott, Dr. Eleftheria Tomadaki and Hans Coppens. For a comprehensive list of the speakers and a short biography of each, please see Annex 6.
When choosing content for your own seminar series, summer school or similar activity, the following general points are worth keeping in mind:

- Make sure speakers chosen are engaging. In a videoconference, the quality of the speaker becomes even more apparent as the speaker is not physically present. The speaker has to rely solely on their voice and presentation style to grab and keep the audience’s attention.
- Ensure that the specific topics chosen are attractive enough for the targeted audience.

If the targeted audience is mainly students, then several other considerations need to be taken into account:

- Ensure that the topic(s) fit into the curriculum of the participating institutions.
- Provide ways of accrediting and certifying these activities.
- Bear in mind that even if the final beneficiary is a student, the actual decision for students to take part in such activities will be made by their departments and faculties, which are represented by professors and other teachers – therefore the actual customer of the products and services can be seen to be single educational institutes.
- Take into account that these activities offer students an opportunity to go either deeper into a particular section of their chosen field of study (e.g. a summer school on various techniques in pharmaceutical sciences) or to go beyond their chosen field of study and look at issues in society surrounding the actual science (e.g. a seminar series on the societal impact of nanotechnology).

When the target audience is citizens, several other factors are important to consider:

- The greatest challenge for attracting citizens is often the (still) large threshold to the academic environment of the university – you may need to take steps to help make the topics more attractive.
- Speakers will need to be chosen who can provide valuable input to both professionals in the field or those who already have the basic knowledge of the specific lecture content as well as those who do not have previous knowledge in the field but are simply interested in the topic.
4.2.3 Managing IPR

During the VENUS project the project team analysed 15 different IPR license agreements or contract templates used within the framework of the Finnish Virtual University and Finnish Virtual Polytechnic and in several EU-funded projects, guidelines created in the e-LERU project (for more information see www.e-leru.leru.org) and recommendations made by the Finnish representative for copyrights. Such agreements cover not only IPR issues but also several financial and organisational issues, e.g. compensation, contract dissolution and contract period.

Based on our experiences in VENUS and other projects, we have created the following IPR management guideline which has been useful when conducted at the appropriate project stage:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Stage</th>
<th>IPR Management Activity/Questions to discuss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programme Planning Stage</td>
<td>Assessment of IPR conditions and requirements:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Which sites in which countries will be involved? Which legal frameworks have to be considered?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Will the live sessions be recorded? Where (which server, which country) will they be stored? Is the site public or for a closed user group?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is the project embedded in a commercial context? e.g. will a fee be charged for participation in the live session or download of the recorded session?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Who has access to the live seminar and/or the recorded sessions? Is the group of participants finite and clearly definable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme Implementation</td>
<td>Establish and enforce a project-specific IPR policy:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Issue IPR guidelines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• What kind of third-party content can be used (e.g. Creative Commons only)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Issue guidelines on how to use third-party content properly (including directives for correct references and citations).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acquisition of copyright for content to be developed in the project (e.g. a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation to be given by a speaker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Confirmation that the author is not aware of any third-party copyright violation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Acquire rights from the author to use and redistribute the content and/or recorded audio and video of live sessions, if this is part of the project scenario.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• IPR Compatibility Check:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Can the third-party content be integrated with the project content to be developed in the project? Watch out for “non-commercial” and “share-alike” license terms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Is the resulting combination compatible with the project conditions and requirements?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior to live session</td>
<td>IPR pre-check for the learning material to be used (e.g. manuscripts):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inventory of third-party content used, including sources and licenses used.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Check correctness of citations and references,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Brief involved parties on IPR policies, raise awareness.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**4.2.4 IPR Risk Assessment**

In VENUS, we used the following IPR risk assessment matrix as a way to determine the extent to which the project needed to take some firm action in respect to IPR. We include it here as a guideline to help you detect potential IPR risk indicators in your own VENUS type activity. If your project is prone to one or more IPR risk indicators, it doesn't mean that the project should be cancelled. Just take the result as a hint, pointing you in the direction of certain areas of your project where you may need to take extra care and invest some extra effort and attention.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk indicator</th>
<th>Project Assessment</th>
<th>Potential IPR risk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is your project embedded in a commercial context, i.e. do you charge for access to the live session and/or recorded sessions?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| | | • Licenses for third-party content used may not allow commercial use.  
• Commercial activities may exclude the invocation of “fair use” or similar exemptions.  
• It’s more attractive to take legal action against you if you charge for a service because you have a revenue stream where potential royalties can be collected from. |
| Is your project marketed to a wide audience with extensive use of public relations? | No | Yes |
| | | • It’s more likely that you attract the attention of professional prosecutors of IPR violations that may see a business opportunity in taking legal action against you.  
• It’s more attractive to take legal action against you: If you can afford extensive PR activities people assume that you must have money.  
• Of course you don’t have anything to fear, because you have ensured proper licensing of all the third-party content used in your project – haven’t you? |
Do you make the recorded sessions (freely) available? Do you plan to publish the learning content developed in the project under a Creative Commons or similar license?

No | Yes
---|---

- If the content is (freely) available or redistributable on the Internet, copyright violations – if there are any of course – can be easily detected and documented.
- Publishing the content on the Internet may disqualify your project to invoke “fair use” or similar exemptions, depending on your national legislation.

Do you make use of reference documents that might be confidential (e.g. company internals or analyst reports)?

No | Yes
---|---

- Legal action may be taken against you for unauthorized disclosure of proprietary information.

A learning object developed in the project makes extensive use of photos, movies and audio with no proper reference and source given.

No | Yes
---|---

- The author may have ignored licenses attached to third-party content used.

### 4.2.5 IPR Agreements and Contracts

In order to manage IPR issues in VENUS type learning scenarios where the content is disseminated to a wide audience, we recommend that agreements with the learning content creators are made. The most important agreement is the one to be made with the expert giving the presentation. As the list of items to be taken into account is long, the project team recommends you make the agreements as simple as possible. A written contract may help you avoid risks, but, at the same time, overly legal contracts may frighten your speakers!

The following check-list may be useful when you set about creating contracts with speakers for your own virtual seminars or summer schools. Contracts of this type normally need to contain the following information:

- Names of contract parties
  - Contact persons
  - Involved parties (university, company, …)
  - What are the responsibilities of each party
- Duration of the contract
  - Start
  - Finish
  - What are the actions taken after the contract has expired?
    - i.e. removing of material from web distribution
• Compensation
  • Compensation for the performance
  • Compensation for the use of lecture material
  • Recompense in the case of breach of contract
    • What is compensated?
    • Where will disagreements be ultimately resolved?
    • What law is applied (country)?
• Contract dissolution
  • Terms for dissolution
  • Possible recompense
• Lecturer’s right to use the material in his/her presentation (including third-party content inbound licensing)
  • Use rights to pictures, video and audio clips, etc.
  • Lecturer’s assertion for the ownership of copyright (in collaboration projects a permission from other parties), responsibility of the lecturer
    • Plagiarism, purchasing the material, ...
  • Worth mentioning the basic rights of the lecturer, i.e. moral right to be referred as the author of the (presentation) material
• Filming rights
  • Video photography
  • Right to make a video recording of the presentation
  • Distribution of the recording
• Use of material
  • Creative commons choices (see section 2.6.5) RECOMMENDED
  • Alternative list:
    • Publishing the material i.e. on the training course’s web page or the lecturer’s web page
    • Distributing the material to the participants on the training course
    • Revising the material (i.e. improving picture quality, editing a video, …)
    • Linking the material to other teaching material (i.e. on a web page)
    • Using the material for a commercial end
    • Technical protection of the material (i.e. password protection)
    • Preventing competition (the use of the same material for another, similar training)
• Transferring copyright
  • What happens if the speaker hands over his/her copyright to the material to another party during the validity of the contract? Does the contract also apply to this third party?
There are also several other actors in VENUS type activities who might have something to say about making the session public. These are especially those people who will be shown during the session, namely the facilitators, local experts and the participants. A common way of handling this is to ask permission for recording and making the session public in the registration form.

One last warning: please do not let the legal speak discourage you from actively engaging in pushing forward a VENUS-type or other educational activity. Based on our experience in this area, we would like to encourage you to make your learning content available to the public under a Creative Commons or similar license, if legally possible. After all, research and education is about disclosing thoughts and ideas instead of locking them up. You are usually treated as you treat others: if you respect other people's IPR, it is likely that people will respect yours. If you give back to the community, people do not mind if you take. If you react politely and immediately in the event of a potential copyright infringement, people usually forgive you for unwitting copyright violations and do not take any further action after removal or correction of the content object in question. All in all, also from an IPR perspective, it pays to be a good citizen on the Net!

### 4.3 Management, Administration and Organisation

In order to make sure the seminars were organised as well as possible, planning began a considerable time before each set of activities. The seminar series was organised in two blocks, the first round of activities was concentrated on the first set of seminars that took place in 2006. The second round began in January 2007 when the second half of the series was organised. See Annex 1 for a table showing the main organisational steps taken from February 2006 to the end of the seminar series in April 2007.

The summer school dealt with the topic of social software and its uses in business environments and higher education. The organisation of the summer school started many months before the actual event; for a table showing the main activities that took place during this period, please see Annex 1. The final agenda of the summer school can be found in Annex 5.

Even though the international, virtual events were fixed some time before the event itself, the other activities were open to the local organisers. Local teams could adapt content and learning methods according to their wishes and needs. Even the general agenda was flexible, to allow for changes if they were thought to be necessary. Throughout the summer school, the main request from participants was for more practical sessions, where they could try out tools and software on their own (preferably with individual guidance). All the VENUS teams tried to accommodate this as far as possible.
4.3.1 Overall Organisation and Management

Given that the organisation of the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School was the subject of a cross-border collaboration funded under a European programme where the emphasis is upon shared responsibility and joint effort, the team organised the activities of the project under various work packages, each of which were led by different partners and which collectively were managed by the project co-ordinator located within the lead partner EuroPACE who led the project management team.

The project management team was set up to foster maximum collaboration between the core partners, enabling them to optimally involve their local and regional extension partners in the project activities. The team consisted of:

- project coordinator (EuroPACE representative)
- project manager (staff member of EuroPACE)
- work package leaders (staff member of the leading core partners)
- representatives of the other participating partners.

This team met regularly face-to-face over the project life cycle: once at the start of the project, twice during the project and once at the end of the project. They put in place working groups in charge of the work packages, discussed intermediate results and project progress, selected the activities to be developed in the project, and organised work in the different work packages. The management team communicated via a dedicated conferencing system to monitor and control the daily progress of the project in-between the face-to-face meetings.

A central support team was at the disposal of all core partners to overcome practical technological, pedagogical and organisational problems in setting up a virtual seminar series and summer school at local level. The central support team also acted as an interface between the local core partner’s support team and the working group associated who were concerned with organisational support. In order to make this happen the (central) support team was made up of a small core support staff in the project (under the supervision of the project manager), which was extended with extra support staff from within the existing support centres of all the core partner institutions, e.g. technicians, e-media specialists, e-coaches, etc.

The project management team were in charge of daily management, monitoring all activities to be carried out and were responsible for the completion of all project tasks and objectives. They ensured that deadlines were met according to the project timetable and within the quality framework specified for the project and the budget limitations. They stimulated all partners to take responsibility for their own work, and especially to foster collaboration amongst partners.
When you are working with your own partners in the realisation of a virtual seminar series or summer school, the following recommendations may be useful:

- Define the goals, the approach and the target group well beforehand and make sure this is clearly described in all your materials.
- Create a very detailed planning before the start of the event(s).
- Agree at the beginning about deadlines in respect to the organisation and timing of specific aspects.
- Good communication is, of course, necessary for a successful collaboration:
  - Have regular more personal meetings, face-to-face, by telephone, use web conferencing facilities like Skype, MSN.
  - Send a monthly e-mail outlining all the activities planned.
  - Create a mailing/telephone list with everyone involved (speakers, technical staff, coordinators, experts, moderators) per partner site.
  - Create an open space (forum, questionnaire, web conferences, personal contact) where participating partners can evaluate the organised activities, the organisation, etc.
- Make sure all partners feel completely involved.

4.3.2 Organisation of Individual Seminars

The following sub-section will describe how speakers were prepared and guided, how the actual seminar was structured, how the content was managed and what kind of online support was given to participants. The approach taken for the organisation of the individual seminars in the seminar series and the daily activities of the summer school were very similar and so the information provided in the following sections largely refers to both.

- **Preparing Speakers and Content**

After selecting the speakers they each received an information pack with information about the project, set-up of the event and guidelines for the event itself. The guidelines covered two aspects: the actual presentation to be delivered and what factors the speaker needed to take into account given the limitations and opportunities particular to the technical set-up proposed as well as any audiovisual support envisaged by the speaker. The guidelines also included practical information, like where the seminar would take place, how the session was to be organised and how the speaker might best prepare.

Speakers were always asked to send their presentation, if they were using one, to the organising team well before the start of the event. There were two reasons for this: first to check the slides to ensure they used a suitable lay-out, were legible, etc. and secondly because participants at participating sites always preferred to have the slides beforehand to prepare
themselves for the seminar or summer school session. Receiving such slides beforehand was particularly appreciated by participants who had a special role to play in the local management of the seminars as, e.g. local moderator or local expert.

Speakers were encouraged to use images where possible in their presentation as images can be very useful in helping get across complex ideas to non-native target language speakers. Although cultural context can influence the immediate understanding of an image, in Europe cultural misunderstandings of this type are rarely encountered. In general, speakers were encouraged to use slides if at all possible given the added value such slides can bring in aiding comprehension.

This is a sample of the information we provided for speakers taking part in either the VENUS Seminar Series or the Summer School that you may find useful. This information was sent some time before the event itself and was also accompanied by information concerning the location, timing, etc.

Dear Speaker

Giving a lecture via videoconference is not the same as giving a lecture in a classroom. It is good to keep in mind the strengths and limitations of this technology. If you follow these simple rules below, your presentation will be just fine.

Slides help the audience to follow your presentation. Therefore we recommend you to prepare max. 15 slides to support your presentation. Here are some specifications we ask you to follow:

- Make the slides preferably using a recent version of Microsoft PowerPoint or a similar presentation software package
- Individual slides should follow the following guidelines:
  - Maximum 9 lines per slide
  - Maximum 35 characters per line
  - Font size between 24 and 36
  - Minimally 2 point line thickness
  - Preferably with a pastel-coloured background

During the session:

- Follow the slides (use key words from the slides)
- Look into or just below the camera
- Speak slowly and articulate clearly
- Do not be too formal in front of the camera
- Do not move too much or suddenly
- Attract attention by modifying intonation or rhythm of speech
- Mention possible problems, be clear in their description

Clothing:

- Do not wear clothing of bright/loud colours, with busy prints, or the colour of the background
- Do not wear shiny or noisy jewellery. Women should wear normal make-up and avoid dark eyeliner and lipstick.
The availability or lack of availability of support materials arose several times during the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School. Those taking part in participating sites and indeed project partners in each site, were all very keen to have such material beforehand, they felt that it helped make presentations more comprehensible, particularly as very few of the participants were native English speakers.

However in reality, this was very hard to achieve. This was largely due to the fact that all speakers asked were well known and respected personalities in their own field and were in fact doing the project a favour by agreeing to make a presentation, this was not part of their normal work schedule and they did not receive any payment for the work they put into preparing and delivering their presentation. This meant that the team were very dependent upon their goodwill and interest in the project and so could not enforce a regime where speakers had to use audiovisual materials. For some speakers like Prof. Riccardo Petrella for example, who never uses audiovisual support in a lecture, it would have been neither possible nor desirable to change his usual style of presentation.

- Preparation of Participants

In order to prepare for individual sessions, potential participants were provided with as much information as possible beforehand. This included the session schedule, the biography of the speaker involved, and an abstract of the topic to be addressed and background articles where available and appropriate. Given the short duration of the individual sessions in the seminar series, the VENUS team found that the more background information that was given beforehand, the more engaging was the discussion that took place during the seminar itself.

For the seminar series, the project team tried to provide all participants with the schedule (in the form of a running order) and the speakers’ slides, if available, four to seven days before each individual session.

As participants of the summer school had to register beforehand, the VENUS team were able to customise local activities to the audience (to their background, their expectations and their areas of interest). All participants received an information pack every day with an agenda for the day, the biography of the international speaker that day, an abstract of the session topic and background articles (where available and appropriate), hand-outs for the session and exercises for the hands-on elements. Participants were also referred to a long-list of references on the VENUS web site.

When organising your own seminar series, summer school or similar activity, the following general points are worth bearing in mind:

- Prepare well and in time, virtual activities like these are most successful when they are prepared well beforehand. A running order is a very helpful tool to organise the structure and the different stages in the seminar, and to make an overview of all the people concerned and all the necessary tools at each stage. To promote discussion and participation, try to make as much content
available as possible beforehand through a web site or other means. This can be the biography and the abstract of the speaker, but also background papers and articles on the subject, interesting web sites or any other references that might be relevant.

- Communicate with the speaker about the structure of the seminar. Give them the opportunity to adapt the structure as they like, check their preferences for the lectures.
- Communicate with the participating sites beforehand on what is expected of them during the seminar. Unexpected questions and demands can cause embarrassing situations, which can be avoided. We suggest that when people register, you ask them about their expectations.
- If you are organising a summer school, you will have to decide aspects like the following:
  - Is the week an integrated programme of activities that can only be followed as a whole?
  - Can individual days in the week be followed as separate entities?
  - Can subsequent days be attended with a different programme?
- Make sure you vary the programme as much as possible to ensure that participants do not feel it is repetitive. For example, focus on various aspects of the topic on different days. Provide enough materials and tools for discussion. Use different working forms (plenary sessions, lectures, presentations, group discussions, learning cafés, etc.)
- Try to be as flexible as possible. Remember that the virtual seminar is still a (virtual) classroom where you want to create a learning experience. It is not a television programme where sections are strictly scheduled. You want to create an environment where speakers (teachers) and the audience (students) feel free to talk, ask and interrupt when necessary. Circumstances might force you to change the schedule or the number of sites participating in the seminar. The participants or speaker might also come up with last-minute requests. Be flexible in meeting these preferences.
- Take local differences into account, in respect to timing for example, and allow for different local approaches in different locations. Do not impose foreign working methods on groups that are not receptive. It will create frustration and a negative attitude towards virtual seminars.
- Be sure to reach an agreement on the working methods used in the common activities.
- Be flexible in adapting the local activities to the feedback and preferences of the audience. This is especially useful in the latter part of a summer school for example, when participants have already had a good introduction to the subject and can identify specific topics to discuss.
- From our experience, participants in a summer school are very interested in practical hands-on sessions. They want to learn about new tools and
Integrate many practical sessions in the summer school. If possible, provide individual tutoring and tutoring in small groups. Guide practical sessions well, with enough worked-out examples and exercises.

- Capitalise on the audience: involve experienced members of the audience as tutors in your practical sessions. Let them talk about their experiences in all activities. Encourage learning from peers.

- Create an online presence for the summer school or seminar series through a weblog and/or wiki. Encourage participants to report on their discussions and thoughts online. Not only does this create a database of interesting, relevant material, it also leaves a presence of the organisational team online after the event (which can help you to stay in contact with the audience, though this does need to be managed).

- Try to relax and take any technical problems in your stride. They are part and parcel of virtual seminars and no reason for frustration. When participants ask about technical problems be as informative as possible. Try to gain as much information from the technical team as you can without disturbing their work.

- After a seminar session, be sure to thank all participants and ask for their feedback. This will give you valuable information for the future organisation of such seminars.

- **Structure of Sessions**
  
  For individual seminars in the seminar series, the following time schedule for the session itself was identified as being the most effective way to engage all participants and to stimulate interaction between all parties involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>By whom?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30min</td>
<td>(before start) Connection of all sites via VC and stand-by</td>
<td>Technical staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10min</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Central moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25min</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>International speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5min</td>
<td>Pause</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30min</td>
<td>Local discussions at all participating sites</td>
<td>Local moderator and local expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40min</td>
<td>Open discussion with all sites on VC/online</td>
<td>Central moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10min</td>
<td>Concluding remarks</td>
<td>International speaker and central moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The VENUS team experimented with several schedules before coming to this final one. This schedule basically divides the seminar into three major blocks: the presentation itself, local discussion and a centralised debate. The whole session was introduced, guided and closed by the Central Moderator. This schedule was preferred over others because of its simplicity and its effective balance between interaction and monologue.

One feature that is missing in this final schedule is a question-and-answer session immediately after the lecture. In the VENUS experience, an immediate Q&A session was very time-consuming, but offered little added value. An elaborate Q&A sometimes inhibited the local discussion and the international discussion, items which appealed more to the participants. So, in order to promote more extensive European and local discussions, the decision was taken to remove the Q&A sessions from the schedule.

For the virtual sessions in the summer school, the team identified the following time schedule as the most effective way to engage all participants and to stimulate interaction between all parties involved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>By whom?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30min</td>
<td>(before start) The connection of all sites via VC and stand-by</td>
<td>Technical staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10min</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Central moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40 min</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>International speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Local discussions at all participating sites</td>
<td>Local moderator and local expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40min</td>
<td>Open discussion with all sites on VC/online</td>
<td>Central moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10min</td>
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<td>International speaker and central moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Close session</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even though the original schedule in the summer school opted for a direct Q&A session after the lecture by the international speaker, this idea was changed (at the request of participants) in favour of a short pause of 5-10 min to allow for local discussions and formulation of questions. In a way, this validates the VENUS Seminar model of three major blocks: the presentation itself, local discussion and a central debate.
When setting up your own seminar series, summer school or similar activity, the following general points are worth keeping in mind related to the structure of the seminar or summer school:

- Keep lecturing short and allow more time for discussions. The videoconference lecture itself should not be too long (30min-40min is a maximum). From our experience, people like to actively participate in a learning activity. Passive listening to a videoconference is tiring and leaves participants disinterested. To encourage participants, it is important to have discussions, where they can voice their opinions.

- Make sure you mix international learning activities with a local flavour. Always foresee some time for local interaction and discussion. People always feel most comfortable in face-to-face conversations. Allowing time to meet and talk to fellow participants in the local site stimulates discussion and contributes to a successful virtual seminar.

- Make sure you allow time for local interaction before international discussion. Schedule a local discussion in-between the lecture and the international discussion. This will give participants time to reflect on the lecture within local face-to-face discussions. It will also improve the quality of the international discussions.

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### Roles and Responsibilities

In a face-to-face seminar, roles are often limited to that of the speaker and the participants. Exceptionally, there may be some technical staff (for technical support in presentations, etc.). In an internationally organised virtual seminar or summer school, however, the number of roles increases sharply in proportion to the number of locations. As well as the participants, there can be moderators, content providers or speakers and technical support people.

In the case of VENUS, the central location had what we called a Central Moderator (who guided the whole seminar, and doubled as a local moderator guiding the local activities), a Chatbox Moderator and a Technical Team (a videoconference technician, a streaming technician and a technical helpdesk moderator). Each participating location had a Local Moderator (who guided the local activities), a Local Expert and a Technical Team (with, at a minimum, a videoconference technician). The roles of those involved in both the seminar series and the summer school were largely the same, although several additional people took part in the summer school due to the nature of the content. These were the expert presenters/trainers initiating the participants in new tools and technologies. More and more, champion participants (who had more experience or who had gained more experience during the summer school) were encouraged to guide their peers, as this seemed the most effective way to encourage participants in working with the tools. Each of these roles will be discussed in more detail in the following section.
**Floor Manager**

To ensure the smooth operation of a virtual session, the VENUS team decided that the role of a floor manager was essential. This was the person who oversaw the practical running of the whole seminar session from beginning to end; she identified and solved minor problems during the seminar and most importantly, informed those affected of any delays where necessary. The floor manager was physically located in the central location and was virtually linked (through a chat line) to all local moderators at the remote locations. Based on the experience of VENUS, the floor manager’s role was very significant during the first seminars (when everyone was still relatively unsure of their role), but gradually became less significant as everyone else became more experienced. Good preparation of the seminar sessions also helped minimise the task of the floor manager during the seminar itself. This reduction in work load was so apparent that during the final seminars it was possible to have one person function as floor manager and manage the technical helpdesk at the same time. However, we are not suggesting you do not consider using a floor manager, as there is always a need to have a single person responsible for the management of an event like a virtual seminar.

**Central Moderator**

The Central Moderator was located in the central site, the one which acted as the central organisation hub. Not all the main speakers were located here as several of them made their presentations from one of the participating sites. In VENUS, the Central Moderator set the tone for the live session by introducing the speaker and describing his/her background as well as the topic of the specific session. He/she then acted as the main chair person for the live session and tried to ensure the session ran on schedule. Right after the speaker’s presentation, the participants in each local site discussed the topic locally with an expert led by a Local Moderator who managed the individual site discussions. The online participants had an opportunity to discuss the topic online, led by the Chatbox Moderator (sometimes assisted by an expert). The main points, remarks and issues that come out of these local discussions were then discussed in the following open discussion that took place between all the respective locations when the sites were re-connected, facilitated by the Central Moderator. Questions and remarks from the online group were brought into the discussion by the Chatbox Moderator.

![Fig.12 Structure of Session and Location of Central Moderator](image-url)
Local Moderator

Each location that participated in one of the live sessions via videoconferencing also had a Local Moderator on site. This was the person responsible for facilitating the local session, leading the local discussion, gathering questions for the speaker and acting as the local chair person during the international discussion.

The most important task for the Local Moderator was to ensure that participants in the local site were as fully involved as possible during the session. This meant encouraging and facilitating local discussion, stimulating participation of the local audience in the international part and ensuring that the session ran smoothly from the point of view of the participating site. Although the overall moderation and facilitation of the session was the responsibility of the Central Moderator based in the central site, he or she depended completely on the Local Moderators to manage what went on in the participating sites. The role of the Local Moderator was essentially that of the local chair person and, as with any other type of meeting involving a relatively large group of people, it was important that the person chairing the meeting managed the process in a fair and organised manner. Given that the VENUS Seminars involved some degree of technological support as well as multiple languages, it was even more important that the Local Moderator kept control over what was happening in the local site in order to make sure that everything proceeded relatively smoothly.

All local discussions took place in the local language and so part of the role of the Local Moderator was to manage this process and then summarise the main points of the discussion together with the local expert for the international speaker and the international audience, in English.

This is a sample of the guidelines we provided for Local Moderators taking part in either the seminar series or the summer school that you may find useful. This information was sent some time before the event itself and was also accompanied by information concerning the location, timing, etc.

*Explain clearly the format for the session at the outset during the initial local introduction phase, making sure you alert people to the different sections of the session and highlighting when local discussion can take place, when questions can be asked and points raised and when the local site will be connected with the other sites for the international sections of the sessions and when not.*

*Try to find out who is actually attending your session locally, if possible ask everyone to introduce themselves during the local introduction period and indicate why they are attending: this may help later when you are moderating the local discussion.*

*Introduce the local expert clearly and distinctly, if possible invite him/her to introduce themselves before the international session begins and remember to explain your own role.*
Ensure that the audience is familiar with where the cameras and microphones are, explain the limitations of the system and agree how questions will be asked by the local audience to the international expert, i.e. will you gather the questions and put them to the international expert yourself or will the person asking the question do this him/herself. If the latter, agree with your technical team how exactly this will be done. At the beginning make sure to introduce yourself and when anyone at your site is asking a question or making a point, ask then to introduce themselves too. Make sure you find out how to mute your local microphone yourself. Your microphone should only ever be switched on when you are actually making a point or asking a question, as otherwise voices and background noise from your site will dominate the discussion. Wait for the central moderator to invite you to speak or to make your point.

You can always raise your hand to indicate you wish to speak; this will alert the central moderator to the fact that you wish to say something.

During the local discussion, do your best to stimulate debate. Try to identify beforehand several provocative questions to stimulate discussion perhaps with the help of the local expert in order to initiate the debate and remember to allow everyone to have their say if at all possible.

If no questions are forthcoming from your site, try to come up with at least one yourself in order to show some interest on behalf of your own site, but do remember that your role is as an independent and unbiased chair person and make sure you don’t dominate the discussion yourself!

In addition, try not to allow anyone else to dominate the discussion, either during the local debate and discussion and/or during the period of time when you are connected with the other sites during the international discussion phase. Remember it is always better to annoy one person by asking them to please allow other people to also have their opinion heard, than to annoy a large group of people by having a single voice dominate!

Remember that your image and that of those people immediately seated next to you is likely to be the one on screen throughout the session for all other sites. This means that it is important you are facing the camera and that you remain attentive throughout the session when you are connected. It is very disconcerting both for the international expert and the other sites participating to see that in one of the sites either the local moderator and surrounding audience are bored or inattentive, or – even worse – that they have actually left the room!
The Chatbox Moderator
In addition to the moderators already described, there was also a moderator who took care of the discussions that took place in the chatbox. As already mentioned, a chatbox was set up for people watching the seminar through streaming on their PC. The Chatbox Moderator stimulated discussion online during the local discussion. The questions raised during this discussion were collected by the moderator and presented to the speaker in the general discussion that took place after the local discussions. The Chatbox Moderator was located physically at the central site and could participate in the videoconference.

Speaker
The main content provider during the seminar was the International Speaker or Expert. This person delivered his/her presentation in English based on their own area of specialisation. The speaker generally gave an approximately 20-minute presentation, then engaged in the local discussion at his/her location (if possible) and then answered questions from the audience.

Local Expert
Each location that participated in a live session via videoconferencing tried to make sure they had a Local Expert in the specific content area chosen for each seminar at their site. This expert was often a professor of that university who was acquainted with the topic and, quite often as it turned out, with the international speaker. The tasks of the Local Expert were to explain his or her own point of view on the topic and to relate the issue that was discussed by the speaker to the national situation.

From experience, the team found that the role of the Local Expert was very important. Often, this person could also clarify some of the views and points made by the international speaker and answer some immediate questions, if necessary. This person could also stimulate discussion at the local sites by putting forward provocative views.

The discussion with the Local Expert was moderated by the Local Moderator and this usually took place in the local language. The conclusions and questions arising from this discussion were then taken to the international discussion in the final part of the seminar.

Based on the experience of VENUS, we would like to make several suggestions about what you should take into account when putting together a team to carry out similar activities. It is important to point out that while the number of people involved in VENUS was relatively high, experience shows that as these types of activities become embedded in the daily work of institutions, the need for large numbers of specialised staff decreases. Also the level and complexity of the seminar or summer school can have an influence, as well as the specific circumstances of individual partners.

Selecting the Speaker
Based on the experience of the VENUS Seminar Series, the project team created a list of factors to consider when selecting a speaker:
• Renowned and recognised expertise in a particular field
• Attractive topic of general value and interest – preferably topical
• Speaker who understands the needs and level of expertise of audience (can adapt lecture to the audience’s level by using appropriate vocabulary, good examples, …)
• Clear (verbal delivery and focus on tone, pitch, rate, force, articulation) and attractive (examples, jokes, non-verbal communication) speaking style
• Empathetic approach that overcomes cultural differences and linguistic challenges
• Character: vivid and enthusiastic
• Open to discussion, not a monologue style
• Very good English if English is to be used as the language for the international parts of the sessions
• Uses presentation or other helpful supportive material
• Aware of remote audience and can open and lead dialogue at a distance
• Aware of central and local moderators – knows how to communicate with them
• Speaker knows how videoconference and web streaming work and how participants perceive him/her
• Must be aware of how to deliver a lecture taking into account the restrictions imposed by the technology chosen

Selecting a Moderator
Based on the experience of the VENUS Seminar Series, the project team created a list of factors to consider when selecting a moderator:

• Should be able to manage and control the progress of the seminar (time, content, etc.) and should be instructed to manage timing precisely. This includes discussing beforehand how long each speaker is allowed to speak and giving clear indications when he/she is exceeding the set time limit
• Should be able to manage discussion - does not hesitate to step in when the lecture, discussion or input from one of the sites takes too long
• Should be diplomatic
• Should be aware of the technology (in contact with central technical team and effectively communicate problems to the group)
• Should be aware of what the sites can and cannot see and give enough information to all
• Should understand the needs and level of expertise of audience and speaker
• Should have clear and attractive speaking style
• Should be able to interview and moderate
- Should know how to summarise discussion (synthesis of ideas)
- Should speak excellent English (clear pronunciation) if English is to be used as the language for the international parts of the sessions
- Should have empathetic approach that overcomes cultural differences and linguistic challenges
- Should have ability to ask right questions and be able to raise all questions (or at least most important ones – with ability to distinguish levels of importance)

**Selecting a Local Expert**
Based on the experience of VENUS, the project team created a list of factors to consider when selecting a local expert
- Needs to be a charismatic person, outgoing, vivid, able to think and respond very quickly
- Should have empathy, good presentation skills and interaction skills
- Best if he/she has recognised expertise in a particular field and an understanding of local conditions - as well as the ability to link the topic to the local context
- Needs to have a clear understanding of the main speaker’s opinion and position and needs to be able to explain this to the audience
- Should be able to summarise quickly and effectively
- Needs to be able to motivate people in discussion and to manage a lively local debate
- Should be enthusiastic about the virtual activity being undertaken

**Online Discussion, Chat and Resources**
The live web stream of the VENUS Seminars was supported by an online chatbox, open to all online participants. The aims of the chatbox were to provide a platform where technical questions could be asked and to provide an interactive space where participants could voice their views on the lecture topics during the sessions. The online sessions were led by a Chatbox Moderator, who stimulated discussion by asking questions or putting forward his/her own views.

Based on the VENUS experience, most online participants needed a great deal of motivation to state their comments or pose their questions in the chatbox. Technical questions were often the standard conversation. Content was discussed to a lesser extent (dependent on the seminar topic).

During the last 5 seminars, a separate Finnish chatbox was set up for participants from Finland. This chatbox had a separate Chatbox Moderator, who was often assisted by a local expert on the topic. On the whole, the Finnish chat seemed to be more successful than the international chat. The participant group was smaller and more focussed. Online participants also seemed to be more comfortable to chat in their native language.
The original aim of the VENUS Seminar Series was to follow-up each individual seminar with an online discussion for some time after the actual lecture. This could not be achieved. Although participants (face-to-face and virtual) were happy to participate in individual seminars, it was much more difficult to motivate them to discuss the topics after the actual event. In the initial seminars, efforts were made to start up an online discussion forum, dedicated to the topic of the lecture, on the VENUS Seminars web site. Although the idea was good and relevant, the implementation proved to be unsuccessful. The VENUS team believes this would have been more successful had we been able to integrate the discussions into existing communities on the web, dedicated to the topic in question.

**Chat Lines**

During the individual sessions of the Seminar Series, participants following online from locations (including their own homes or offices) other than those set up directly by the VENUS partners in their institutions had the choice between 4 options to take part in the VENUS Seminar. These were created to support participants who had different access facilities:

- live event with chat: this was the most interactive way to take part in the VENUS Seminars. The participant could see the lecture slides, the video image with the speaker and/or the different sites and he or she could discuss issues with other participants in the chatbox and put questions directly to the speaker.
- live event without chat: here, the participant could view both the videoconference image and the slides, but he or she did not join the chatbox.
- slides only: in this case, only the slides of the lecture and the sound coming from the videoconference were available.
- video and sound only: in this situation, the participant only saw and heard the image and sound coming from the videoconference.

The fifth choice in one country was to combine video streaming (including all 4 options just mentioned) with local chat in the local language. This arrangement was offered to allow people in this country to form their own virtual community and participate from home.
The experience described here relates to those participants who opted for the whole package, including the national or international chatbox, where they could put forward their opinion about the lecture. A simultaneous online debate took place in the chatbox during the videoconference and local debates. During the seminars, the team used a number of strategies to stimulate this discussion, which are described in a following section.

It is important to point out that the topics and questions raised in the chat were being integrated in the seminar, because the moderators of the online chat also reported to the moderator and speaker about what had been said. That way, the online participants could engage in a real dialogue with the speaker.

The activity in the chatbox varied greatly over the different sessions. Sometimes very lively discussions were going on without the Chat Moderator having to interrupt much and during other sessions almost no-one posted a question or a comment.

Based on the VENUS experience of using a chatbox in this way, we would like to make several recommendations for the use of a chatbox if you decide to use one.

- First of all, it is important to make available a separate communications channel – possibly a chatbox – to facilitate communication about technical issues and problems. Because the VENUS Seminar Series used only a single chatbox, during some sessions this was completely overwhelmed with comments and discussion related to the technology being used, difficulties with the web stream for example or the failure of sound from a particular videoconferencing site.

- Secondly, it is important to make it clear from the outset what the specific purpose of a chatbox is. This can be facilitated by a short introductory text above the chatbox explaining clearly how the chat works, what its purpose is and what is expected from participants.

- Thirdly, it is important to make it easy for participants to create a user name under which they can post comments or questions. Most chatters in the VENUS Seminars appeared under the name “guestxxx” with the “x” being a number (see examples below). This did not encourage people to talk to each other because they mentioned that they found it annoying not to know who they were talking to and not to be able to give themselves some sort of identity. In addition this meant it was difficult to distinguish different users. The participants tried to help each other solve this problem, but there was quite a lot of confusion about creating a user name.

- Finally, with users logging in and out all the time, the appearance of this information blocked the ongoing conversation, e.g. an extract from the chatbox below.
Online Resources for the Summer School

Interactivity through a chatbox was not offered in the summer school, as it proved to be unsuccessful during the seminar series. Also, interactivity did not seem an important goal to achieve as the primary activities of the summer school were face-to-face. All international seminars in the VENUS Summer School were recorded and can be accessed on demand on the VENUS Seminars web site.

Some experiments were conducted with video podcasting of the international seminars and the local presentations at the Leuven site. This video podcast is available on the VENUS Seminars web site.

Finally, the participants attending the summer school at the different locations were encouraged throughout the week to create material online on the local wiki or weblog (in the local language) and on the central wiki or weblog (in English). This was successful and the results can be found on the VENUS Seminars web site. Participants were also asked to keep sending in interesting material that they find or information on their own initiative to the VENUS team as a follow-up to the activities of the summer school.
4.4 Multicultural and Multilingual Aspects

International seminars executed according to the VENUS model can play a key role in promoting European co-operation, student and professional mobility, cultural and linguistic diversity and understanding, expansion of professional expertise and curriculum and materials development.

As both the seminar series and the summer school were organised in an international context with sites participating in 7 different countries, the issues of multilingualism and multiculturalism were at the heart of VENUS activities. These topics were addressed in a very explicit way during the planning phase of the activities and dealt with during the activities when needed. By addressing these types of issues pro-actively, the VENUS team aimed to seek workable solutions to specific circumstances against a background of linguistic and cultural diversity.

Even though the multilingualistic and multicultural aspects are discussed separately here, it is obvious that both are strictly linked and that language is not only a set of symbols, rules and a meta-communicative system (i.e. voice shade and intensity, sign language, etc.), but also a medium and an acting-out of a specific culture. It is therefore important to remember that language is the vehicle and the expression of a specific culture and that there is a clear relationship between the notion of culture and the more pragmatic aspect of language.

Multilingualism
The VENUS activities were organised in the specific context of 7 different locations in 7 countries and at least 7 different languages as suggested in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>PARTNER</th>
<th>OFFICIAL LANGUAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(BE)</td>
<td>Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Catholic University of Leuven)</td>
<td>Dutch, French, German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(BE)</td>
<td>Audiovisual Technologies, Informatics and Telecommunications bvba (ATiT)</td>
<td>Dutch, French, German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(DE)</td>
<td>University of Cologne</td>
<td>German</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(FI)</td>
<td>Teknillinen korkeakoulu, Koulutuskeskus Dipoli (Helsinki University of Technology, Lifelong Learning Institute Dipoli)</td>
<td>Finnish, Swedish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(HU)</td>
<td>Nyugat-Magyarországi Egyetem, Geoinformatikai Foiskolai Kar, (University of West-Hungary, College of Geoinformatics)</td>
<td>Hungarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(PL)</td>
<td>West Pomeranian Business School</td>
<td>Polish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(SK)</td>
<td>Technical University of Kosice - Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Informatics</td>
<td>Slovak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(IT)</td>
<td>NETTUNO - Network per l’Università Ovunque</td>
<td>Italian</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There were several different options available when considering how groups of people who do not share a common language can communicate in sessions like the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School. Three options were considered, each of which was based on allowing contributors to use their own language to express themselves and the use of English as the common language for communication.

The first option is *simultaneous translation*, in which the international speaker uses his/her own language and is translated in loco into the local languages.

This option has a clear benefit in that it permits international speakers to communicate using their own language. However, a system to support this option is very expensive, especially if there is a need for professional translators, versed in a variety of themes. Moreover, not-strictly-linguistic aspects (proxemic aspects such as gestural expressiveness and body position of the speaker) are lost. There is a risk of simplification of the linguistic communication.

The second option is consecutive translation, in which the international speaker talks in his/her own language and is then translated into the local language. This option, like the previous one, allows international speakers to communicate at their ease using their mother language. However, besides being expensive, this option effectively doubles the speech time.

The third option – used in the VENUS model – is the *mixed use of English and local languages*: the international speaker speaks English during the international part of the seminars and local discussions take place in the local languages. The benefits of this solution are clear: a more workable solution from the organisational and economic viewpoint and it permits all participants to express themselves in their own mother tongue, in their own cultural circumstances. The main disadvantage is that the international speaker has to be very proficient in English, which can reduce the number of potential speakers willing to participate. This prerequisite is also valid for contributors: they have to be able to speak English well, which again may reduce their number.

The solution chosen by the VENUS team addressed each of the roles in the chosen scenario: expert speaker, central moderator, local moderator, local expert, chatbox moderator, audience. In the following section, we will describe the linguistic aspects of each role in more detail. The expert speaker used English during the lecture and the subsequent discussion. This implied that this person needed to be a relatively skilled and fluent speaker of English. The same skills were required of the central moderator, who communicated with the speaker and the local moderators.

The local moderator and the local expert spoke in their mother tongue with the group in the local site and in English with the central moderator. Opportunities could be taken on a local level to develop a debate in the local language. It was possible for a summary of the presentation to be given by the expert speaker, if necessary, to explain the most difficult points and to clarify potential misunderstandings. This could happen during the scheduled
debate times or during informal breaks. The local expert, as well as being an expert in the field, needed to have a very good command of English.

This approach could represent a limitation since it reduced the number of people who could act as local experts in a participating location. Furthermore, the local expert had a very challenging role in that he or she needed to understand if any form of linguistic or contextual ambiguity had occurred and to make the local audience aware of this. There are many examples of how a language’s use, its complicated syntax and metaphors could cause deep misunderstandings and ambiguities. Even though they are part of the language’s richness, these situations have to be recognised and interpreted so that they are not perceived as obstacles between interlocutors.

Finally participants in the audience also needed to be fairly fluent in English. The required language competences are “listening comprehension” and “written text comprehension”. Other linguistic competences, such as: speaking capability, pragmatics, textual or writing competences were not essential.

Listening comprehension refers to understanding the spoken language. Listening comprehension can be described at two levels:

- **Low level of listening comprehension** would include understanding only the facts explicitly stated in a spoken passage that has very simple syntax and uncomplicated vocabulary;
- **Advanced levels of listening comprehension** would include implicit understanding and drawing inferences from spoken passages that feature more complicated syntax and more advanced vocabulary.

For a useful source on this topic, see [http://www.readingsuccesslab.com/Glossary/ListeningComprehension.html](http://www.readingsuccesslab.com/Glossary/ListeningComprehension.html)

For the VENUS activities, the team considered both levels of comprehension to be necessary for those participating to get the most out of the international seminars.

**Multicultural aspects**

From the multicultural point of view, cultural adaptation has different features and needs to be developed at different levels of the organisation. It goes beyond the use of language as a means of communication. Again, multiculturalism was taken into account proactively during the planning of the VENUS activities. For example, the topics considered for the VENUS activities were global **topics** that have local interpretations, implementations and nuances. All local participants received background information on the topic and the speakers, as far as possible. This information could be offered in the local language if needed.

In this respect, the subject matter chosen for the seminars needed to be of broad interest to people in all locations. In some cases, specific content could be presented in a general framework that could then be integrated at local level. This was the case, for example, of
the VENUS Seminar on *The Future of the European Integration*. The speech made by Prof. Wolfgang Th. Wessels provided a “European” perspective in general terms: the European policy on integration, difficulties, strategies, and the adoption of the European Constitution. Each local site could then refer the general framework to their own national (or regional, or local) experience or situation (e.g. the different national policies on adopting the European Constitution, by referendum, by governmental agreement, etc.). In addition, thanks to the broad participation of sites in the VENUS Seminars, the final result could be the general framework and the additional localisation of many different sites, offering a more comprehensive and nuanced view of various topics.

The continuous interchange between the global level and the local level can be emphasised and elaborated by:

- preparing the local moderators and the local experts by providing them with a summary of the speaker’s contribution to allow them to propose and formulate a local “viewpoint”;
- more contact between the international expert speaker and the local expert speaker; and
- more contact between the local expert and the audience.

While some of these aspects were achieved during the VENUS activities, it was not always possible to find ways to link the various experts in any individual session. In an ideal situation, it would be advisable not only to submit the text beforehand, but also to allow for it to be revised and agreed with the local expert. In short, it would be advisable to have a real exchange between the international and local experts, so as to arrive at a final presentation and supporting documentation that took into account the “local” expectations of the local expert and the global expectations of the international speaker.

Several technological options were provided to offer the lectures, including videoconferencing, live streaming, podcasting and downloading. This made it possible to cater for local preferences in relation to technology. For example, the Finnish group preferred to follow the lecture and the discussion through a live stream, as the videoconference option was not always feasible for them.

During the summer school, wiki’s and weblogs were set up in the local languages and in English. A deliberate choice was made for these tools in the local language to lower the threshold to the tools themselves, as writing English was seen as too large a step for the participants. An English wiki and weblog were provided for those who wanted to use them.

In a few instances, cultural differences had a large and generally unexpected effect on the organisation of the VENUS activities themselves. In VENUS, the working form of seminars was chosen to be re-invented and placed in an international setting. Seminars were perceived as a commonly known and used educational form suitable for introducing new topics and organising debates. However, seminars have different connotations in the cultural contexts of different countries. For example, in Belgium, a (non-)formal educational seminar is a common evening activity that will attract a high number of citizens. They can be seen as an entertainment activity such as a concert or a movie. In Germany and several other countries, on the other hand, (non-)formal educational seminars for citizens are only held during the day and are often seen as a reward for performance and achievements.
This difference in interpretation of the idea of a seminar created a very practical problem: finding a suitable time to organise the VENUS events. This was important as for most partners the time chosen for such an event could have a major impact on the success of the event and the number of participants it attracted. The VENUS team resolved this by choosing a time that was suitable in most partner countries and allowing for various local approaches at each seminar (e.g. only following live stream and not participating in the videoconference).

At the beginning of the project, there was also a fundamentally different understanding of the relationship between the expert speaker and the audience in a seminar amongst the partners. In some countries, the concept of questioning the speaker’s thoughts and lecture was commonplace, whereas in others, this was unheard of. This goes beyond general inhibition to speak in a large group, but a deeper cultural value. For some partners in the VENUS project, it was a learning process to move beyond this cultural inhibition and realise the full potential of the seminars.

We recommend a mixed use of local languages and English in educational activities. The central idea is, on the one hand, to reduce the threshold of participating in expert seminars by using the local language, but, on the other hand, also to keep the direct interaction with international speakers in a common language (e.g. English or French).

Do not be afraid to introduce new approaches. Despite the initial resistance, it pushes people to go beyond their comfort zone and often results in interesting creative solutions. Many of the partners in VENUS experienced the VENUS Seminars as eye-openers in pedagogical, organisational and technical respects, and have used this experience in their daily work.

However it is important to remain aware of cultural sensitivities. Cultural differences often occur unexpectedly. It is important to be open to cultural differences and to work towards solutions that are workable for all partners. As these are often considered to be sensitive issues, it is important for partners to be rational and calm when discussing them. It is also important to allow for local differences in the way these types of activities are organised in different countries. This adds to the uniqueness and the richness of the events.

As demonstrated during the VENUS project, the continuous interchange between general and local interpretation of the chosen content can allow:
- at international level: the choice of a theme – and of an approach to the theme – that provides general validity for the different partners taking part and
- at local level: the by-effects and the specificities that this theme raises in the local context. From our experience, the greatest added value for participants were the local discussions and the interplay with the global theme.
4.5 Promotion and Supporting Participation

4.5.1 Defining an Audience for the VENUS Seminar Series

Defining an audience for the VENUS Seminar Series happened in several ways. First the VENUS team defined the geographical range of the audience: these seminars were aimed at a European audience. The core group were the partner countries who supported the videoconferencing lectures, but by making the lectures available publicly through live streaming, these sessions were also available to anyone, anywhere in the world who chose to sign in.

Defining the target audience happened at three levels:
1. Firstly, the team tried to find people who were interested in the seminar series as a whole, i.e. those who would find the overall intercultural and European dimension of the seminars interesting.
2. Secondly, there were those that were interested in how these seminars were being delivered and wanted to experience how technology could support such activities. Most of these people are situated in what is called the “e-learning community”.
3. Thirdly, there was the group of people interested in the specific content of individual seminars. While in the two first categories, the VENUS team disseminated information about the whole seminar series, to this third group they used dissemination strategies specifically related to the content of an individual seminar and the specific speaker chosen for that session. In the participating sites, the emphasis was also upon the local aspects of the seminar, including the local expert. As a result, the national and local levels needed a different dissemination approach than that used on the wider (European, worldwide) levels, both in terms of the message and the dissemination channels used. In Finland, for example, those interested in the content were often more interested in accessing this content from home.

4.5.2 Defining an Audience for the VENUS Summer School

For the summer school a different approach was taken for defining the audience. Given that the topic of the summer school was more specific and the timing more intensive, the potential audience could be more clearly defined. In this case the team focused on one level, the content level. In fact the content topic of the summer school incorporated the two other levels of the seminar series in that social software enables international networking in a virtual way. This meant that people who were targeted were those who might be interested in all three aspects: intercultural dialogue and networking, new educational technologies and following lessons in a virtual way.
We found that it is useful when you set about attracting an audience for an activity like a virtual seminar series or summer school to create a dissemination plan. This can help you and your partners coordinate your activities to make sure you reach your target participants in an effective way. Here are some suggestions on how to set about such a plan:

- Define the goal: What are the goals and objectives of the dissemination effort? What kind of target numbers are you aiming for? e.g. “for each seminar, we want to have at least 10 participants at each site and 30 online participants, coming from 10 different countries”.
- Define the context: Who is the main target audience, what are the available communication channels and what are the possible barriers?
- Analyse the target audience: who they are, where are they, can they be divided into several groups, what are their expectations, what is on their agenda and what are the barriers for them?
- Define the message: What kind of language should be used, what are the benefits for the target groups of attending the seminar?
- Plan and organise the dissemination (timing, channels, etc.).
- When only a few participants take part in your seminars, you should track and assess the target groups to find out why. Perhaps the dissemination was OK, but the (subject/lecturer) seminar was not what the audience was expecting, i.e. it is important to have a clear view on what is happening and why it is happening.

4.5.3 Reaching the Audience

The VENUS team approached the work of reaching and building an audience from three different perspectives:

- Channels: what is the most effective way to reach each potential participant?
- Message: how can the message be made attractive and what sort of information needed to be provided; how to define the benefits of attending that actually meant something?
- Barriers: what were the potential barriers and how should these be overcome?

- Channels

Each partner institution was responsible for reaching target participants in their catchment area through appropriate channels. Nevertheless, each partner university received guidelines on how to improve their dissemination activities. As well as the local approach, general dissemination at a European level was carried out at the beginning of the entire seminar series and summer school.

The channels used by individual sites differed somewhat, but the most common way of disseminating information was by sending out personal invitations by e-mail, hanging up
posters, distributing leaflets, putting the different seminars on targeted event-calendars and blogs and finally also by word of mouth. Local press was tried, but only the seminar series as a whole succeeded in making it to the local press (written and also audiovisual). The regular communication channels within each partner university were also exploited. At the K.U.Leuven for example, there is a specific newsletter announcing all forthcoming events, reaching all staff and students of the university. Each individual seminar was announced in this way. In Finland, mailing lists from the Finnish Virtual University, Polytechnic and e-learning centres were used. In our experience, we had the impression that electronic invitations sent on an individual basis were particularly successful even if rather time-consuming. Many of the partners used the library to distribute flyers aimed at non-generation students or lifelong learners.

At the European level, the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School were announced on several e-learning portals and blogs. First of all, all the information about the seminars and the summer school was available on the VENUS Seminars web site, which was referred to in every dissemination message. In addition, each seminar and the summer school were announced in the EuroPACE web site and in Pacesetter, which is the newsletter of EuroPACE ivzw. Also the newsletters of the e-learningeurope portal and the European Association for Distance Learning (EADL) announced the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School. Several European organisations were also contacted to announce our activities. These were the European Association for Education of Adults, the Active Citizenship Network, Youth Planet, Aegee, ESIB and BEST.

**Message**

Because there were different kinds of audiences for the VENUS Seminar Series, a targeted message for each proved to be a necessity. First of all, the invitations for each individual seminar sent by each partner institution were written in the local language, also for the summer school. The local personal invitations focused on the topic of the seminar and the (reputation of the) speaker, and secondly on the fact that the seminar was international, delivered in several European countries at the same time. The benefits of attending the seminar were said to be participation in an international event and getting to hear and see a famous speaker as well as meeting a local expert. The impression was that the number of participants varied from speaker to speaker (and consequently from subject to subject). There was certainly more interest in a particular location if the speaker was well-known in that location. The fact that the seminar was international turned out to be not as attractive as we had initially presumed.

The personal invitations also focussed more on the delivery through videoconference and less on the possibility to attend the seminar through streaming. Furthermore, practical arrangements were described in as detailed a manner as possible: when, where (with a description on how to get there), how (videoconference, international, interactive) and a link to the seminar web site, mentioning the fact that more background information could be found there.
A very careful balance had to be found between providing enough information and yet keeping the message short and simple. An electronic version of the brochure of the seminar series as a whole and a more elaborate invitation was attached to each personalised e-mail.

- **Barriers**
  There are a considerable number of factors that can affect participation negatively. These depended on whether the potential participant wished to take part in person by going physically to the closest participating site or whether he/she wanted to take part via live streaming and chat.

In most cases, those interested in travelling to the closest site were interested in the subject of the seminar, and apart from the fact that a videoconference network was used to connect participating sites during the seminar; there is little difference between the VENUS Seminar Series and a more traditional face-to-face seminar. Therefore, a typical barrier that we encountered related to whether or not clear instructions on how to actually find the location were provided. Another common barrier related to whether or not members of the audience had ever experienced videoconferencing before and whether they knew what they could expect from a session delivered in this way. One person for example, asked why he did not want to attend one of the seminars he was interested in, mentioned that if he could not see the speaker in person, he was not interested. We found that one way to overcome these types of barriers was to explain very clearly what a virtual seminar was like, and by stressing the fact that the seminars were very interactive and that videoconferencing was only a technology mediating between the speaker and the participants.

For the second group, those potentially taking part through live streaming and chat, we found several barriers. People who were not that familiar with computers, the Internet and social software, were not easily convinced of the value of following a seminar delivered in this way. Only computer-literate people seemed to be interested in how a seminar can be delivered virtually. The barriers for non-native Internet users were so high that even with a good dissemination strategy; the VENUS team concluded that it really was very difficult to encourage them to take part in this way.

**Timing the VENUS Seminar Series**

One of the most difficult issues to tackle in organising virtual seminars for citizens in different parts of Europe (or for that matter, all over the world!) is finding the right time of day for such events. As there were several time zones involved in the participating network, it took the partners quite some time to agree upon the best hour of the day to organise these sessions. Given the intention to reach not only students but also citizens, the team concluded that the best time to organise the VENUS Seminar Series was in the evening. Because of the fairly low attendance during the autumn sessions in 2006, the timing of the seminars was adjusted for the second series of sessions, going from the original 4 – 6 p.m. (CET) to 6 - 8 p.m. (CET). Not all partners however evaluated this timing as being ‘better’ to attract audiences. This was especially the case for Finland, where, due to the different time zone, the local time for the seminars changed from 5 to 7 p.m. to 7 to 9 p.m., which was seen as being too late in the evening.
The following list contains strategies that you can use to identify and reach your audience and includes some of the information we provided to local site organisers to promote the VENUS activities:

- Try to find media partners: you advertise their event on your supporting website while they advertise yours. This will also improve your overall search page rankings.
- Do not forget to send out reminder e-mails shortly before the event takes place to increase the number of attendees.
- If you want to reach a broad audience, find a topic that appeals to citizens, academics and industry. The same goes for the speaker, the more widely known he/she is, the larger the audience you will attract.
- Try to locate online communities which are built around the topic being discussed at the event. Make sure that you raise awareness in such communities about your event.
- Check your university for relevant research centres, MA or BA programmes, etc. with related topics. If, for example, your seminars are linked to a European theme, and if you don’t have a “European Studies Department” as such, don’t forget subject areas like “International Economics” “European Law/Policies...” Ask the heads of these departments to help distribute information about your event.
- If the subject of your seminar series is linked to “European Integration” for example, then check the topic online but tick the box that says “only pages from ...” (choose your own country).
- Check the name of the expert online, ticking the same box so you get only pages from your country, so you can find out who has worked with him/her before.
- Calendars of events of (online) magazines are a good way to reach citizens.
- Try family, friends, and colleagues and use whatever personal networks you and your colleagues have.
- Make sure you ask your local expert to bring their students or organisations in which they are involved, suggest NGO’s/ interest groups. Provide him/her with the digital and/or paper brochure well time before the event so he/she can also help to promote it.
- Check out the education or science pages of regional/national newspapers and try local press.
- Invite the participants of previous seminars and ask them to spread the word.
- High school teachers tend to be an interested citizen group – it is worth checking if there is a portal site or magazine for them (especially history or politics teachers) which you can use.
- Don’t forget other universities in your area.
Contact the press office of your university if you have one.
If you know of any other lecture series taking place locally aimed at a similar
target audience, it is worth contacting them and asking for their advice.
Ask the international expert to invite people or to suggest NGO’s, interest
groups, etc. to invite.
Put posters and leaflets in public libraries to reach citizens.
Put a lot of emphasis on the content of the seminar (in clear descriptions)
and emphasise the fact that seminars are accessible for everyone.

Although most of your resources should be devoted to reaching your target
groups, it is also worth trying to reach potential participants in much larger
aggregates through the use of mass media including newspapers, radio and
even (local) television. If this succeeds and the seminars become known to
a larger audience, this can give the seminars (and people attending them!) some sort of ‘élan’ they would otherwise not have.
It is of course a matter of making a choice, whether you want to go for a
small, but interested audience, or a big, but less devoted one to which the
subject and content of your seminars should be adjusted. Either way, it is
worth putting some effort into mass marketing. You may even find a new
target group!

4.5.4 Keeping the Audience Interested

As already mentioned, we came to understand that word of mouth was very worthwhile.
That is why the team found the quality of the VENUS Seminars and the Summer School and
their delivery to be extremely important. Several steps were taken to ensure the quality of the
individual seminars. First of all, it was important to make newcomers welcome. Newcomers
tend to be very sensitive about basic matters, for example, they notice that the room where
they sit has too much or too little light or that it is hard to find the toilet. First-time visitors
also try to look for familiar aspects to make sure they fit in. This is why the basic services
should be carefully taken into account. When you work for an organisation for a while, you
tend to overlook all these things and forget how the seminar location might be experienced
by others.

Making newcomers feel welcome is also about reducing the ‘fear-factor’ for people attending
one of the seminars for the first time. This was done by simple things, like offering tips on
‘how to prepare for the seminar’ and a clear description on how to reach the location.
We found that once inside the building, the seminar room had to be clearly identified, and
participants needed to be invited to sign-in on a document clearly showing who was taking
part. Something we found worthwhile was to give a short introduction about common
practices during the seminar at the beginning, e.g. you are welcome to help yourself to tea
or coffee which is available at the back of the room at any time during the seminar. We also
reminded people about the structure of the seminar at the beginning, so that participants knew when there was a break, that they would have a local debate after the break, etc. The manner in which everyone associated with the seminar series communicated with the audience on an individual and group basis was also very important and the VENUS team found that one of the most important aspects was simply to be friendly with participants!

Here are some suggestions to make sure participants are satisfied with the seminar and the way in which it is organised. If participants are pleased with the way in which an event like this is organised, not only are they more likely to return, but they are also more likely to bring their friends/colleagues/fellow students with them.

- Make newcomers welcome and ensure basic services are all up to scratch.
- Make newcomers feel welcome, e.g. provide them with advice on how they can prepare for the seminar and how to reach the location.
- Make sure that those who have to deal with the participants like people and are friendly.
- Ask those taking part for their opinions in a regular and systematic way.
- Track the number of visits to your seminar’s web site, note that what counts is not the number of “hits” but the number of visitors.
- A way of tracking the success or otherwise of your dissemination activities is by adding a question to the evaluation form asking about where participants first heard about your activities. This will give you feedback on which channels are most effective.
- When you advertise the seminars through web sites of other organisations, it might be difficult to keep track of results. Build relations with your contacts in the other organisations and ask for confirmation when/if people include you on their web site to better enable you keep track of results.

4.5.5 Online Communities

Although no specific online VENUS communities were created during the seminar series due to the rich variety of topics, a good deal of online community-building took place during the summer school as participants used the various tools presented to communicate and set up virtual networks. Some of the partners also used the LinkedIn tool (see www.linkedin.com) to connect participants into this network which obviously extends beyond the remit of the project.

The fact that we were not able to set up an online community during the seminar series is not really surprising as it is unlikely anyone would be specifically interested in all the different topics these seminars tackled. For example, someone who attended the VENUS Seminar
about water economy will probably not be interested in Art of the 21st Century. This is why the team tried to integrate the separate topics into already existing online communities by posting announcements about forthcoming seminars in these communities. It was possible, for example, to attract quite a few people within the e-learning community to the session led by Stephen Downes on Knowledge 2.0.

Although a forum was included in the VENUS Seminars web site, this was not very successful, which meant that the forum was somewhat neglected. Perhaps a strategically placed guestbook would have raised more interest from visitors. The postings in the guestbook could have informed new visitors and potential participants about what they could expect from such an international and partly virtual event and what the experiences of other participants had been.

One option that could bring together chat lines and online communities is to save what was said in the chatbox during the discussion of the seminar. It may be necessary to edit these comments and then post only the edited transcript on the web site. This would also show future participants what they could expect from a chat, and could be very useful for those participants who afterwards would like to pick up on what was said in the chat.

Should you find it difficult to attract adequate numbers of participants to your virtual seminars or sessions, you may want to re-consider the following:

- **Location:** this only counts when the seminars are also broadcast at several locations. Perhaps the location is hard to reach by public transport, or is too far away from the city centre. Try using another location for some time that is better to reach or closer to the city centre and evaluate if the number of participants changes.
- **Timing:** one of the hardest issues to tackle in organising virtual seminars for citizens in different parts of Europe (or imagine, all over the world!) is finding the right timing for all possible participants so you may need to experiment until you find a good compromise.
- **Session structure:** the structure for the VENUS Seminars was tested a few times and adjusted to take into account evaluation results. Eventually, the seminar began with a lecture from a top expert via videoconference to all the locations, then a local debate was held and finally all participants were again brought back to exchange results from the local debates and have a general debate through videoconferencing. This formula was found to be very attractive and participants were positive about it. You too may need to test out different structures.
- **Subject:** the choice of subject mostly depends on your institution’s and partners’ field of interest. It may not be easy to suddenly change the subject. However, it is possible that the scope of the subject is too limited
and that is the reason why there are so few participants. For example, if your subject of choice is nanotechnology, a very technical point-of-view will only appeal to a small number of people (engineers, researchers, employees in the field). An ethical or societal point of view might appeal to a much wider public (including sociologists, communication specialists, doctors, general interest groups, etc.).

4.6 Technical Management

The following section describes the technical approach that was taken to realise the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School. It describes the choices we made in respect to networks and services and how the VENUS team set up and managed the various sessions from a technological point of view.

4.6.1 The Design of the Service

VENUS was partly inspired by the interfaculty Lessen voor de 21ste eeuw translated as Lessons of the XXIst Century organised at K.U.Leuven. Like K.U.Leuven, we also wanted to offer a unique opportunity to explore beyond the borders of a subject, to widen horizons and to offer a broader and “universal” dimension to studying at a university. The VENUS Seminar Series should, we argued, appeal to all members of the University community and to all who are interested in order to contribute to the realisation of the concept of the Universitas omnium scientiarum.

The model of the Lessons of the XXIst Century is a traditional classroom model in which the lecturer and participants are all present at the same place and same time, in a lecture hall, large enough to hold about 1000 participants. Not only do students of various faculties and departments join this event, but a significant number of interested citizens also take part. The auditorium in which the activity takes place, is a building located in the centre of the city of Leuven, which is regularly used for public and semi-public events like concerts and plays. These events are a mix of lectures during which the speaker develops his or her ideas and discussion with the audience (as far as the number of participants allows). Speakers are invited on the basis of their having something to say that is interesting to a wider audience, and secondly on their being able to address and engage a large mixed audience of specialists and laymen. Each session lasts for about two hours.

It was initially the intention of VENUS to try and replicate this highly successful model via ICT to a number of institutions abroad and see if the model could be virtualised and
internationalised creating an outreach or extension model of the Lessons of the XXIst Century. The VENUS Seminars were designed to provide a telepresence experience to participants, matching as closely as possible the feeling of effectively being in the same room as the expert. It was also our intention to ensure that participants could discuss and engage as easily and spontaneously as possible with the expert and with the other participants.

This led to the following definition of requirements:

- **Live aspect:** the speaker and participants had to be present at the same time in order to be able to interact with one another.
- **The presentation of the expert (his/her visual and auditive representation) as well their presentation support materials, needed to be reproduced faithfully, synchronously and in sufficient quality for the participants to be able to comfortably see and hear all, and to understand them and interpret them. The whole system should have a high signal to noise ratio, both in electro-magnetical as well as in psycho-cognitive terms.**
- **The system chosen needed to allow participants to interact in an easy and natural way in various modes.**
- **A high degree of accessibility was required via different modes (videoconferencing and web conferencing).**
- **The service needed to support the synchronous participation of and exchange between multiple sites. These sites in turn needed to allow for optimal participation by a small group (between 4 and 30, depending on the physical limitations of the room). Individual participation needed to be equally possible, compromising as little as possible the interaction functionality, effectively trying to give all participants (those within the same room as well as the presenter, those in the remote videoconferencing sites, those participating via stream and chat), a sense of equality.**
- **The service should run at the lowest possible cost of installation and operation, both for the organiser of the seminars and for the participants.**

### 4.6.2 Technical Approach

There were two ways of approaching the technical set-up for the live sessions. The first was to set up a highly centralised service that defined the whole system and that clearly prescribed the requirements and specifications of the whole system from contribution side to participant side. The second way was to set up a system that was as open as possible and that catered for as many client configurations as possible.

Before deciding exactly what the technical set-up would be, the technical team carried out a location check at each site in order to find out not only what equipment was available at each location but also in order to gather important contact details and operational information about each site. The form used to gather this information is contained in Annex 2.

As one of the key objectives of the VENUS project was to test the extent to which the proposed seminar series could in the future form part of the extension service of each of the participating universities, it was agreed that it was important to utilise the equipment and networks already available in participating universities.
Following a consideration of the outcomes of this check and taking into account the options available from a technological point of view as described in Chapter 2, the team decided upon a rather open approach that included:

- the use of IP and ISDN based multipoint videoconferencing as the core system for high-quality production of the content, and for contribution from the sites, i.e. allowing for group-based synchronous interaction.
- a recommendation to use H.239 videoconferencing standard for the presentation of high-quality supportive learning materials.
- the provision of synchronised slides via streaming video to allow for dual display presentation at sites which were not equipped with H.239 compatible equipment.
- the possibility for live streaming of content for individual participants.
- the use of a management system for registration and management of the participants as well as for the resource centre for provision of access to the streaming and support materials before, during and after each seminar.
- the provision of communication tools for live (synchronous) interaction via chat and asynchronous interaction (via forum) embedded in the management system.

This compromise was agreed in order to provide the best possible service to the largest possible audience. Instead of fully prescribing the technical requirements to each site that would allow for the best quality and highest functionality experience, the technical solution was left open to the different setups that are available in each of the core participating institutions. This had an advantage as it allowed the partnership an opportunity to assess the value of a hybrid system and to prepare guidelines and support materials accordingly which are based on a realistic appraisal of the technology in use in universities today rather than on an idealised situation where the same equipment and networks are being used everywhere.

### 4.6.3 Technical Infrastructure

The structure used for the realisation of the live elements of the seminar series and summer school was a hybrid one, combining a mix of technologies – videoconferencing, video streaming and online chat, and using the two different prevailing networks, IP and ISDN. The sessions took place in three different modes: all of which were designed to be equally interactive, but they each responded to different requirements or set-ups from the participant point of view. All three options were offered in parallel, during the live seminar. These options were chosen to guarantee the best possible quality for video, audio, interaction and subsequent recording and re-distribution, while being the least costly in terms of hardware, software, support and network.

- **Option 1: Group Videoconferencing Mode Dual Screen**

  Participating institutions which chose this option provided access to an auditorium in which a group of participants could join via traditional videoconferencing. Participating sites could choose to display the speaker and the presentation materials (e.g. slides, graphics, etc.) on two parallel screens, via H.239 mode if their equipment allowed for such an option. H.239 or the so-called “People + Content” mode relates to the display quality. H.239 was only fully
accepted as a standard in September 2005. This means that most equipment bought before 2006 may not be compatible or may need an upgrade.

- **Option 2: Group Videoconferencing and Streaming**

If the system available in the participating institution was not H.239 compatible, then traditional videoconferencing was still possible where the presenter’s image was displayed on one screen. To display the slides or other visual materials, a second display needed to be connected to an on-line PC that was equipped with a streaming client (QuickTime, Real Player or Windows Media Player). This PC picked up the full screen streaming presentation that ran in parallel with the presenter’s image.

Note that both option 1 and option 2 required a videoconferencing codec as well as dual screens and projectors (or monitors). See Fig. 14 *VENUS Network Set-up Options* for a diagram showing this set-up. Both these options originated from the Multipoint Control Unit (MCU) at the AVNet K.U.Leuven that acted as the concentrator and central control point of the conferences.

- **Option 3: Web Conference Mode**

In addition to the traditional videoconferencing-based distribution of the seminars and summer school sessions, VENUS also offered access via a web conference. This consisted of the combination of the streamed video with the video image of the presenter, together with the streamed video of the presentation slides, laid out within a web page that was further complemented with a chat application, in order to allow participants that were using this option to interact. This was implemented by feeding the video source into a streaming server and the presentation (slides and screens) into a second streaming server, both made accessible through a public web page. In order to meet the expected traffic, the web server and streaming servers were located on strategic nodes on the network. The following image gives an impression of the result from the point of view of the end user. The end user needed to have a browser with QuickTime player and Flash player installed.
4.6.4 VENUS Network

The option to technically manage and control the live sessions from AVNet in Leuven was chosen because of the capacity and know-how that is available in AVNet and because AVNet has access to the various technologies used as well as the capacity to develop, manage and monitor what was going on.

The live sessions themselves actually originated from a number of different locations depending on the availability of the presenter: Prof. Riccardo Petrella for example contributed his seminar from the Politecnico di Bari in Italy, where a temporary videoconference system was set up specially for the VENUS Seminar.

Other contributions came from the University of Cologne, (Prof. Wolfgang Th. Wessels), University Richmond USA (Prof. Joanne Ciulla), National Research Centre Moncton, Canada (Stephen Downes), MARTa Herford, Germany (Jan Hoet, cancelled), North Karelia University of Applied Sciences Joensuu, Finland (Risto Linturi), University of Toronto, Canada (Dr. Derrick de Kerckhove). The seminars of Prof. Jean-Jacques Cassiman and Nathan Shedroff were transmitted from the videoconferencing room in AVNet K.U.Leuven.
All participating sites were connected to the MCU at K.U. Leuven via IP, with bandwidths up to 512 Kbps apart from the West Pomeranian Business School, SZCZECIN (Poland) which connected via ISDN (with speed up to 256 Kbps). The main reason for this was the fact that a reliable bandwidth connection over IP was not available from that institution at the time, hence the decision to opt for the (more expensive) ISDN solution.

The following set of diagrams illustrates the three different viewing options and shows the networks that were used in the case of each.

**Interaction**

In all options, interaction was possible using the forum and chat functions on the VENUS platform. In the case of the videoconferencing mode, audio/visual interaction was also possible. In all cases, moderators, both locally in the videoconferencing rooms, or centrally in the web conferencing environment, facilitated interaction. The purpose of this interaction option was
to provide all participants with the possibility of interacting with one another at any time; this included the possibility of interacting with the speaker no matter where they were located.

The following interaction modes were possible:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Actors</th>
<th>Time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VENUS web site</td>
<td>Distribution of supporting materials to participants</td>
<td>All participants</td>
<td>Before seminar, asynchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videoconference</td>
<td>Introduction to the seminar, presentation of sites</td>
<td>All participants</td>
<td>Seminar part 1, synchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F2F Group discussion</td>
<td>Discussion within local sites</td>
<td>Participants per site</td>
<td>Seminar part 2, synchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat</td>
<td>Discussion amongst individual web conferencing participants</td>
<td>Web conference participants</td>
<td>Seminar all parts, synchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videoconference</td>
<td>Question and Answer Session</td>
<td>All participants</td>
<td>Seminar part 3, synchronous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum</td>
<td>Post seminar discussion opportunity</td>
<td>All participants</td>
<td>After seminar, asynchronous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Distribution of supporting materials to participants: if relevant interesting materials were made available by the presenter to VENUS beforehand, these were then posted on the VENUS web site in order to allow the participants to prepare for the seminar.
- Introduction to the seminar, presentation of sites: the scenario was generally the same during all seminars: after a short general welcome and introduction by the Central Moderator, all participating sites were introduced by each of the Local Moderators. Then the Central Moderator introduced the Speaker, who began with his/her presentation.
- Discussion within local sites: after the presentation, participants in all sites took part in a local discussion, chaired by the Local Moderator and supported by a Local Expert.
- Discussion amongst individual web conferencing participants: a parallel discussion exercise (similar to the local site discussion) was generated by the group of web conferencing participants, who communicated by means of the chat channel. This chat was moderated by the Chat Moderator, who was connected closely to the Central Moderator.
- Question and Answer Session: this part involved the Speaker and allowed the local sites and the web conference group to ask their questions and formulate comments or conclusions from their discussions to the presenter. In order to facilitate this most interactive part, it was decided on the basis of extensive experience with group videoconferences, to use the Local Moderators and the Central Moderator to ask the questions passed onto them by participants. Questions that originated in the chat discussion were passed on via the Chat Moderator in the same way.
- Post seminar discussion opportunity: participants and speakers could continue the discussion after the seminars and were invited to use the Forum that was embedded in the VENUS web site for this purpose.
The VENUS Summer School adopted roughly the same elements as the sessions in the Seminar Series but arranged them in a more flexible manner: common parts of the videoconferencing elements were mixed with local break-out sessions, or complemented with off-line activities that were specific to the nature of the summer school topics (see the Summer School Agenda Annex 5).

- **Technical Support Measures**

Behind the scenes of the VENUS sessions, a small team of technical staff provided technical support. This team consisted of a systems supervisor, specialists in videoconferencing technology, in A/V and in streaming media, and finally web designers at the central facility, complemented with at least one videoconferencing, ICT and/or A/V specialist in each location. This support can be divided into the following types of activity:

  - **Identification of requirements**: on the basis of the objectives of the VENUS project, it was decided to use (group) videoconferencing and parallel web conferencing, supporting presentation with separate display of media, and complemented with participant interaction.
  
  - **Guidance and support in preparation**: the technical support team collected relevant technical and logistical information from all the different sites (see Annex 2). Individual tests were carried out between the participating sites and the coordinating site (AVNet). Guidance and support were given as far as possible to each of the sites, in order to optimise the set up technically and ergonomically. Documentation was also provided where requested.
  
  - **Setting up the VENUS system**: the various components (videoconferencing, streaming, web site with chat and other services) were tested individually and then combined into a single system. The technical support team was involved in testing the whole system well before the first live session took place.
  
  - **One week before the first seminar, a so-called ‘zero’ session was organised to test the full set-up at all locations.** Before, during and after this and all other seminars in the series, the support team was available to operate and support the sessions from a technical point of view.

A typical session was operated and supported by a support team at the central coordinating site and at all local sites. The support person(s) in charge of the contribution where the presenter was not physically present in the VENUS central site or in one of the partner sites, was also included in the support team for each particular seminar.

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**Fig.15 The VENUS Support Team**
For each session, the support team set up a dedicated Skype chat conference to facilitate communication amongst the technical staff. A dedicated support telephone number was also given to all local support people. The same support team also actively and continuously monitored the participant chat session because technical issues arising to do with the use of web conferencing (and also other participants in some cases) were often communicated there. Issues to do with the streaming of the media (presenter as well as presentation materials) were often raised via this channel.

### Using a Hybrid Solution

Although it was initially not the intention to combine videoconferencing with web conferencing technologies (the original project plan used very much the telepresence factor as its basic design element), the partners’ wishes to extend the seminar offer to other types of participants (the lonely participant at home, at the workplace or at the school too remote from suitable videoconferencing facilities) meant that the VENUS technology team had to consider complementary options.

A comparative study was carried out to look into various off-the-shelf solutions. The result of this study was that none of the available services and tools were considered suitable to meet the relevant criteria which were:

- sufficiently low cost to implement and operate - for the provider as well as for the individual user;
- easy to use;
- sufficiently reliable;
- sufficiently scalable, and
- suitable for integration within the telepresence facility.

In order to meet these criteria, it was decided to develop a customised VENUS service, combining videoconferencing with web conferencing as described earlier. This was possible because the necessary skills and competences as well as much of the hardware and infrastructure were available within the project partnership.

Additional investment was necessary to purchase the encoding and streaming server Codian (now part of Tandberg) IP VCR 2200, this is a videoconference recorder that allows to record video and slides from standard videoconferencing equipment. It allows content to be streamed immediately (live) or played back on demand at multiple speeds to any PC on the Internet or to any videoconferencing end-point.

The advantage of this solution was the fact that all elements lay completely within the control of the VENUS technical team, there were no limitations on scheduling, testing, adapting and operating the service. No other investments other than the acquisition of the Codian server were necessary and the investment necessary is well within the reach of small to medium institutions. The running costs of this service are minimal.

An obvious disadvantage was the fact that this was initially an innovative and unproven solution, which meant that initial problems had to be solved during operation, and this
in turn led to a degree of frustration for end-users at the outset. Typical problems we encountered were conflicting versions of browsers and plug-ins, an issue that can only be ironed out by carrying out larger scale testing.

Once the teething problems were solved, the system ran in a very satisfactorily manner.

The following suggestions and tips arise from our work in VENUS and may be useful when it comes to setting up and using technology for your own seminar series or summer school.

- It is essential that all participating sites and individual participants are informed about the technological requirements of the sessions that are being organised and that they are supported in verifying if their set-up matches these requirements.
- Consistent instructions need to be provided to all with regard to the required hardware and software, as well as about participation procedures. For example, individual participants should know what software needs to be installed to be able to receive seminars. Site coordinators need to know how to set up their equipment and room in order to receive the seminars in the best possible way to accommodate participants.
- The VENUS support team was also responsible for briefing speakers about the design of presentation materials, for making recommendations on how they could best get across their message using videoconferencing technology and on how to interact in real time with remote participants. These elements can obviously be checked during a test connection that can be carried out well before the real seminar takes place. Such test connections are essential for verifying the technical situation, and it is even more useful if the actual speaker can be there in order to get a feel for the typical nature of telepresence teaching and learning.
- Immediately before and during the seminar, all technology coordinators need to be in close and continuous contact in order to be able to immediately solve any technical issues that emerge. We recommend that participants communicate using the telepresence platform in a natural way also regarding issues and problems.
- Always carry out a common site survey. Not only does this help to establish what technologies and solutions are available in each institution, but this will also help build a strong technical support team and establish a common vocabulary and set of standards.
- Always establish a network of technical contact points in each institution taking part making sure you deal with any linguistic or other issues, circulate the names and contact information of these people and ensure regular contact and communication.
During a live session, create communication channels with the contact persons and local moderators at participating sites other than the videoconference channel. This will enable you to discuss issues not related to the content of the lecture during a session, without disturbing the progress of the seminar.

Try to involve this technical team in all evaluation activities in order to help and support the network and as a way to prepare for future developments.

Use common and available solutions where possible, before putting in place a new tool or service and ensure a rigorous usability assessment has been carried out with typical users.

4.6.5 VENUS Web Site

Within the field of virtual mobility and e-learning initiatives, web sites are a critical part of the activities. A web site can be the interface, the source of information and the communication portal. The tools to create and deploy web sites are becoming more flexible and easier to use. However, the production of complicated web applications that require more than the standard methods of interaction is not trivial. Often, each application requires customisation. In the work carried out to prepare the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School, the team went through 4 clear stages in the web site development process: analysis, design, prototyping and development.

4.6.6 Analysis: Identifying the Needs

The analysis phase focused on gathering information to facilitate an understanding of the project. Before starting to build the VENUS Seminar web site it was very important to identify the project goals. What were the objectives? Who do we want to reach and what did we want to accomplish with the web site.

The goals were very clear: the VENUS consortium wanted to organize a Virtual Seminar Series and Summer School with live participation both through videoconferencing and streaming in an international context. The project wanted to create a “Faculty of Extension” with an online module that contained recordings and learning materials that were to be derived and published from the seminar series and summer school. From an organisational point of view, the web site needed to manage the participant process for the seminars, the registration process, the agenda and to give access to supporting documents.

The web site had several kinds of users: the webmaster and final editor, VENUS project partners and the current and potential audience for the seminar sessions and summer school.
Different users needed different applications and functions. Different user groups meant that we needed to put in place a user management system which could identify users and give them different roles in the online environment. To identify different users, the users needed to register. We also wanted to enable non-registered users to see a part of the content of the web site, to provide them with information and give them the chance to register and become a member of the VENUS Seminars and Summer School community.

4.6.7 Design and Development

Web site visitors needed to be able to access basic information about the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School: The main page needed to be a summary of all items that could be found on the web site. The site therefore had the following sub-sections:
- A news section: to post all activities related to VENUS and to make the site lively and attractive
- Agenda showing when the different sessions were to take place
- Location where it was possible to register
- Location where it was possible to LOG IN
- Location where it was possible to subscribe for a session
- Place providing more information about the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School
- Location with further information about the speakers
- Information about the different locations

For the VENUS partners, the site also needed to support direct content editing, in-place commenting on content, control of access privileges and management of the authentication process. This means that the site needed to allow for registration, document storage (content management), discussion groups, seminar scheduling and an updated news section. Another important aspect of the site was that it needed to provide the actual location where the live event took place for those who wished to follow online. This meant we needed to have a place for live streaming, interactive chat, slides and also a way in which the sessions could be immediately evaluated online.
4.6.8 Registration of Participants

Given the complex organisation of the VENUS activities, with participants at different physical locations and virtual participants following the live stream, we decided it was necessary to make registration obligatory. The registration process was technically supported by an online database and registration system on the seminars web site.

For the seminar series, participants in each site registered centrally through the web site. A registration system was created, which invited potential participants to fill in (i) their details, (ii) the name of the site where they would participate (physical or online) and (iii) what they expected from a seminar. All local VENUS teams could directly access the central database, to check the number of participants for each seminar in their respective site. This was important as they could adapt local marketing strategies accordingly. The main problems we found with this system was that it was in English and as it was outside the framework of the participating organisations and institutions’ own web sites, it was something of a barrier to participation.

For the summer school, the system was slightly different as the local VENUS teams could not directly access the central registrations database. This caused further difficulties, and resulted in more work for those responsible in the participating sites.

Even though at an early stage we also put in place a rather complex registration system for managing access to the live stream, in retrospect, it is clear to us that this was not necessary. As the number of online participants remained low, we did not insist on compulsory registration for the live stream. This in turn had the positive effect of making it easier for participants to join the online sessions. However one down-side to this was that the names of those following the live stream did not appear in the online chat, resulting in less meaningful interaction.

Based on our experience of putting in place a registration system, we have several recommendations we would like to make in relation to doing this:

- Online registration can be a valuable tool when it is used in the right circumstances, i.e. when the numbers are high. It can help to not only manage the process, but can also offer valuable feedback in terms of audience response, participation patterns, etc. However it is essential that all participating sites have access to the central database.
- Registration for online participants is particularly helpful as this can also provide necessary security and will enable people to be named in an online chat situation which is important.
- Registration for both online participants as well as those who participate on site needs to be extremely user friendly, possibly in the local language and should not represent a barrier in any way to participation.
- Access to information on the activities in the local language is essential to attract citizens.
4.6.9 Choosing an Open Source Content Management Solution

There are many ways to manage web site content, from the simple web log (blog) engine system that allows limited content publishing to a full content management system framework to application frameworks on which you can build your own customised content management system. With the wide array of choices in the open source space, it can be hard to choose the right solution for your needs. Following some considerable discussion, the VENUS team chose Drupal (for more information see http://drupal.org). This choice was based on a number of factors, some related to the functionality provided by Drupal and others related to more practical factors, such as the fact that this was the system of choice in the University leading this discussion, K.U.Leuven.

Drupal contains many built-in features and can be easily extended. There is a lively community supporting its development and adding to the portfolio of additional features. The basic features include:

- Provision of friendly URLs using Apache’s mod_rewrite capability
- It is easy to extend using Drupal’s module framework (the Drupal community has developed many useful modules that provide functions such as taxonomy display, private messages, bookmarks, and so on...)
- A personalisation environment for individualised content and presentation based on user preferences
- A role-based permission system to define access to the viewing and editing of content
- Its content is fully indexed to support search
- Drupal is written on top of a database abstraction layer, so the framework can be easily extended to other database back ends
- It supports other content forms such as polls, threaded comments and discussions and content syndication
- It allows for the separation of content from styling in a templating system that uses HTML, CSS, and PHP
- It provides administrative support for logging, analysis, and web-based administration
- Online help is available
- There is a forum function as well as a chat function

All in all, the technical support team in VENUS concluded that Drupal proved to be a flexible content management system and it does have a variety of very useful features. However, it is worth noting that the team also found that it required considerable effort was needed to customise it to the needs of VENUS which requires resources both in terms of time and skills that may not be available to all institutions.
4.7 Cost Issues

In the following section we will review the relevant basics for cost accounting and then propose a simple cost model which is based on the experiences that occurred in the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School and similar projects. The model will then be discussed and applied to the VENUS context and recommendations will be provided for cost management in future VENUS type seminars.

But let’s start by asking why you should take the question of cost into account in the first place. Accurate cost controlling is a critical success factor for any project is a familiar truism among project managers (as well as accountants and controllers). But nevertheless it has been completely ignored in many well-publicised cases where the costs of a project have simply exploded. Now, pretend for a few seconds that the costs of your own project are a bunch of kindergarten children in the toy department of a supermarket. Would you dare to lose sight of them for one second? Well, just like those energetic children, costs have a marked tendency to get out of hand if not constantly watched.

However cost management in projects dealing with innovative learning arrangements seems to be a rather touchy issue which is often downplayed or even completely ignored. This tendency can be at least partially attributed to the concern that discussions with external stakeholders tend to focus on cost issues while neglecting potential benefits once cost issues have been brought up in a debate. However, in many cases this rather unfavorable course of discussion can be attributed to the fact that cost issues were not systematically considered beforehand: decision makers will tend to probe even more rigorously for cost issues, when they have the impression that costs were not adequately considered in a project proposal. Only if you have a thorough understanding of your cost structure and project budget line will you be able to deliver a balanced and persuasive view of your project to your stakeholders.

4.7.1 Cost Accounting in VENUS Type Projects

Costs represent the monetary value assigned to the consumption of resources to produce an output (goods or services) in a given accounting period. Variable costs are the costs that change directly with the amount of output: if you don’t own any videoconferencing equipment, for example, you may have to rent it for an hourly fee every time you conduct a videoconference. The more conferences you conduct, the more rent you have to pay. Fixed costs remain the same regardless of the amount produced. If you have bought your own videoconferencing equipment there are no additional costs implied when you conduct an additional videoconference. In real life (i.e. apart from accounting theory) fixed costs often take the form of a step function, remaining constant over small ranges of output but increasing by steps when a certain threshold is reached: e.g. if the existing VC equipment in your organisation is constantly blocked due to high usage intensity, you may have to buy more equipment. However, when you are actually using the equipment you exclude alternative uses (e.g. renting it to somebody else). The costs incurred for the foregone
alternative use of an asset are referred to as opportunity costs. In general aging and usage of the equipment lead to decrease in value which is accounted for as depreciation. The relations between input and output define your cost structure. Note that the cost structure depends on the perspective of the respective cost centre (the place for which the costs are calculated): if you rent VC equipment on demand it is treated as a variable cost from your perspective. From the perspective of the provider, the equipment is treated as a fixed cost: the purchase price remains the same, no matter how often the equipment is rented out.

4.7.2 Cost Model for VENUS Type Seminars

The cost model for VENUS type activities normally consists of three dimensions (see Fig. 17). The first dimension of this cost model refers to the cost driving activities of the project. These activities should match the ones identified in the project plan. This is linked to the initial model put forward in Chapter 3 and is related to the goal-setting triangle described as the first element necessary in setting up an educational activity.

The second dimension of the model represents the cost categories in a project. The cost categories account for the resources required to deliver the activities identified in dimension 1 of the VENUS cost model.

The following table shows the common costs categories for VENUS type projects with the corresponding costs calculation mode and examples for each category:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cost category</th>
<th>Cost calculation</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff costs</td>
<td>Opportunity costs</td>
<td>Project Manager, Teacher, Moderator, Technical Support, Administrative Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(e.g. total hourly wage)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure costs</td>
<td>Depreciation</td>
<td>Buildings and furniture, Telecommunication hardware, Network hardware, Computer hardware, Software</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Renting fee</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Internal cost rate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing Expenses</td>
<td>Payout (invoiced amount)</td>
<td>Data and telecommunication volume, Consumables, External services, Travelling and accommodation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The third dimension reflects which organisational unit, centre or institution has to bear the costs associated with a given activity and category. In VENUS the following cost centers were distinguished:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Project Partner/Site</th>
<th>Cost Center 1st level</th>
<th>Cost Center 2nd level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Project Coordinator/Main Site</td>
<td>AVNet- K.U.Leuven</td>
<td>Costs borne at department level (for the department in charge of VENUS)</td>
<td>Costs borne at institutional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating Sites</td>
<td>University of Cologne Helsinki University of Technology NETTUNO, Rome University of West Hungary West Pomeranian Business School, Szczecin Technical University of Kosice</td>
<td>Costs borne at department level (for the department in charge of VENUS)</td>
<td>Costs borne at institutional level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consulting and Technical Support</td>
<td>ATiT</td>
<td>Costs borne at department level (for the department in charge of VENUS)</td>
<td>Costs borne at institutional level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is worth noting that an interesting extension of this model would be to include the learner as a cost centre as well (e.g. for the learner’s travelling expenses and opportunity costs for the time spent travelling).

After an analysis of your own proposed activity based on the VENUS cost model, you should be able to create a cost activity matrix illustrated in the following table which we have completed using the VENUS Seminars as an example.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Column</th>
<th>Headline</th>
<th>Function</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>List the cost-driving activities and sub-activities of your project (represents dimension 1 of the VENUS cost model)</td>
<td>Set-up/Prepare question list for live session 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Resources</td>
<td>For each activity list the resources that are required to carry out the activity</td>
<td>Local Moderator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Assign a cost category to the required resource (represents dimension 2 of the VENUS cost model)</td>
<td>Staff Costs/Local Moderator</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the information collected in the matrix you should then be able to thoroughly evaluate and discuss the cost structure of your project from different perspectives. Note that changing the cost perspective by omission or inclusion of cost centers (e.g. costs borne at institutional level) may change the exhibited cost structure of your project significantly.

The matrix has also proven to be a useful structure to keep track of actual costs compared to originally planned costs. Doing so constantly enables the project manager to assess the implication of potential cost overruns as early as possible so that corrective action can be taken accordingly.

### 4.8 Evaluating Virtual Seminars

In this section we will discuss the evaluation methods used for evaluating the seminar series and the summer school. This evaluation was carried out in a variety of different ways, spread throughout the lifetime of the project. It was also aimed at a number of different target groups.

#### 4.8.1 Preparation Stage

The first step was the creation of an evaluation plan in which the key evaluation elements were identified. A target group was identified for each key element. We choose different types of evaluation methods for the different key elements.

In general, we decided we needed to use both quantitative and qualitative evaluation techniques. We used a quantitative technique to evaluate participants in the seminar series and summer school and chose to employ a questionnaire as a mechanism to support our evaluation. Questionnaires were one of the most used methods throughout the VENUS project and they contained a number of questions with prepared alternative answers and open questions.

To gather more critical views of the various stakeholders involved and the project partners, we used a qualitative evaluation method. We also used several other methods including a
simulation. This simulation took the form of a so-called ‘0’ seminar session at the start of the seminar series. During this ‘0’ session, the partners had a chance to test out their practices and procedures for the proposed seminar series without involving real participants or a guest speaker. This session which was in effect a rehearsal, allowed the partners to evaluate the technology, structure, environment and timing and was very helpful in our preparation.

In general terms, an interview method was used when more detailed and fundamental information was required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information to be collected</th>
<th>Methods used</th>
<th>Information collected from</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>About how well the seminars functioned.</td>
<td>Test (Pre-test and test of seminar) – simulation of seminars</td>
<td>VENUS Project partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the organisation of the seminars.</td>
<td>Product evaluation check-list for monitoring of seminars</td>
<td>VENUS Project partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many people took part.</td>
<td>Calculation of number of participants at each partner institution and online participants</td>
<td>VENUS Project partners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction levels on the part of participants as regards the virtual seminar or summer school.</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
<td>Target users – virtual seminar participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In depth satisfaction levels in relation to the VENUS concept.</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Stakeholders – practical level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The strategies and policies of participating institutions in relation to the Faculty of Extension.</td>
<td>Interview</td>
<td>Stakeholders – managerial level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of project partners during and at the end of the seminar series and summer school.</td>
<td>Virtual meeting after each seminar&lt;br&gt;Self-assessment at each stage of the project&lt;br&gt;Face-to-face meeting at the end of the seminar series</td>
<td>VENUS Project partners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.8.2 Data Collection

Each activity related to the VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School was evaluated by participants through the use of short questionnaires. Two different questionnaires were created. The participants at videoconference sites were asked to fill out the questionnaire in paper form right after the seminar. They could also fill in an online form available on the VENUS Seminars web site. Online participants could fill out the questionnaire only in an online form. The questionnaire was available on either the seminar live stream site or on the VENUS Seminars web site.
We used in-depth interviews to question the experts or people with decision-making powers. It was important to consider that this target group were usually fully occupied therefore the structured questions were well composed to take into account all key issues within the limited time available. A self-assessment methodology was used several times during the project in order to implement partners’ suggestions for improvement and to adjust planning for later stages of the project. The VENUS Seminar web site was reviewed by project partners as part of an internal review. Although we did not specifically use this method, a good example of an external evaluation method would be to invite an expert to review the content information of a specific topic on the web site, or review the topics selected for a virtual seminar series.

4.8.3 Data Processing

The quantitative evaluation results were first compiled and statistically analyzed. All questions were sorted according to relevant themes and sub-themes (e.g. pedagogy, content, technology, etc.)

This is a key step in gathering relevant and significant information. The processed data was then represented in a radar diagram like the one shown in Fig. 19. A radar diagram is an explicit and synthetic representation. It structures conceptual space along vectors or axes representing the specified key elements. It is helpful as a way to see how consistent or balanced your product is. The values marked with lower scores need focus. A score of “5” represents values which are fulfilling for the participants. However, all results need interpretation. That is why we chose to create questionnaires with both open and closed questions, to ensure a minimum level of feedback. For example, it is possible that one partner site had a problem with technology during a specific seminar, which could result in a general bad score on technology although participants at all the other sites, who experienced a normal session, could be completely satisfied. Annex 7 contains an example of one of the evaluation forms used.

![VENUS Radar Diagram](Fig. 18)
The qualitative information gathered through face-to-face interviews and the self-assessment questionnaires were treated on a case-by-case basis. All information received was considered to be important and all answers were regrouped and compared. We checked to see whether the opinions expressed were the same, converging or diverging and whether important remarks had been made that needed to be considered.

4.8.3 Results

An evaluation report was created right after each seminar in order to provide an immediate feedback from participants. The partners also organised virtual meetings to discuss each seminar and to react to participants’ feedback. This approach was found to be essential as it allowed the project team to react immediately. The results after each stage were then processed in a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analysis that resulted in a list of actions. Some of these required there to be a change in the project. At the end of each set of activities, a general summary was created of the main problems identified. Based on these results suitable solutions were found for future activities. For example, the results of the VENUS Seminar Series evaluation were very useful as lessons learned during this part of the project could be immediately applied to the organisation of the summer school.

Before you start to develop evaluation instruments, we recommend you ask yourself the following questions:

- What information do you need to collect from your evaluation analysis?
- Who do you have to ask to get the right information?
- Which method will be the most suitable for the defined evaluation group?

It is very important to make the right decision about the questions listed before the evaluation process starts. Creating an evaluation plan at the beginning of your activity can play an important role in summarising your own thoughts on the goals and objectives of your evaluation. You will find out that you need different information from different users and that there are various ways of receiving feedback.

For example, if you need information from managers you have to take into account that they are usually very busy people and they will probably not respond to a questionnaire received by e-mail. Therefore it is essential to arrange a meeting with them and use an interview as the method concentrating on the most important issues you need to investigate.
To receive the immediate reactions of seminar participants, short questionnaires are a very appropriate method. You can ask basic questions about their level of satisfaction, feelings, comments, and so on. This questionnaire should not be too long.

The best way to check how the technology works or the organisation of an event like a virtual seminar is to carry out a test or a simulation. Don’t forget to gather feedback from people who participate regularly during the entire series as this will provide you with useful information on the whole process. With all evaluation groups it is very important to make sure they know their input is valued and that it will have an impact. This impact is generally in terms of an improvement of the activity reflecting the needs of the users. If the virtual seminars are organised through the cooperation of several partners, self-assessment by each partner followed by an open discussion (either virtual or face-to-face) helps provide a useful overall evaluation of the activity.
This chapter begins with a broad overview of some of the issues and challenges facing modern universities when they decide to open up courses and services to the wider public as part of their mission to support Lifelong Learning. Accreditation and recognition are then addressed, topics which again can raise significant issues for many universities. In this chapter you will also find a short overview of the structural issues that can arise when arranging educational services for a wider audience.

5.1 Contribution to the Faculty of Extension

A common understanding of the multiple purposes of higher education is emerging. Broadly speaking, four main purposes have been identified:
- preparation of students for the labour market;
- preparation of students for life as active citizens in a democratic society;
- personal development of students; and
- development and maintenance of a broad, advanced knowledge base.

The basic tasks of higher education institutions currently fall into three categories: research, education and societal services. Higher education has a societal service function whose roots stem from an era as early as the first universities. As society changes, the higher education system is meeting expectations, demands and obligations that it did not previously have to address. This has included an increasing demand for higher education institutions to demonstrate their value not only to government and private industry but also to the wider community.

During the past decade, new elements have been integrated into university operations, emphasising the financial and societal utilisation potential of research and education. This is made more concrete when the third mission of higher education institutions, societal impact, is broken down into comprehensible intentions as to what is meant by this mission as well as into policy alignments and clearly defined tasks. Adult education and complementary studies are also positioned within this mission field. The definitions for these activities vary from country to country: the definitions used in Europe include university teaching for adults,
education for adults, lifelong learning activities, even vocational education activities and university teaching outside the regular degree structure, to mention but a few. Sometimes, these university activities are called its Faculty of Extension, a term widely used in the US, rather than Continuing Education, which is the more common term in Europe.

The approach taken by the VENUS partners in their realisation of a virtual seminar series and a summer school is just one option in a wide variety of alternatives open to today’s university. As previously mentioned, the project team see these types of developments in the context of supporting a long-term and sustainable Faculty of Extension, a part of the Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning services that can be put and are being put in place by significant numbers of European Universities.

### 5.2 Recognition and Accreditation Issues

The VENUS project partners accepted the challenge to support virtual mobility not only by ‘internationalising’ seminars and a summer school and opening them up to citizens but also by testing the recognition and accreditation procedures in partner institutions in seven European countries. They also tried to develop procedures on how to issue certificates for citizens that are not officially subscribed to universities as traditional full-time students.

#### 5.2.1 Recognition

Mobility of staff, students and graduates is one of the core elements of the Bologna Process. The aims of this process include creating opportunities for personal growth, developing international cooperation between individuals and institutions, and giving substance to the European dimension. This is what VENUS aimed to do with its virtual seminar series and summer school. As mentioned in the London Communiqué, the resolution of the Bologna 5th Ministerial Conference in May 2007, many challenges still exist. Among the obstacles to mobility identified in this document, it specifically mentions recognition of qualifications, degrees and study periods.

The most important tools recommended and developed within the Bologna Process for recognition are:

- Qualifications frameworks: instruments in achieving comparability and transparency within the European Higher Education area and facilitating the movement of learners within, as well as between, higher education systems. They should also help higher education institutes to develop modules and study programmes based on learning outcomes and credits.

- The Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the EHEA: many European countries have developed a national quality assurance system based on these standards. Countries can be divided into three categories based on the solutions made: those that
audit, those that accredit, and those that have a combination of the two or a different solution altogether. The nature of the higher education system, legislation and steering mechanisms determine how a country organises its national quality assurance system as a part of the higher education system.

The definition of learning outcomes and accreditation of entire programmes is today widespread, but this is not the case at an individual modularised course level, e.g. the VENUS summer school.

The VENUS higher education institutions come from different traditions, and the majority of them are accrediting, while Finland represents the auditing tradition. In the auditing model, the accreditation of programmes is the responsibility of the university, whereas with accrediting, accreditation is done by an external body. However, the systems for accrediting individual courses are more or less similar in both traditions and there is a kind of tendency towards the integration of VENUS-type courses into the curriculum, even though to give credits for the students, there is a formal procedure for accrediting the course internally.

It is also stated in the London Communiqué that there is a need to work on a national level to fully implement agreed recognition tools and procedures and to consider ways of offering further incentives for mobility. This includes, according to the Communiqué, encouraging a significant increase in the number of joint programmes and the creation of flexible curricula as well as the development of institutional recognition policies and practices. As mentioned in the recommendations of the Riga seminar on recognition systems (for more information, see www.aic.lv/rigaseminar), there is a need to disseminate information on the legal framework for recognition and best practice at the level of faculties and individual study programmes. We can also argue that there is a need to encourage internationalisation of individual courses, development of practical models for the implementation of these kinds of courses and recognition of such courses beyond institutional borders. There is also a strong need for sustainable practices, which support the grassroots level work done in institutions.

However, as is pointed out in the Manual for a Collaborative European Virtual University, recognition is not only a matter of systems, tools are also necessary for this purpose. Recognition in a collaborative environment (like in the VENUS project) is ultimately the formalisation of mutual or multilateral trust about scientific and educational levels, educational beliefs and criteria for evaluation and quality.

In the following section we will take a closer look at accreditation of courses and certification issues as they are essential instruments for recognition of VENUS type seminars and courses.
5.2.2 Accreditation

The REVE Virtual Mobility Manual defines accreditation as a formal and independent decision, indicating that an institution of higher education and/or programmes offered, meets certain standards. The accreditation process is essentially a peer review process, undertaken by appropriately qualified and independent panels.

From the VENUS perspective, there is also another level of accreditation, the accreditation of a single course. Continuing to refer to the REVE Virtual Mobility Manual, the broad definition of accreditation can be contrasted with the term ‘creditation’ or ‘validation’ which can be taken to mean the process by which an awarding body allocates credits to students in recognition of their successful completion of a course of study.

The commonly used system to facilitate the creditation of student study on European exchanges, supported by the Bologna Process, is the European Credit Transfer System, ECTS. The ECTS system facilitates agreements between institutions and allows students to receive credit for courses that they successfully complete in a university where they are not typically based for most of their studies.

In a survey conducted by the REVE project in 2006, 75% of responding institutions (N=26) indicated that their institution was ECTS compliant, with a further 15% planning to apply for the ECTS label in the near future. However it is important to point out that students can still experience problems having courses accepted in their own university.

It is clear that there is still a long way to go before the European Higher Education Area is fully implemented. In the meantime, how can institutions be given assurance as to the quality of teaching and learning in other institutions when they enter into joint teaching or exchange agreements and agree to allocate certain credits for students undertaking exchanges?

The REVE manual puts forward several alternative approaches:

- **Peer relationships**: Quality can be assured by creating formal or informal partnerships at an individual or institutional level. This approach to quality assurance, even though appropriate in the context of the VENUS project, would not easily support true freedom of movement across the European Education Area.

- **External Accreditation Agencies**: A second approach is to rely on the external accreditation of courses and quality control through agencies like the European Consortium for Accreditation.

- **Specific Accreditation**: A third approach is to rely on subject-specific accreditation mechanisms. This provides a broad level of quality assurance, but only in those subject areas which are related to professional training.
A number of different accreditation scenarios were identified in the REVE project. Two of them fit the VENUS context rather well and could be used for accreditation of similar virtual seminar series and summer schools:

1. **The course is newly created in the institution and the same numbers of credits are agreed upon by all partner institutions**
   In this scenario each consumer university directs students to the provider university. The credit transfer is arranged by a bilateral or multilateral agreement.

2. **The course is newly created in the institution and the number of credits is different in each partner institution**
   This is very often the case when two or more partners are offering a joint course. Although in each institution the course is embedded in a study programme, the context varies in each institution and a different number of ECTS credits may be allocated. This approach was used for the VENUS Summer School, when participants were awarded credits at some partner institutions.

### 5.2.3 Accreditation of Courses by VENUS Partners

It is now worth taking a closer look at several institutional accreditation systems in order to give you a better understanding of some of the practices currently in operation. Four cases are described from the perspective of the VENUS summer school accreditation process.

- **Helsinki University of Technology (TKK) Example**
  In the case of TKK, the educational regulations provided the framework for arranging, accrediting and certificating the VENUS Summer School. Courses provided within a study programme (mainstream education) have to be included in the curriculum. There is room for elective courses. These kinds of courses can be provided under a specific code, not related to any specific programme. The information has to be provided in January for the next academic year starting in August. In addition to this process, there are two other options for accrediting VENUS type seminar series and summer schools:
  - Inclusion within the Open University teaching programme, Open University education at TKK is university education following university curricula, geared to adults. Participants on the Open University courses pay €60 for courses like the VENUS Summer School.
  - Inclusion within the continuing education context.

The first option requires acceptance by the TKK Open University Board. For this, the following information has to be provided:

- Name of course
- Objectives
- Contents
- Extent of credits
- Teaching and working methods and their scheduling
- Unit/s responsible for providing the course and teacher (TKK) in charge of the course
A degree student may transfer credits completed at a Finnish or foreign university or some other educational institution towards their degree as well as replace studies included in the degree with other studies at a corresponding level. The department with responsibility for that student makes the decision on the basis of a written application.

**University of West Hungary Example**

The educational regulations of the university provided the framework for arranging, accrediting and certificating the VENUS Summer School as an elective subject within mainstream education. The study programmes of the subjects within mainstream education were accredited by the faculties which were in charge of teaching them. A minimum of 5% of the credits of a programme must come from an elective subject.

**University of Cologne Example**

The University accredits courses provided by other universities. The faculty representing the university in the VENUS project was the main coordinator cooperating in many study programmes with other universities in Europe and all over the world. Mandatory study programmes were not open to citizens. At the moment the university can only propose accreditation of courses for students who are enrolled at the University.

**Technical University of Kosice Example**

Here there is a mechanism for the accreditation of courses provided by individual teachers. The actual study plan is proposed by the guarantor of the study programme. In the case of the VENUS Summer School the guarantor was responsible for including the proposed course in the study plan. The course may or may not be compulsory. Credits are based on the number of contact hours per week. The general rule is that the number of contact hours per week equals the number of credits.

Once the study plan has been approved, students are eligible to take the course and receive marks. This is the only way to include a proposed course into the study plan, which is updated each January.

**5.2.4 Certification**

A common definition for certification is that it is a process by which recognition is granted to persons meeting pre-determined standards. The certificate is normally a formal recognition of achievement in a course (certificate of achievement). However, there are also other types of certificates. They are not official and not issued by a certification body, but still widely used:

- certificate of attendance: administrative confirmation of attendance
- certificate of participation: confirmation by the trainer/tutor of active participation

For the VENUS Seminar Series, some certificates of attendance or certificates of participation were handled by the local partner organisation. For the summer school several certificates of participation were provided for student and citizen participants centrally by EuroPACE.
Initially there was an option that one institution might provide a certificate of achievement for all, in the context of continuing education. In this case the precognition was that there had to be clear evidence of attainment guaranteed. To provide a certification of achievement in this case, the criteria for completion had to be clearly defined. In order to provide information on the number of credits, the workload of participants had to be calculated by the local coordinator in each institute.

The partners ended up with a solution that the certificates providing credit were given by the local partner in order to meet the local institution’s requirements, e.g. in Hungary a certificate was provided based on agreed criteria to be fulfilled by the attendee (short seminar – attendance, summer school – full attendance, submission of assignments, final presentation, etc.).

5.2.5 Conclusions

The VENUS partners agree with the challenge contained in the Virtual Mobility handbook that transparency of the structure for virtual learning activities across borders is a critical issue. They also agree with statements made in the Being Mobile, REVE and cEVU projects: *In order to ensure that virtual mobility is embedded within the mainstream activities of institutions, it must be supported under the existing ERASMUS procedures and support structures so it really can become Virtual ERASMUS.*

In order to succeed with the accreditation of individual courses, it is important to take into consideration local procedures in operation at each participating institution. The timeframe for accreditation normally needs to start one year before the implementation of a course or seminar. The information to be submitted includes at least the following:

- Name of the course
- Objectives of the course
- Learning outcomes of the course
- Contents, syllabus
- Extent of credits
- Teaching and working methods and their scheduling
- Evaluation method (type of examination/assignment, performance)
- Learning materials to be used
- Method of marking
- Unit/s responsible for providing the course and teacher in charge of the course

European universities are increasingly tending towards modular courses and the accumulation of course credits within the Bologna Process. This trend improves the flexibility of higher education institutions to accept VENUS type virtual mobility activities. This kind of modularisation enables students as well as new target participants to accumulate awards in increasingly flexible ways. Opportunities are arising within ECTS to enable universities and their continuing education departments to provide credits in multiple
ways that would not be achievable in mainstream education. These kinds of solutions can also allow for the issuing of certificates to citizens as well. An example of this is the integrated model of lifelong learning in place at Helsinki University of Technology (for more information about this, see http://iacee.org/2004conf/2004proceedings/Theme6/T6-P5.pdf). It is a lifelong-learning-oriented adult education model, which can integrate modules from continuing education and degree-oriented education.

5.3 Towards Supporting Lifelong Learning

5.3.1 The Changing Role of Higher Education

Rapid and continuing changes to the social and technological context of adults already working have influenced the growing emphasis on lifelong learning. The term lifelong learning (LLL) began to crop up in the educational professional and policy discussion during the 1970s. According to experts in this field, the notion of lifelong learning has evolved by way of continuing education and Universities of the so-called Third Age which values learning for its own sake and personal fulfilment through learning.

In Western Europe, rapid development started to occur in higher education as departments with specific continuing education responsibility began to be formed in a significant way 20-30 years ago. In some countries laws have been passed requiring universities to become more open. Lately, in the framework of the Bologna Process, the importance of the societal educational services provided by universities has been raised by the European University Association (EUA) in its statements for the future by Roderick Floud: We look forward, after 2010, to continuing the Bologna Process and to focussing on areas which still need change. I single out, in this respect, lifelong learning and widening participation. The Europe of Knowledge cannot rely just on increasing the proportion of young people going to university. ... So Bologna must continue and with it an increased focus on its social objectives and on lifelong learning.

The rationale for lifelong learning is often associated with the demands of a knowledge society that requires individuals to gain new skills and update existing ones. The definitions of the term are prolific and diverse. One such definition emphasising the central role of learner, is the one the European Commission gave in 2001 as all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. For more information see: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/lll/life/communication/com_en.pdf

Seen from the education provider perspective, this definition challenges the current forms of services provided, even though Europe is very rich in the amount of continuing education provided by universities.
5.3.2 Structuring Lifelong Learning Activities

How well are university systems able to create the structural prerequisites necessary for flexible studies meeting quality requirements based on content and the extent to which this content is up-to-date? While ensuring continuity and the independence of their operations, universities are required to demonstrate their ability to accept new tasks and to meet the changing needs of the surrounding environment. There is clearly a need for flexibility at institutional level to meet these demands.

A number of different models for the management and organisation of lifelong learning and continuing education services and courses are in operation in Europe. Internally they may be either centralised, dispersed to faculties or departments, or a mix of both. Externally, they may be based on partnerships with other education providers and/or employers or they may be separated into a foundation or an enterprise with private sector status that is owned entirely or partly by the university. In many cases such arrangements have been made for a limited period of time. Often, the current global context (international markets, the need to generate income and so on) and the curriculum reforms of the Bologna Process are generating new opportunities, new demands and new threats, provoking a review of the way adult and continuing education is managed and organised. According to a recent Communication from the European Commission, adult education has not always gained the recognition it deserves in terms of visibility, policy prioritisation and resources. Its potential has not yet been achieved.

The European Thematic Network in University Continuing Education has developed a typology of organisational structures for continuing education:

1. Delivery through a separate department, centre or company, with or without expertise brought in from subject departments.
2. Delivery as above and by a range of subject departments with a number of different kinds of continuing education support services provided by the continuing education centre.
3. Delivery entirely devolved to subject departments but with strong central support through a range of functions (e.g. development, marketing, promotion, monitoring).
4. Delivery devoted to subject department with little or no central support or coordination.
5. Delivery through a consortium of institutions, this fifth model has emerged as the potential of technologies to support learning increases.

The VENUS approach is based on a combination of two models. The local actors in each country work in one of the first four structures. The local structure affects how they together deliver courses and seminars internationally as a consortium. The higher education institutions acting in the VENUS consortium represented the full range of local models:

- The AVNET, K.U.Leuven, is a support unit for faculties – taken as a whole; the K.U.Leuven is an example of structure 3.
- The Universities of Cologne and West-Hungary as well as the Technical University of Kosice are all represented in the consortium by one traditional research faculty, which strongly reflects model 4.
- TKK Dipoli, as a continuing education centre of the university represents model 1, while
as a whole, the university organisation is moving towards model 2.

- The West Pomeranian Business School is the only private higher education institution in the consortium, focussing mainly on education and their structure resembles model 3.
- NETTUNO is a television and telematic university delivering open and distance education degree programmes and professional training programmes and courses, therefore in itself is implementing the idea of opening up the university. This is an example of model 1.
- EuroPACE is a trans-European network of universities and their partners and so is of itself an example of the emerging model 5.

When considering the sustainability of the VENUS consortium, it is clear that the commitment of local actors to the international consortium is crucial. The actors in the consortium are the units involved, rather than the higher education institutions which they represent in the project. In smaller countries and smaller higher education institutions, there is a practical requirement to provide high-quality educational programmes and courses for wider audiences, while in bigger countries and bigger institutions the motivation for participating or delivering courses internationally may be the internationalisation of higher education.

The specific model in place naturally influences the kind of role a specific partner is able to take in the whole continuum of activities. The local institutional model also contributes to the way in which interaction with society is organised and what kind of local and regional contacts an individual partner has. The research oriented institutions may focus on contacts related to research activities. A continuing centre's life-blood is the management of organisational and individual customer contacts on all levels, and partner contacts in delivering training. This means that the motivation for participating in VENUS type activities is different in different organisations and this has to be taken into consideration. This can make the management of activities like virtual seminar series and summer schools quite demanding.

5.3.3 Sustainability of the VENUS Model

The results of the interviews that were undertaken with management staff in the VENUS partner universities indicated that the VENUS type of general studies seminars with renowned experts, regardless of whether they are arranged locally or internationally, are mainly of promotional value for the institutes. They also seem to be way of improving contacts with potential research partners abroad. Universities may also use these kinds of activities to maintain contacts with or provide services to the alumni of the university or faculty. The international aspect is of value when it provides access to a presentation given by an internationally renowned speaker.

At the same time these kinds of seminars provide an opportunity to integrate interesting topics and presentations to existing mainstream courses provided for students. The critical factor is the commitment of the teacher or professor responsible for those curriculum integrated courses or programmes. There is also some interest among the faculty to internationalise their courses. However in these kinds of situations, strong organisational
and technological support and well structured support services for the teacher is a prerequisite. The high cost and significant technical support required in order to ensure that the session reaches high technical standards when traditional videoconferencing is used can be an obstacle to the take-up of such services in traditional higher education institutions. There is an increasing interest among university faculty members for web conferencing opportunities, even though web conferencing by its nature requires for there to be more collaborative activities than in traditional telelecture mode and it cannot provide the same level of telepresence for groups as in traditional videoconferencing.

Having said this, there still seems to be significant interest in setting up sessions using videoconferencing following the VENUS approach, especially if the groups participating in sessions are not too big where interaction between participants can be direct, rather than indirect through a facilitator. However the facilitator’s role is still seen as essential especially when there are issues related to language barriers. One model tested during the VENUS Seminars, where a local group had their own virtual discussion in their own language during sessions, seems to offer some potential. In this scenario, one critical issue is how to integrate the local technology with the one used for the international sessions.

5.3.4 Conclusions

The VENUS Seminar Series and Summer School models provide promising scenarios for future activities: an interesting and novel global topic, a mixture of local and international activities and the extent to which participants can participate in a flexible way according to their interest and available time – varying participation from single seminar sessions to a summer school taking place over a whole week. In VENUS, once the rather high costs associated with the international videoconference setting were met at the beginning, the organisational costs of the events were lower, i.e. the staff costs could be reduced as practices ran more smoothly. It is clear based on our experience, that once the main actors, i.e. the participants, facilitators, and organisers, have learnt how the structure, technology and organisation works, the focus can be more on interaction and content. This can lead to a far more successful and cost-effective system supporting virtual seminars and summer schools set up and managed in the way we did for the VENUS project.
This chapter contains a glossary of some of the less familiar terms used in this handbook.

**Accreditation** is a formal and independent decision, indicating that an institution of higher education and/or programmes offered, meet(s) certain standards. From the VENUS perspective, there is also another level of accreditation, the accreditation of a single course.

**Bologna Process** is an intergovernmental initiative which aims to create by 2010 a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) based on three cycles: Degree/Bachelor - Master - Doctorate.

**Bridging Multipoint Control Unit** (MCU) is a device that is used to link a videoconference of three or more end points (users at computers or groups of users in one room).

**Certification** is a process by which recognition is granted to persons meeting pre-determined standards. The certificate is normally a formal recognition of achievement in a course (certificate of achievement). However, there are also other types of certificates. They are not official and not issued by a certification body, but still widely used: certificate of attendance and certificate of participation, used in the VENUS project.

**Codec**: A codec is a device or programme capable of performing encoding and decoding on a digital data stream or signal. Codec is short for compressor-decompressor.

**Creative Commons** licenses are a number of copyright licenses issued on December 16, 2002 by Creative Commons, a U.S. non-profit corporation founded in 2001. Many of the licenses, notably all the original licenses, grant certain “baseline rights”, such as the right to distribute the copyrighted work without changes, at no charge. Creative Commons licenses are currently available in 34 different jurisdictions worldwide.

**Dissemination** is defined as a planned process of providing information on the quality, relevance and effectiveness of the results of programmes and initiatives to key actors. It occurs as and when the results of programmes and initiatives become available.
European Higher Education Area is a term used by the European Commission. It is to be established by 2010, with the aim of facilitating mobility of students and scholars, transparency and recognition of qualifications, quality and a European dimension in higher education, as well as increasing the attractiveness of European institutions for third country students.

H.239 is an ITU-T recommendation for videoconferencing that supports an additional video channel to show a slide presentation from a presenter’s computer or any additional image source as a second video channel. During multipoint conferences, H.239 ensures that only one endpoint in the conference can send the second video channel at a time.

Instructional Design: used in this handbook to indicate the manner in which the teaching and learning process in the VENUS project was organised, although there are other terms which could be used, like didactics.

Internet Protocol (IP) is a data-oriented protocol used for communicating data across a packet-switched internetwork. IP is a network layer protocol in the Internet protocol suite and is encapsulated in a data link layer protocol (e.g. Ethernet).

Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) is a circuit-switched telephone network system, designed to allow digital transmission of voice and data over ordinary telephone copper wires, resulting in better voice quality than an analogue phone.

Learning Café is an internationally recognised training methodology. It is used to create a natural discussion and brainstorming environment that facilitates knowledge, experience and opinion transfer between people from diverse backgrounds.

Lifelong Learning refers to all general education, vocational education and training, nonformal education and informal learning undertaken throughout life, resulting in an improvement in knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective. It includes the provision of counselling and guidance services.

MPEG-1 Audio Layer 3 (MP3) is a compressed music format that is very popular for digitizing music.

Open Source refers to a programme in which the source code is available to the general public for use and/or modification from its original design free of charge.

Podcast: this is a collection of digital media files which is distributed over the Internet using syndication feeds for playback on portable media players and personal computers. The term, like “radio”, can refer either to the content itself or to the method by which it is syndicated; the latter is also termed podcasting. The host or author of a podcast is often called a podcaster.
**Synchronized Multimedia Integration Language** (SMIL) is a W3C recommended XML mark-up language for describing multimedia presentations.

**Telepresence**: refers to a set of technologies which allow a person to feel as if they were present, to give the appearance that they were present, or to have an effect, at a location other than their true location.

**Video-on-demand** (VOD) systems enable users to select and watch video content over a digital network. These systems either “stream” content, allowing viewing in real time, or “download” it so that the programme is brought in its entirety to a set-top box before viewing starts.

**Virtual Seminar**: used in our context to describe the idea of a seminar – the bringing together of a group of people to find out more about and discuss a specific subject – that takes place virtually – in virtual space as opposed to face-to-face.

**Web Conferencing** is the term used for live meetings or presentations conducted over the Internet.

**Webinars**: Shorthand for web-based seminar, a presentation, lecture, workshop or seminar that is transmitted over the web; a key feature is its interactive elements.
Further Reading

The following books and articles are recommended for further reading and have been used by the VENUS consortium in their work generally and in the preparation of this handbook in particular.

- Cohen, D.J. & Rosenzweig R. (2005) Digital History, A guide to gathering, preserving and presenting the past on the web, Center for History and New Media Echo, Penn Press USA
- Communication from the European Commission Adult learning: It is never too late to learn. Draft version 18 September 2006
- de Kerckhove, D. L’Europa di qui a cinquant’anni, 2006 URL: www.apogeoonline.com/web zine/2006/07/31/19/200607311901
- Duffy, T.M. & Cunningham, D.J. (1996) Constructivism: implications for the design and delivery of instruction
• Mayer, R. E & Gallini, J K (1990) When is an illustration worth ten thousand words?
Journal of Educational Psychology, 82(6) (715-726)

- Moss, R., (1983) Video, the educational challenge, Croom Helm Ltd, London and Canberra
The following table shows key organisational steps that were taken in preparing for the VENUS Seminar Series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb - April 2006</td>
<td>Brain-storming amongst partnership for long list of potential speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2006</td>
<td>Final selection of 15 to be invited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May - June 2006</td>
<td>Confirmation of 9 speakers and confirmation of dates, topics, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of biographies from speakers and posting on VENUS web site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of first marketing information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2006 - Aug. 2006</td>
<td>Ongoing marketing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collection of background material (relevant articles, papers, slideshow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>presentations, abstracts, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of streaming technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparation of framework around live stream (registration of participants,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>integration of chat module, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2006</td>
<td>Further extensive marketing campaign aimed at potential participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Zero-session: mock session with all partners to test technical framework</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following table provides the full list of seminars, dates and topics and the main organisational activities around each seminar. The preparatory activities were the same for all seminars. They will only be elaborated for the first seminar and we refer to this description for all others.

Marketing activities went on before and throughout the period in which the seminar series was held.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October 2006</th>
<th>Seminar 1: Dr. R. Petrella: Water Economy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Collection of background material (relevant articles, papers, slideshow presentations, abstracts etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creation of running order for international, virtual seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preparation of speaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preparation of participants (central moderator, local moderators, local experts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Final dissemination of seminar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Local logistical organization (set-up rooms and equipment, registration desk for participants, catering for reception, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar: Dr. R. Petrella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow-up activities including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Follow-up on web site (recorded seminars, slideshow presentation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partner evaluation of seminar through web conference</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November 2006</th>
<th>Seminar 2: Dr. W. Th. Wessels: Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar: Dr. W. Th. Wessels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar 3: Dr. J. Ciulla: The Moral Challenges of Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar: Dr. J. Ciulla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar 4: Dr. J.J. Cassiman: Genetic Services in Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar: Dr. J.J. Cassiman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Dec. 2006 - Jan 2007 | Ongoing marketing |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February 2007</th>
<th>Seminar 5: Stephen Downes: Knowledge 2.0 - Towards a Future Knowledge Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar: Stephen Downes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar 6: Jan Hoet (cancelled because speaker was indisposed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar: Jan Hoet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March 2007</th>
<th>Seminar 7: Risto Linturi: How to Develop Radical Ideas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seminar: Risto Linturi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar 8: Nathan Shedroff: Experience Design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory organisational activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar: Nathan Shedroff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following table shows key organisational steps that were taken in preparing for the VENUS Summer School.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| April 2007       | **Seminar 9: Dr. Derrick de Kerckhove: Culture and Technology**  
Preparatory organisational activities  
Seminar: Dr. Derrick de Kerckhove  
Follow-up activities  
Follow-up evaluation of seminar series                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|                  | **Preparatory organisational activities**  
Brainstorming amongst partnership for long list of potential speakers  
Brainstorming by Summer School team on programme, structure and organisation of the Summer School                                                                                                                                                            |
| May 2007 – June 2007 | Final selection of 7 speakers to be invited  
Confirmation of 7 speakers and confirmation of dates, topics, etc.  
Collection of biographies speakers and posting on VENUS Seminars web site  
Preparation of first marketing information                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| July 2007 – August 2007 | Creation of registration system for participants  
Ongoing marketing  
Collection of background material from speakers (relevant articles, papers, slideshow presentations, abstracts, etc.)  
Collection of background material (relevant articles, papers, web sites, etc.)  
Collection and selection of interesting Web 2.0 tools to be integrated in the Summer School  
Preparation of local activities (local presentations, local hands-on sessions)  
Follow-up registrations and preparatory activities for participants  
Set-up of online evaluation survey  
Logistical and technical organisation of the Summer School (VC tests, set-up halls, set-up PCs for participants, catering, etc.)                                                                                                     |
| 3-7 September 2007 | **Summer School: Social Software in Business and Higher Education**  
Logistical preparation and follow-up (hand-outs, updates of web site during the week)  
Daily evaluative virtual FlashMeeting for partners and preparation of following day  
Evaluation by participants every day and at end of week (on paper or online)  
Certification (at certain participating sites)                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| September 2007   | Follow-up of Summer School (evaluations, certification)                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
8.2 Technical Check-list for Participating Sites

The following check-list was used by the VENUS partners at the start of the project to ascertain the exact state of and availability of equipment and services in the participating universities.

VENUS Educational Technologies Survey

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect information about the technical and logistical facilities that are available at each of the partner institutions.

The information we are collecting in this form should provide us with enough information to know what is available and possible with regard to the organisation of the VENUS Seminars. It is very important at this initial stage that we collect information about who exactly the appropriate people are in your institution who know exactly what facilities are available, who know what AV technology is in place and who can provide us with information about the telecom and Internet network that is in use at your institution. This is very important so that we can communicate in the future with minimal delay. Please bear in mind that the communication will be mainly in English, although we will try of course, wherever possible, to accommodate other languages.

If you have any questions about this questionnaire, please let us know. Kindly complete it and return it before the end of March 2006.
### Contact information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the Institution</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the person who completes this form</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: tel No.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: e-mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the contact person who can provide all the/more the technical information (please add function or special responsibilities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: e-mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Please add as many contact persons as necessary for the information collection.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the contact person who can provide all the technical information (please add function or special responsibilities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: e-mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name of the contact person who can provide all the technical information (please add function or special responsibilities)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: telephone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact details: e-mail</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Available room facilities

| Do you have a room that is suitable for public events/conferences? Can the public (that means students as well as non-students) easily access this room, is the access and use of this room suitable for public events that last 3 to 4 hours? (i.e. has it good light, acoustics, security, sanitary facilities, additional room for reception etc, easy access, appropriate furniture, pleasant atmosphere…)? |  |
| What are the room dimensions? Please draw and attach a floor plan or provide room specifications. Photographs and an access map would also be very helpful. |  |
| How many people can attend an event in this room? |  |

### Does this room have audiovisual facilities?

| Good public address and microphones? |  |
| Do you have radio microphones (wireless)? |  |
| How many? |  |
## Video/data projector(s)

- How many screens?
- Camera(s)
  - How many?
  - What type of camera(s)
- Controllable lighting (with dimmers?)
  - What type of lighting?

## Operations and support:

- Are there skilled members of staff who can operate the AV facilities, etc.?
- Will these members of staff be available to assist with the VENUS Seminars?
- Is the room quiet (no internal or external noise and disturbances)?
- Is the room well lit (artificial lights)?
- Can the external light (sunlight, daylight) be blocked out?
- Is there an ancillary room that can be used for setting up support (for example computers and/or other AV equipment)? Note: this room should be in the immediate vicinity of the conference room
- Have you experience with videoconferencing from this room? Has the videoconferencing equipment been used in this room?

## Videoconferencing

- Do you have videoconferencing equipment?
- What type, make and model?
  - Polycom?
  - Tandberg?
  - Arel?
  - Other?
- What type of connection do you use for the videoconferencing?
  - IP: what is the typical bandwidth available to your videoconferencing system (Upload, Download)
  - ISDN: How many lines?
- Are these network and/or telecom connections available in the conference room or in the immediate vicinity?
## AV Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there an AV support team or department in your institution?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**What services do they offer?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Graphics design</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AV production</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conference support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videoconference support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AV Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## ICT Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is there an ICT support service or department in your institution?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What services do they offer?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On campus ICT support only?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off campus ICT support also?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student ICT support also?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Network management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Web conferencing support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What types of conferencing do they support?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GoToMeeting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breeze</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FlashMeeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebEx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MeetingServer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS LiveMeeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elluminate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Click-to-Meet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iLinc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WebTrain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What other services are offered by the ICT support personnel?

ICT services:

Other external facilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you have access to a video recording studio?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have access to a graphics creation department or studio?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have to pay for these services?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have catering facilities?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please provide floor plan, access plan, photograph(s) and any other materials that you think may be useful to describe the public room that you intend to use for the VENUS Seminar.

Thank you, the VENUS WP3 Educational Technologies Team
# 8.3 Running Order for Seminar Session

The following table shows the running order for a typical virtual seminar session involving several participating sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>30min</td>
<td>connect all sites via VC and stand-by</td>
<td>All sites</td>
<td>PROP: VENUS animation Set up a questioning place (with chair and mike)</td>
<td>BACK-UP: in the event of a technical problem, you can show the live stream through a beamer. Keep a beamer handy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.15</td>
<td>15min</td>
<td>Local introduction</td>
<td>All Local Moderators</td>
<td>PROP: VENUS animation Find out who is present in the room (you can use name tags). This is handy for the local discussion and for questions later on.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.30</td>
<td>5min</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Central Moderator</td>
<td>PROP: Google Earth of all participating sites Intro central moderator Central moderator introduces local moderator Local moderators briefly introduce local experts Central moderator introduces method of working Central moderator introduces international speaker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.35</td>
<td>30min</td>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>International speaker</td>
<td>PROP: slides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.05</td>
<td>5min</td>
<td>Pause</td>
<td></td>
<td>PROP: Pause slide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.10</td>
<td>20min</td>
<td>Q&amp;A from all sites including chat lines</td>
<td>Moderated by Central Moderator</td>
<td>PROP: Q&amp;A slide local experts can ask one question each</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.30</td>
<td>5min</td>
<td>Pause</td>
<td></td>
<td>PROP: Pause slide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.35</td>
<td></td>
<td>Close VC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.35</td>
<td>20min</td>
<td>Local discussions at all participating sites</td>
<td>All sites (incl. online)</td>
<td>PROP: local discussion slide// VENUS animation 15min discussion + 5min defining questions Local moderators send themes of local discussions to central moderator (via e-mail to chatbox moderator) Central team makes draft list of discussion items to start-up international discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Moderator</td>
<td>Propagation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:55</td>
<td>30min</td>
<td>Re-open VC discussion with all sites on VC/online</td>
<td>Moderated by central moderator</td>
<td>PROP: discussion slide</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>People in the hall with a question can move to questioning place. If there is a question, local moderator raises his hand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:25</td>
<td>5min</td>
<td>Concluding remarks</td>
<td>International speaker</td>
<td>PROP: slide with title of lecture</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Close session</td>
<td></td>
<td>PROP: VENUS animation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.4 Speakers Chosen for the VENUS Seminar Series

Prof. Dr. Riccardo Petrella
Prof. Petrella is best known as the initiator of the Lisbon group, bringing together more than twenty parties including universities, companies and the cultural sector to counterbalance both the overly pessimistic and the overly optimistic views on the globalisation of the economy. Prof. Petrella has worked for the European Commission and UNESCO and he has taught in numerous universities all over the world. In the nineties, he founded the International Committee for the Global Water Contract and published a trilogy among which the much-acclaimed “The Water Manifesto”.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Th. Wessels
Prof. Wessels holds the Jean Monnet Chair for Political Science at Cologne University and is visiting professor at the College of Europe, Bruges and Natolin. He is also chairman of the executive board of the Institute for European Politics (IEP) in Berlin and of the Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA) in Brussels. He is also the coordinator of EU-CONSENT, Constructing Europe Network (Cologne). In the past decade, he has lectured at the Europa College in Bruges and Natolin and the Institut d’études Politique in Paris. His priorities in teaching and research include the political system of the European Union, the role of the EU in the international system, the deepening and widening of the EU, the transformation of political systems in Europe and theories about international relations and European integration.

Dr. Joanne Ciulla
Dr. Ciulla teaches courses on ethics, critical thinking, conflict resolution, and leadership in international contexts. She is one of the founding faculty members of the Jepson School of Leadership at the University of Richmond. Prof. Ciulla has held the UNESCO Chair in Leadership Studies at the United Nations International Leadership Academy in Jordan and academic appointments at La Salle University, the Harvard Business School, The Wharton School, and Oxford University. Dr. Ciulla’s research interests are leadership ethics, business ethics, international leadership and the philosophy of work. Dr. Ciulla consults on ethics and leadership programmes with universities, businesses, and government agencies in the United States and overseas.

Prof. Dr. Jean-Jacques Cassiman
Prof. Cassiman is currently division head of the Centre for Human Genetics at the Catholic University of Leuven. After graduating from the department of medicine of the Catholic University of Leuven in 1967, Prof. Cassiman worked as a clinical fellow for five years at Stanford University, USA. For his research on human genetics, Dr. Cassiman received numerous awards, including the 1998 Franqui Chair at the Université Catholique de Louvain and the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy, Iuliu Hatieganu, Romania. He has organized numerous international symposia and congresses and is a member of various scientific commissions and societies. He was secretary-general of the European Society of Human Genetics (ESHG) for six years, liaison officer for the ESHG to the International Federation of Human Genetic Societies. He was secretary-general of the European Platform for Patient Organizations Science and Industry (EPOSI), vice-president of the Flemish Institute for Technological and Societal issues (VIWTA) and a member of the OECD task force on Biological resource centres.
Stephen Downes

Stephen Downes is a senior researcher at the Institute for Information Technology’s eLearning Group of Canada’s National Research Council. He is renowned for his expertise on learning objects, metadata, weblogs in education and content syndication. His work also includes the development of educational content syndication systems such as Edu_RSS and DLORN and the design of a digital rights management system for learning. Stephen Downes is frequently asked to teach seminars and to give lectures on online learning all over the world. These lectures include the notable 2004 Buntine Oration in Perth, Australia. Downes is, however, probably best known for his daily research newsletter OLDaily (Online Learning Daily), which reaches thousands of readers around the world. Downes received his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Calgary and continued his education at the University of Alberta. After his graduation, Downes worked for several universities as a distance instructor and portal designer.

Jan Hoet

Jan Hoet graduated as an Arts major. After a brief stint as a teacher, he became widely known as the curator of the Museum for Contemporary Art in Ghent, which he re-named Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK). Apart from dealing with poor housing facilities and low budgets at the museum, he also had to overcome the many prejudices against contemporary art. His flamboyant personality and his often intuitive, but always uninhibited comments make him an influential, but also controversial figure in the world of art. With his immense popularity in the media, he has generated huge goodwill towards his museum and for modern art in general. The SMAK brought cultural Ghent back to life, with many events outside the museum; he tried to bring art closer to the masses and vice-versa. Hoet regularly works as a guest curator for other international art centra, among other Documenta IX in Kassel (1992). Since he left SMAK in 2003, he has been working as artistic director of the Marta-museum in Herford, Germany. He was knighted in Belgium For his contribution to art.

Risto Linturi

Risto Linturi is one of the leading futurology consultants and researchers of Finland. He currently works as a programme director for Radical Innovations in Helsinki University of Technology, Lifelong Learning Centre Dipoli. He is also a successful entrepreneur and member or chairman of the board in several ICT-companies. Earlier he worked as technology director and principal researcher for the Helsinki Telephone Corporation where he initiated one of the world’s best known digital city projects, Helsinki Arena 2000. Linturi has also been a member of the National Information Society Forum and is frequently invite to speak at international seminars. He has advised venture funds and large corporations on future scenarios and innovative strategies. His particular expertise is in gauging the long term effects of technology development on everyday life at home, in the wider society and radical effects on business strategies.

Nathan Shedroff

Nathan Shedroff has been an experience designer for over twelve years and he became an expert and leader in the fields of Information Architecture, Interaction Design, and Online and Interactive Media, with extensive, professional experience. He has worked in many different media and authored several books on multimedia, computers, and information. His electronic experience spans CD-ROM development, kiosk technology, applications development, online services, and the Internet. Lately, he has spent a lot of time building online solutions for businesses that enhance and evolve their online branding, developing new types of online advertising, and building customer-centered online experiences for companies seeking to expand their contact and services in this medium.
Dr. Derrick de Kerckhove

Derrick de Kerckhove is director of the McLuhan program in Culture and Technology at the University of Toronto. At this university he also teaches in the department of French. He received his PhD in French Language and Literature from the University of Toronto and his doctorate in Sociology of Art from the University of Tours, France. He worked with Marshall McLuhan for over ten years as a translator, assistant and co-author. He has edited and co-edited numerous books, and has written extensively, amongst which “The Architecture of Intelligence” and “McLuhan for Managers.” He has also contributed to the design of “Hypersession,” a software collaboration tool for educational purposes. Dr. de Kerckhove was a member of several task forces on the development of a telecommunications policy for the province of Ontario and was a consultant for the project of the Information Highway. He is also in charge of research into technological and business development of new technologies for the Vivendi Institute.
# 8.5 Summer School Agenda

NB: All timings are Central European Time (CET)!

## MONDAY 3 September: Grand Opening of the Summer School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11:00-13:00</td>
<td>Introduction&lt;br&gt;The local coordinator at each site welcomes the audience and introduces the Summer School, the concept of social software in general and the main speaker. Participants get the opportunity to get acquainted to one another as well, both locally as well as with other European participants, by means of social software.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00-14:00</td>
<td>Lunch and Reception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:00-14:15</td>
<td>Introduction of all European Sites:&lt;br&gt;All European sites connect through videoconference and introduce themselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:15-15:00</td>
<td>Lecture by Teemu Arina on the Trends Social Software Answers in Today’s Society&lt;br&gt;Teemu Arina guides us through the use of Social Software in today’s world. This lecture will be about 45 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00-15:30</td>
<td>Discussion with Teemu Arina:&lt;br&gt;Participants are welcome to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## TUESDAY 4 September: Social Software in Business (Day 1)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Local Introduction: Local introduction to the use of social software in Business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 – 10.45</td>
<td>Explanation of tools: the tools to be used are explained locally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45-12.30</td>
<td>Practice on tools&lt;br&gt;Participants are given an assignment to practice and discuss social software in business.&lt;br&gt;Participants practice with social software tools so they get acquainted with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-13:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.30 – 14:00</td>
<td>Introduction to all European Sites: All European sites greet each other via videoconference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00 – 15.15</td>
<td>Lecture by Dr. Yael Ravin of IBM:&lt;br&gt;Dr. Y. Ravin shares her view on the use of social software. Her lecture is broadcast through videoconferencing to all European sites. After a 45-minutes lecture through videoconferencing, participants can freely ask questions for another 30 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:15 -15:30</td>
<td>Local round-up of experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## WEDNESDAY 5 September: Social Software in Business (Day 2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Local Introduction:&lt;br&gt;Local introduction to the use of social software in Business.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 – 10:35</td>
<td>Sharing experiences:&lt;br&gt;Participants of all sites share their experiences of the previous day through videoconferencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35 – 11:35</td>
<td>Best Practice example&lt;br&gt;The research group from the University of Cologne working on social software in business present the state of the art in social software and a best practice example. The speakers are:&lt;br&gt;Dr. Detlef Schoder, Cologne, State of the Art of Social Networks&lt;br&gt;Daniel Oster, Best Practice Example in the German Savings Bank Kreissparkasse Koeln</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Event</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:35 – 12:00</td>
<td>Discussion on presentations via videoconferencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00 – 12:15</td>
<td>Short Introduction to afternoon activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:15-13:15</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:15 – 14:15</td>
<td>Learning café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At each site, three topics concerning social software in business are discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.15 – 15.00</td>
<td>Reporting of discussions :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All sites formulate their findings on online platforms like wiki, weblogs, vlogs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 -15:30</td>
<td>Closing session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THURSDAY 6 September: Social Software in Higher Education (Day 1)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 – 10:00</td>
<td>Local Introduction:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local introduction to the use of social software in Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00 – 10.45</td>
<td>Explanation of tools:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The tools to be used are explained locally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.45-12.30</td>
<td>Practice on tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants are given an assignment to practice and discuss social software in education. Participants practice with social software tools so they get acquainted with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:30-13:30</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.30 – 14:00</td>
<td>Introduction to all European Sites:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All European sites greet each other via videoconference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>Lecture by <strong>Dr. Peter Scott and Dr. Eleftheria Tomadaki</strong> (KMi - OU - UK) on the use of Social Software in Education from his background at the Open University in the U.K., Peter Scott leads us through the use of Social Software in educational practice. After a 25-minute lecture through videoconferencing, participants can freely ask questions for another 25 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 -15:30</td>
<td>Local round-up of experiences</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FRIDAY 7 September: Social Software in Higher Education (Day 2)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>Local Introduction:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Local introduction to the use of social software in Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:00 - 10:35</td>
<td>Sharing of experiences:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participants in all sites share their experiences of the previous day through videoconferencing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10:35 – 11:45</td>
<td>Best Practice example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Hans Coppens</strong> from the K.U.Leuven presents a 25-minute best practice example of Social Software in education (Japanese Studies), also through videoconferencing. The presentation is followed by a discussion where all participants are free to ask questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:45 – 12:00</td>
<td>Short introduction on afternoon activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>...by means of videoconference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00-13:00</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:00 – 14:00</td>
<td>Learning café</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At each site, three topics concerning social software in education are discussed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>Reporting of discussions :</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All sites formulate their findings on online platforms like wiki, weblogs, vlogs, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:00 -15:30</td>
<td>Closing session</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.6 Speakers chosen for the VENUS Summer School

Teemu Arina
Teemu Arina spent 1/3 of his life as an entrepreneur before the age of 25, teaching his first semester at the age of 17, building two large internationally known Open Source projects and working as an advisor to many start-ups, enterprises, universities and policy-makers on the impact of social technologies on their operations. He is currently the CEO of Dicole Ltd. a SME focusing on understanding the role of social technologies (including Web 2.0) in knowledge work and networked learning in organisations. He also works occasionally as a visiting lecturer at universities like Helsinki University of Technology, University of Joensuu, Lappeenranta University of Technology and the University of Art and Design Helsinki. In addition to his duties as an industry advisor, Teemu is on the industry board of PROLEARN and is one of the founding members of Vope Ry (Free, Libre and Open Source Software in Education Association) in Finland. He writes on FLOSSE Posse (Vope group blog) focusing on Open Source in education and Tarina (personal blog) focusing on networked learning, knowledge and collaboration in organisations.

Dr. Yael Ravin
Yael Ravin received her Ph.D in Linguistics from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. She also holds an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language from Columbia University in New York and a B.A., Cum Laude, from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Israel. Since joining IBM in 1987, Dr. Ravin has worked as a Research Staff Member, at IBM’s Thomas J. Watson Research Center in New York, in the areas of computational linguistics and knowledge management, specializing in grammar checking, advanced search technologies and text analysis. Until recently, she led IBM’s Institute for Advanced Learning, a research programme dedicated to the design and development of technologies for e-learning. Currently, Dr. Ravin is working on an internal IBM initiative in Knowledge Sharing. Dr. Ravin has published two books on lexical semantics and holds five patents in computational linguistics.

Dr. Detlef Schoder
Detlef Schoder is Professor in the Department of Information Systems and Information Management at the University of Cologne, Germany. He was appointed reviewer to the German Parliament’s Lower House for e-Commerce issues and advises the European Commission on research projects. He was Visiting Scholar at Stanford University, the University of California at Berkeley, and MIT, Cambridge, USA. Detlef is on the editorial boards of several international journals covering e-Business. His research interests include Ambient Intelligence, Mass Customization, Information Management, and IT-based media innovations.
Daniel Oster

Daniel Oster holds a Master’s degree in Information Systems of the University of Cologne. He is a staff member of a large German Savings Bank. His areas of expertise include management support tools, change management, and collaborative innovation networks. His research areas are “social networks and team performance” and the “dynamics of social networks”.

Dr. Peter Scott

Dr Peter J Scott is the Director of the Knowledge Media Institute of the Open University. Peter’s own research group in KMi prototypes the application of new technologies and media to learning at all levels. Peter’s current research interests range widely across knowledge and media research. Three key threads at the moment are: tele-presence; streaming media systems, and ubiquity. He has a BA (1983) and PhD (1987) in Psychology. Before joining the Open University in 1995, Dr Scott lectured in Psychology and Cognitive Science at the University of Sheffield. Dr Scott is regularly a keynote speaker at international research conferences, from Netties in Oulu, Finland; Learning Management Congress Munich, Germany; the K2 Summit in Amsterdam, Holland; to Tedis in Venice, Italy. In 2006 he was invited guest speaker at EdMedia in Florida, USA, keynote speaker at the i-Know congress, Graz Austria, and keynote at Online Educa Berlin, Germany.

Dr Eleftheria Tomadaki

Dr Eleftheria Tomadaki is a research fellow in the Knowledge Media Institute (Open University, UK), focusing on collaborative media, e-learning and social software. Her role involves the integration of the videoconferencing tool FlashMeeting with the Moodle e-learning environment and the development of a theory and analytical framework to underpin the study of large-scale synchronous collaborative media, in the context of the Open Content Initiative. She received her PhD in information extraction by the University of Surrey. Her PhD research investigated the merging of information from texts describing video content for video annotation by employing cross-document conference techniques and introduced a new and challenging scenario - film and the variety of collateral text genres narrating its content, including unrestricted sets of events.

Hans Coppens

Hans Coppens is a teacher and researcher at the Japanese Studies department of the K.U.Leuven. He is also the coordinator for ICT projects in the Faculty of Arts at K.U.Leuven. His professional interests include: Educational Technology, Open Source methods, Japanese media and popular culture and (self-directed) learning.
8.7 Evaluation Sheets used in VENUS Activities

The following questionnaire is an example of the questionnaires used in VENUS to evaluate participants’ impressions of taking part in a VENUS Seminar.

**Evaluation questionnaire**
Kindly fill in the questionnaire and return it to a member of the VENUS seminar staff!!

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

1. * How did you like this seminar from an educational point of view?
   - Definitely didn’t like it at all
   - Didn’t like it much
   - Neither liked nor disliked it
   - Liked it to a limited extent
   - Liked it a lot

2. * Did the seminar meet your expectations?
   - Definitely did not
   - To a very limited extent
   - To quite an extent
   - Mostly
   - Completely

3. * Did you like the format of this seminar?
   - Definitely didn’t like it at all
   - Didn’t like it much
   - Neither liked nor disliked it
   - Liked it to a limited extent
   - Liked it a lot

4. * What did you like most about the seminar?
5 * What did you not like about the seminar?

6 * What suggestions would you like to make to improve these seminars in the future?

7 * Would you recommend these seminars to others (friends, colleagues)?

<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please elaborate on your answer:

8. * Would you attend another VENUS seminar in the future?

<p>| | |</p>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If no, please explain why not:

9 * Please give your overall impression of the seminar on a scale of 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent)

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Thank you for participating in our survey!
Your feedback is very important for the future development of seminars!
The questionnaire is evaluated anonymously.
Universities nowadays have a mission to provide knowledge not only to their on-campus students but also beyond the “walls” of the institution. Lectures or seminars that have relevance for a wider audience and that go beyond the campus boundaries are often held in public and are open to all citizens. What we are seeing in many universities is a strong desire to open up the campus, to break down the barriers that have traditionally kept out those not directly involved in full-time courses and to invite the citizen in to share the academic richness of the modern-day university.

This handbook is the result of just such an endeavour on the part of a group of European Universities working together in the VENUS Project which was supported under the European Commission’s eLearning programme (DG Education and Culture). During the lifetime of the project, the VENUS partners organised seminars focused on issues that are relevant for European Society today. These seminars were delivered virtually and simultaneously at all European locations by means of videoconferencing and live streaming. Each lecture was followed by interactive discussions at all participating sites as well as online. The VENUS team also organised a summer school on the subject of Social Software which involved a mix of face-to-face events and virtual seminars supported by videoconferencing linking the partner universities.

This handbook is intended as a way of sharing the experience we gained in this project with others interested in setting up similar activities.