RASSEGNA 1

The First E-learning Italian Conference:
a short review of the papers

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On the 25th-26th November 2004 the First National Conference of the Italian e-Learning Association (Sie-l www.sie-l.it) was held in Genoa (Italy).

In answer to the Conference Call, some 107 abstracts were received by the Organizing Committee. These were divided into two categories: posters (47%) and presentations. The latter were split into specific sections: Educational Projects, Learning Theories, Virtual Communities and Tutorships, e-Learning and Knowledge-Management, Developmental Environments, Wireless Open Source, Costs, and the Quality of e-Learning.

Hereafter, we present an overview of the topics together with an analytical list of the presentations.

The distribution of the papers is as follows: Northern Italy: 51%, Central Italy :32%, Southern Italy plus Sardinia and Sicily: 17%). Participants came from Universities and Research Centers (48%), Enterprises (22%), Public Bodies (14%), Schools (5%), together with individual authors (10%). Most papers deal with experiences and case-studies (68%), followed by Theoretical contributions (37%) as well as research and innovation (21%).

Based on the frequencies of the key words, one can observe that e-Learning is the most frequently used term (217 frequencies), together with a high number of generic educational terms (i. e. didactic 200, education 180, learning 173). Collaborative/cooperative learning is quoted 71 times, followed by platforms (58), quality (57), Virtual Communities (44), Knowledge Management (28), Open Source (25), Learning Object (21), Mobile Learning (19). A special emphasis on collaborative learning, learning community, community of practice can be readily observed. Experimentation by some big stakeholders is worth noting; these aim at integrating e-Learning, Knowledge Management and mobile learning. Issues related to platforms were also debated in about 20% of the papers with special attention to Open Source platforms, especially in the Public Administration setting. Learning Objects were discussed but in a more theoretical manner, whereas Applications were limited. T-learning was not a subject of this Conference. Here follows a specific list of the papers and authors, divided according to specific categories.

1. Didactic objects

Key words

Learning Objects, Metadata, Standards (SCORM, AICC, IMS,), Courseware, Didactic Typologies (tutorial, simulations, games, VR)

A. Fini (anto@fininformatica.it) and L. Vanni, University of Florence, reflect on the state of the art of the LO, questioning the presumed pedagogic neutrality and suggesting integrations with methodological considerations.
Pocodima, a self-studycourse, based on simulation strategy is presented by **C. Rastelli** (c.rastelli@glaux.it), F. Gaglini and G. Filosa.

F. Giorgini (fgiorgini@giuntilabs.it), Giunti Interactive Labs, introduces the «Sculpteur project», aimed at creating and managing, digital data with VR technology for edutainment in museums.

G. Bonaiuti (gbonaiuti@unifi.it) University of Florence, presents one of the «EMDEL project» findings: the *european search engine* for courseware and LOs.

M. Contini (mirvana@sofwerk.it), Softwerk Genoa and A. M. Sugliano, iLabor Genoa, illustrate a model for e-Learning resources which are SCORM and «W3C XHTML 1.0 Strict» accessibility compliant.

P. Casillo (pcasillo@unina.it), C. Cesarano, A. Chianese, V. Moscato, and G. Taraschi, University of Naples, present a methodology of Content Management called «eCo» (E-Content Unit).

R. Baldascino (roberto.baldascino@irremarche.it) – Irre Marche, deals with Learning Objects for teacher training.

R. Santilli (santilliriccardo@libero.it), Eductra srl, introduces «Gutemberg», a software that enables accessibility, quality and fast production of LOs.

S. Alvino (alvino@cnr.it) and L. Sarti, ITD Genova, explore the role of Learning Objects inside a Constructivist educational setting.

S. Penge (steve@lynxlabs.com) presents Ada, an «author sensitive» lesson generator.

2. Technological innovation

Key words

Semantic WEB, m-learning, conceptual maps, Knowledge Management, Technological Devices RID and Adaptive Systems

D. Giuli (giuli@det.unifi.it), A. Calvani, M.C. Pettenati, University of Florence, discuss the need for convergence between e-Learning, Digital Libraries and e-Knowledge within the University system.

D.L. Fuschi (d.fuschi@giuntilabs.com) Giunti Interactive Labs, presents «Webkit project» and describes the Smart Tags, intelligent labels technology (RFID) as resources for Learning and Training.

D. Ricciardi (daniela.ricciardi@elasis.it), Elasis, shows how a e-Learning strategy based on competence, here called: KEI (Knowledge Electronic Information), can improve a learning organization.
With the «Mobilearn project», **G. Bo** (g.bo@giuntilabs.it) and G. Da Bormida, Interactive Labs, explore new mobile environments to support individual and collaborative learning. The Interactive Labs group is involved in providing solutions which take into account interaction between environment and content, and integrate tangible objects, virtual reality, and wireless solutions.

I. Codoban (codoban@achille.det.unifi.it) and M. Breschi, University of Florence, introduce a wireless e-learning application for the mobile sales force, based on Intelligent Agents and adaptive technologies.

The analysis of an e-learning specific experience allows **M. Mazzoneschi** (mazzoneschi@lynxlab.com), Lynx, to reflect on how tacit knowledge can emerge in a collective on-line environment.

P.E. Selva (paoloemilioselva@tin.it) ISIM-Lab and C. Giovannella, University Tor Vergata (Rome), introduce a method of profile-setting and evaluating based on conceptual maps.

P.E. Selva (paoloemilioselva@tin.it) ISIM-LAB, S. Coco, C. Giovannella, University Tor Vergata (Rome), develop a strategy for m-learning networked services.

The focus of the study by **S. Scotti** (stefano.scotti@polimi.it) and M. Mauri, IULM (Milan), is on «Biosensors» and the emotional involvement of on-line students.

3. Tools, environments and technologies

Key words

LMS, LCMS, CMS, wiki, blog, Open Source, interface, profiling, portal, metadata, web page.

How to use web pages as educational resources is dealt with by **C. Gaeta** (claudia.gaeta@unicatt.it), Cattolica University (Milan).

Ariel.net, a Degree Course in digital security, designed by the CTU (Milan), is illustrated by **M. Bove** (bove@ctu.unimi.it).

F. Landriscina (franco@simulware.com), Simulware, talks about simulation-based approach.

G. Adorni (adorni@unige.it), University of Genoa, and G. Premuda, Softwerks, describe the Genoa University e-learning Portal.

G. Favini (favini@ctu.unimi.it) and D. Scaccia, CTU Milan, deal with designing a graphical interface.

M. Noceti (marco.noceti@unige.it) and M. Carando, DIST-University of Genoa, present a technological infrastructure aimed at supporting networked communication, coordination and decision making in real time.

R. Guarasci (guarisci@unical.it), A. Rovella and S. Vuono, University of Calabria, illustrate a user-oriented e-learning platform with a semi-automatic Units indexing system.

S. Pirruccello (silvana@funteaching.it) presents a simple user-based system, called Funteaching.

V. Baraniello (baraniello@uniroma2.it), C. Giovannella, University Tor Vergata (Rome), S. Coco, P.E. Selva, Isim_Lab present the «Home University» (HU) learning environment, a platform that support community services, mobile capability, profiling users and statistic analysis.

4. Pedagogic models

Key words

Constructivism, Knowledge Management, Instructional Design, Communication, Tutoring, CSCL/CSCW, Community of Practice, Community of Learning, Virtual Learning, Collaborative Learning, and Distributed Cognition.

A. Calvani (antonio@calvani.it), A. Fini, G. Bonaiuti, University of Florence and E. Mazzoni, University of Bologna, have implemented a software in order to monitor collaboration activities of a group inside a CSCL environment (Synergeia).

A. Cartelli (cartan@unicas.it) speculates on the knowledge construction within a learning community.

A. Fata (anna.fata@iol.it) is involved with the psychological aspects of the online relationship.

The model Open Access for education resources, is examined by **A.M. Tammaro** (Annamaria.tammaro@unipr.it).

A short Guide to the history and evolution of e-learning, bases, services, CMC and specificity of the courses on-line, is provided by **A. Perra** (annperr@tin.it).

C. Cuoco (cuoco@glaux.it) and V. Deplano, Glaux, reflect on the methodology of structuring Didactic Units based on Constructivist suggestions.

C. Tasso (tasso@dimi.uniud.it) and G. Rossi, University of Udine, present a data mining system based on artificial intelligent technology capable to do a content analysis and automatic clustering in the online learning communications.

A communicative model for e-learning is described by **C. Succi** (chiara.succi@lu.unisi.ch) and L. Cantoni, University of Lugano (Swiss).

Cooperative reticular systems are the focus of the contribution by **D. Biolghini** (davide.biolghini@teos.it).

D. Boldrini Daniela.boldrini@teos.it) and L. Guerra, Studio Teos, investigate new technologies used in integrated environments.

E. Chianura (edo_chianura@postino.it) focuses on the value of conceptual maps and tools in cooperation.

G. Adorni (adorni@unige.it), G. Vercelli, University of Genoa and F. Rebellato, Liceo Giorgione (Castelfranco Veneto) presents EPICT, an e-learning model for the empowerment of teachers.

G. Marcianò's contribution (marciano@siscas.net) provides a historical overview of distance learning in the Italian school system.

G. Tortora (tortora@unina.it), University of Naples, stresses the urgency of an integration between research, and specific technologies that deal with collaborative knowledge building and learning.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

Key Words

Monitoring, Evaluating, Social Network Analysis, Cost-Benefit Analysis, User satisfaction, Portfolio, Quality Systems

F. Landriscina (franco@simulware.com) analyze the value of simulation in an instructional design prospective.

E. Mazzoni (mazzoni@psice@unibo.it) and S. Bertolasi, Universitiy of Bologna, investigate the typologies of analysis according to SNA for online collaborative groups.

F. Dal Fiore (Filippo.dalfiore@unimib.it) and M. Gui, University of Bicocca (Milan), introduce a Portfolio methodology, focusing on development plans, self-reflection reports and peer evaluation.

According to IMS standards, **F. Giorgini** (f.giorgini@giuntilabs.it), M. Dicerto, A. Lorenzon and L. Pagani, Giunti Interactive Labs, present an innovative e-portfolio European project: an instrument which can be integrated into e-learning platforms in order to create, manage and share personal data.

G. R. Mangione (joman@interfree) and P. Zamperlin examine how virtual learning communities can improve their effectiveness through the use of tools for monitoring and reflection.

Analysis and Cost Benefit Analysis are discussed by **M. Boccolini** (marioboc@hotmail.com) and C. Perich: their aim is to go beyond a simple econometric approach, integrating educational and technical considerations.

Quality is one of the important topics at stake: **M. Rotta** (mrxibis@interfree.it) illustrates a comparative analysis of different qualitative systems.

P. Appari (paappari@tin.it), CSA Milan, introduces E-Qua, a project whose aim is to describe a quality e-learning model.

P. Dimonte (p.dimonte@lavorocampania.it), B. Fadini - University of Naples (Fred II), M. Mezza - RAI, G. Zezza - University of Cassino, G. Zollo and J. Vincent - University of Naples (Orientale) talk about the quality evaluation in e-learning experiences.

S. Boca, University of Palermo, F. Ballor, Ideosfera KSM and **S. Ruggieri** (stefanoruggieri@libero.it) talk about styles of communication, satisfaction and efficiency within online working groups.

E. Chianura (edo_chianura@postino.it) demonstrate a tool that helps tutors to analyze motivation indicators in online students.

V. Eletti (eletti.valerio@uniroma1.it) introduces a certification process based on quality criteria in the Asfor manager training corporation.

P. Cinti (patrizia. cinti@uniroma1.it), G. Ragusa, F. Ballone, L. Livigni, University La Sapienza (Rome), introduce and describe a model of online collaborative learning, the «Portic.ol project», that is at the same time a process of competences development and a quality model.

6. Disciplines

Key Words

Language, Skills Collaboration, Mathematics, Chemistry and Physics Course, ECM, Virtual worlds, environment, Multimedia, Hypermedia, Evaluation, Repository, and study Planning.

Planning and project management of blended communication tools in «Let in roll», is the focus of the paper presented by **A. Canzi** (annalisa.canzi@ctu.unimi.it), A. Folcio, M. Milani, S. Radice, E. Santangelo, and E. Zanoni, CTU (Milan).

A. Cosetti (cosetti@ctu. unimi.it), CTU University of Milan, presents result of the analyses carried in the «Labsol project»: an online writing labs that aim to improve competences in the written communication.

A. E. Baldini (enzo.baldini@unito.it), University of Turin and L. De Renzis, Icon Consortium, through the portal ICON share one of the most important initiatives of the sector offering a triennial degree course in Italian Language and Culture for foreigners integrated with tools such as a library, encyclopaedia and virtual museum.

A. Gambini (annastella.gambini@unimib.it), P.S. Lodovici, A. Pezzotti, show the experimentation of an on-line Biology course.

F. Pucci (f.pucci@giuntilabs.it) describes a project named IVIMEDS (The International Virtual Medical School)

L. Giannini (calip@mbox.panservice.it), B. Nati, E. Pettinari, M. Rotta propose a reflection on the «Giunti Fad» course devoted to the didactics of Italian.

The Online Teaching Project for Economic Mathematics is introduced by **G. Limongiello** (ligian@cilea.it), S. Stefani, and A. Torriero.

L. Mesh (mesh@unisi.it) and C. Zanca, CLA - University of Siena, talk about the features of WebLingu@ a blended English courses that use web resources and collaborative, learner-centred design principles.
The project **@Poi** introduced by **M. B. Mastroianni** (marisamastroianni@virgilio.it) and A. Pappalepore is a training programme, with a methodological approach based on Constructivism and practical education.

M. Michelini (michelini@fisica.uniud.it) and A. Stefanel, University of Udine, draw on the results of networked online group experiences of Physics teachers in elementary school.

P. Fornasier (kioko.81@libero.it), M. Michelini and P.G. Rossi, University of Udine, present the «@ roles» project, an experience based on the use of specific tools to support learning in a scientific context.

P. Parlavecchia (paolo.parlavecchia@fastweb.it) exposes the findings of an experimental distance ECM course for «health economy».

S. Ferrari (sara.ferrari@unicatt.it), Catholic University of Brescia, describes the advantages of the Blackboard 6 platform with regard to online evaluation in a Spanish language course.

7. Experiences: University, Schools, Organisations

Key words

KM, university, classroom, environment, ICT, master, ECDL, Italian school, teachers, blended, experiences, experiential, forum, qualitative, quantitative, information, communication,

A. Tonoli (Antonella.tonoli@unipd.it), present the «e-learning Project» of University of Padua that looks at the training of human resources as the first step to induce the change in the university teaching practices.
Trio, the web-learning portal for lifelong an vocational learning of Tuscany Region is described by **G. Bonaiuti** (g.bonaiuti@unifi.it) University of Florence, and by L. Santoni Region of Tuscany.
The experimental online helpdesk at a high-school in Vicenza is dealt with by **E. Spadavecchia** (elspad@interfree.it).

F. Arcelli (arcelli@disco.unimib.it) and M. Pezzè, Bicocca University (Milan), report on the choice of the blended solution for the Master Course in «Information and Communication Technology Management»

F. Berengo (Francesca.berengo@tes.mi.it), ITSOS «Marie Curie», describes the project *BiTE:* bridging the gap between the traditional and e-learning environment.

G.P. Zara (Giampaolo.zara@unito.it) and C. Spadaro present the University of Turin formative model for the distance education project with 21 degree courses for some departments of the Faculty of Medicine.

M. Balestra (mbalestra@acse.it) talk about the ACSE report (Lombardia Region) that illustrates two different research projects: »Myself» and «E-dynamic». The first project presents an innovative multimedia aspect in terms of voice activated interactivity (user-user/user-platform). The second one explores new technologies dealing with knowledge and its relation to e-learning techniques.

I. Tanoni (i.tanoni@fastnet.it), Regional School Board - Marche, outlines the three stages of e-learning within the Italian school system.
A presentation devoted to the Master «E-learning for School, University and Business company», is made by **G. Adorni** (adorni@unige.it), L. Sarti, A. M. Sugliano, G. Vercelli, University of Genoa.

A model for the development of an information system for the personnel employed in the URPs (Public Relations Offices) of the MIUR is object of the paper by **G. Marcianò** (marciano@siscas. net) and M. Tortorici.

M.T. Ciaffaroni (Mariateresa.ciaffaroni@fastwebnet.it) analyses the Fortic courses, and draws a global evaluation of the experience.

M. Masoni (m.masoni@med.unifi.it), M. R. Guelfi, A. Conti, G. F. Gensini, from the Faculty of Medicine and Surgery of the University of Florence, introduce different strategies of KM, in relation to the objectives, goals and users of their project from *people-document people-people* (based on the transfer of knowledge through technologies used to promote interpersonal communication).

N. Paparella (Nicola@studiopaparella.it) and S. Colazzo, in e-learning Mediator find a new professional profile to be developed through the Master at the University of Lecce.

P. Frignani (paolo.frignani@unife.it), University of Ferrara, presents a report of the 2004 «e-learning expo» event.

P. Morandotti (info@morandotti.it) presents a personal experience gained while following a Master's Course for Training, Research and Personnel Development Experts

P. Ravotto (pfr@tes.mi.it), ITSOS, shows the evolution of some educational projects concerned teacher training and production of didactic materials.

R. Speretta (Roberto.speretta@ial. fvg.it), Ial Friuli-Venezia-Giulia, synthesizes the experience and e-learning promoted by a corporate non-profit body.

R. Trinchero (Roberto.trinchero@unito.it), S. Sgarella, R. Grimaldi, University of Turin introduce the experiment of an experiential environment for the development of online E@sy courses.

S. Barni (barni@ctu.unimi.it), R. Bravetti and C. Corvi, University of Milan, talk about their experience in one of the earliest Italian e-learning courses.

S. Genone (sgenone@liuc.it), C. Mari, L. Mari, Cetics, introduce a rational experience of the use of the ICT to support teaching in the elearning@LIUC system.

S. Panini (panini.s@alphazero.it) and A. Zombini present «Safety at School for Teachers and Pupils» an interactive CD used in the blended model experience.
The realization of a short Learning units for classes at primary and secondary school, is presented by **S. Simoncini** (serena.simoncini@istruzione.it).

M. Terraschi (morena@lynxlab.com) introduces concrete examples from the experience of on-line course realized by Altrascuola.
The experience carried out in a secondary school related to the use of a forum together with the qualitative and quantitative analysis of the training experiment, is synthesized by **M. Tommasi** (marco.tommasi@uniud.it), University of Udine.
The innovative field of «Info learning», which overlaps areas of e-learning and publishing, is explained through the experience of Enel Sfera by **V. Eletti** (eletti. valerio@uniroma1.it).

V. Lavolpe (vlavolpe@neurol.uniba.it), A. Carella, F. Federico, P. Lamberti, M. Nardini, and P. Livrea, University of Bari present «Freedom» a model of classroom net integration for the improvement of university teaching strategies.