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PROLEARN

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Sustainability plan for PROLEARN Academy

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1.2	02.01.08	D. Gillet	Integration of EducaNext statistics and Summer School details
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Summary

This document reports on the sustainability plan for the PROLEARN Academy instruments launched during the PROLEARN funding period that will be sustained in 2008 and beyond.

The instruments developed and deployed in the framework of the PROLEARN Academy represent intrinsically a large part of the whole PROLEARN sustainability plan. As a consequence, this document shares many elements with D.10.10 (Sustainability Executive Summary). To avoid duplication, references to D10.10 have been given where applicable.

PROLEARN has created a new organizational instrument: the European Association for Technology Enhanced Learning, EATEL (http://www.ea-tel.eu/), which will help with the sustained organization of technology enhanced learning research beyond 2008. PROLEARN has three major events that it has brought into existence, the EC-TEL academic international conference on technology-enhanced learning, incorporating the PROLEARN Doctoral Consortium, the Professional Training Facts (PTF) conference for business and professionals, and the PhD Summer School. All these events, but the PTF one, are outcomes of the PROLEARN Academy and are fully sustained and significantly expanded as described in this document.

1 Introduction

The goal of the PROLEARN Academy has been to integrate and coordinate professional learning, research, and academic training in the PROLEARN network, helping frame European research and academic endeavor in a single management structure. It has established a distributed research network, integrating the very substantial research and training efforts of the NoE participants.

The Academy has consolidated interactions among PROLEAN partners, its associates, and the wider international TEL research community through three principle integrated activities:

- Education and Training,
- Scientific Leadership,
- Technology Infrastructure.

Deliverable D9.9 reports on the results of the activities listed above for year 2007. The present deliverable D9.8 reports on the activities launched during the PROLEARN funding period that will be sustained in 2008 and beyond. The organization of several activities planned for 2008 is already underway.

2 Education and Training

2.1 Summer Schools

The aim of the *PROLEARN Doctoral Summer School* is to contribute to the creation of an institutional culture, integrating distributed researchers across Europe into one community. Another important goal of the Summer School is to actively involve institutions beyond PROLEARN core partners in view of establishing the most important TEL Summer School as a cornerstone for sustaining the PROLEARN initiative. Thus, it represents PROLEARN mission on a PhD candidate level. The summer school offers a unique opportunity to foster cross-domain training and collaboration among researchers in Europe and beyond, working in the disparate fields of expertise that promote the advancement of TEL for citizen and at the workplace. The Summer School programme includes lectures from leading professors, industrialists, and experts in the field, trans-European tutoring, mentoring, and joint research opportunities. Additionally the school offers practical sessions in research methodology and the basics of TEL.

Over the past four years a core group of PROLEARN partners: INT, RWTH, ZSI, JSI, UKOU, KTH, WUW have established PROLEARN Doctoral Summer Schools as a cornerstone in shaping the next European generation of TEL researchers and entrepreneurs. They have crafted a blueprint for the continued success of this annual event and have been able to secure funding for its 2008 edition. SEEERA.NET funding will provide EATEL, carrying on from PROLEARN, an opportunity for this initiative to continuously swell its spiraling effect on incorporating an ever-increasing number of TEL researchers throughout Europe. SEEERA.NET funding targets more especially researchers working in the Western Balkan countries. Additionally, the Palette (http://palette.ercim.org/) Integrated Project has taken the responsibility of the PROLEARN Summer School in the framework of its workpackage on Training in collaboration with EATEL. This collaboration enhances both the geographic diversity of prospective participants and the scientific programme. As a matter of fact, the profiles of the PALETTE partners strengthen the representation of educational scientists in the Summer School expert panel.

The underlying principle of this partnership model for organizing the event is to take advantage of the EATEL framework to pass the baton to operating consortiums for ensuring the logistics and providing the necessary resources. Additionally, the aim is also to avoid the multiplication of Summer, Winter or Whatsoever Schools in Europe to reach a proper critical mass and a rich competence portfolio.

Joint committees have been established and resources have been secured to ensure the 2008 edition in Ohrid. In addition to EATEL and Palette, the Summer School has the pro-active support from a growing number of EU IST and eContent funded R&D projects such as APOSDLE, MATURE, iCAMP, PROLIX, MACE, TENCompetence, GRAPPLE, and ARIADNE. The broader European coverage achieved by bringing the core partners of these consortiums together in the scientific committee, the organization committee and the expert panel is shown on Figure 1. Each partner project has undertaken to contribute on its own budget to support the participation of PhD students and experts.
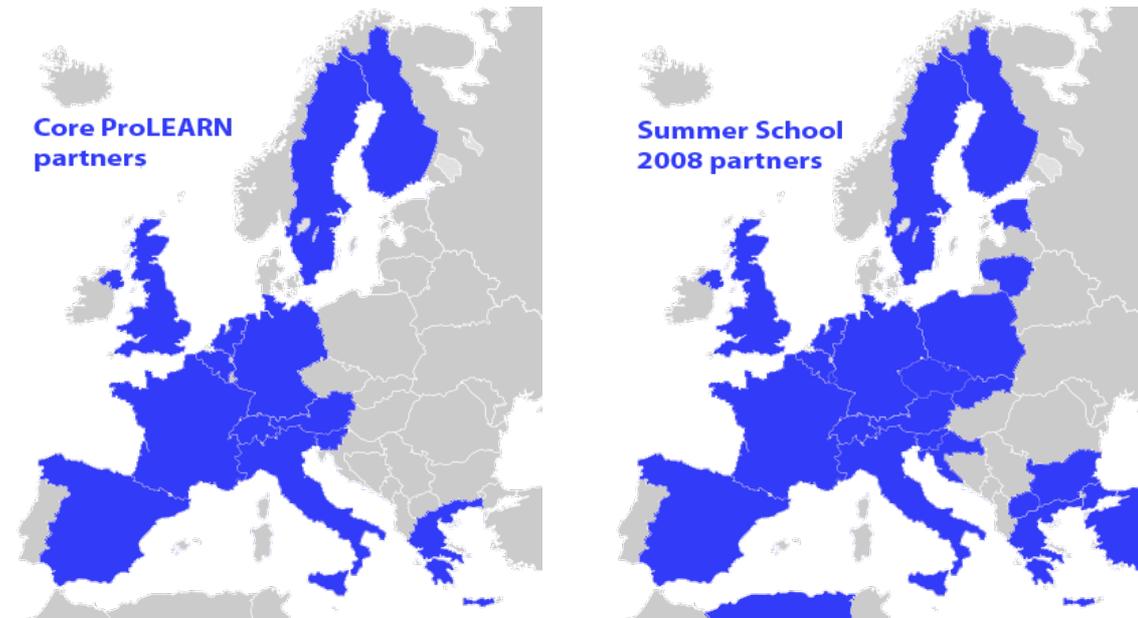
Figure 1: Summer School partnership expansion.

The programme announced for 2008 in the first call for participation (January 31st) is the following:

- Collaborative Design between Educational Scientists and Computer Scientists;
- Creation of and Access to Knowledge and Learning Resources;
- Practice Modelling, Management & Mining;
- Personalisation & Adaptation in Learning Environments;
- Privacy and Security;
- Pedagogy, Life-Long Learning, and TEL;
- Individual, Social & Organisational Learning Processes;
- Interoperability: TEL Standards, Models, Processes, Tools;
- Research Techniques;
- The Future of TEL.

Some PROLEARN partners such as JSI have already secured further funding to continue to participate in organization of the PROLEARN Summer Schools for PhD students in technology enhanced learning. Part of the necessary local funds for this activity is expected to be ensured through the next 7-year national research programme in Slovenia. Furthermore, it is already agreed that PROLEARN sustained platforms will continue to be supported by partners to ensure that the summer school is effective and world leading.

Indeed, partners like the UKOU have already committed to contribute to the PROLEARN Summer School 2008 and beyond (with the support of the EATEL organization). In the case of the UKOU, they have also agreed to host the ongoing virtual events located on the PROLEARN (and henceforth EATEL) FlashMeeting Server. The virtual events correspond to a very significant body of ongoing event organization and participation (see below). Additionally, RWTH, KTH, and WUW plan to provide technology assistance to the summer school with the Academy Portal, Confolios, Conzilla, and EducaNext tools.

The general enthusiasm and commitment to the summer school generated during PROLEARN has motivated core partners to garner funding from other projects in order for them to sustain their commitment and devise a funding strategy to secure the organization of future summer schools within the framework of EATEL.

The summer school or similar events constitute the backbone for sustaining a TEL academic community. Granting scholarships and ECTS credits, as it is envisioned, will help to motivate the participation of PhD students. To motivate the participation of TEL experts, their academic return on personal investment should be increase, especially if no significant financial incentive can be provided. Knowing that publication impact factors is more and more taken into account in academic promotions and personal recognition, it is planned to ask the experts to write a book chapter related to their contribution to the Summer School. All the chapters will be published as Lecture Notes in Computer Science (or equivalent). The table of content will help to promote the Summer School, the drafts of the chapter and the slides available online as learning resources will help to support the presentation of the material during the event, and the final published book will make visible annually the advances in the domain. Such educational resources will also facilitate the TEL community to access content for Master courses and PhD programs offered in their own institutions.

The principal added value of the proposed Summer School compared to other equivalent academic events is its multidisciplinary nature and all the associated cross-fertilizing opportunities. To better convey this peculiarity, it is discussed to change the name of the Summer School to "**Technology Enhanced Learning and Knowledge Management**". It effectively reflects the disappearing of the frontier that previously existed between these two domains and could also help interested students to easily get the agreement from their PhD advisor or doctoral program to participate.

2.2 Doctoral Consortium

One of the important PROLEARN Academy training measures for PhD students, the Doctoral Consortium, was introduced in 2006. It brings together Ph.D. students working on topics related to TEL, offering them the opportunity to present, discuss, and receive feedback on their research in an interdisciplinary and international atmosphere. The doctoral consortium is accompanied by prominent professors and researchers in the field of TEL who participate actively in reviewing and commenting on the students' written and oral expressions of their research. The EC-TEL conference is a perfect framework for bringing together students and faculty members, and generates enough revenue so that students may participate free of charge. Therefore, the PROLEARN Doctoral Consortium has been incorporated into the EC-TEL conference and will be sustained as an annual event in this context.

The Doctoral Consortium occupies a useful niche in the TEL academy framework between the Summer School, which mainly target PhD students starting their research, and the EC-TEL, where PhD graduates could present their results.

The Doctoral Consortium also provides an indirect way for research groups with little experience in conducting TEL research to integrate the TEL community. Actually, the participation to the Doctoral Consortium turned to bring more added value to PhD students having an adviser without the necessary multidisciplinary experience needed to effectively supervise TEL research activities. It can be defined as a platform to find informal or formal co-advisers or jury members for the PhD thesis. Being possibly invited as co-adviser or jury member is indeed an interesting

academic incentive for experts to participate. Besides, such a scheme is strongly supported by the European University Association (EUA) that defines in the criteria to get the European Doctorate Label (Doctor Europaeus) the condition to fulfill the following requirements:

1. The PhD thesis defence will be accorded if at least two professors from two higher education institutions of two European countries, other than the one where the thesis is defended, have given their review of the manuscript;

2. At least one member of the jury should come from a higher education institution in another European country, other than the one, where the thesis is defended;

3. A part of the defence must take place in one of the official languages, other than the one(s) of the country, where the thesis is defended;

4. The thesis must partly have been prepared as a result of a research period of at least one trimester spent in another European Country.

This last point is also facilitated thanks to the Doctoral consortium that provides a valuable platform to initial short and mid term research stays in leading TEL laboratories for promising PhD candidates. Strengthening such advantage in the call for participation will help in achieving self and long-term sustainability for the Doctoral Consortium.

The 2008 Doctoral Consortium edition will be collocated with EC-TEL 2008 and co-organized by the EATEL Association and the Palette Integrated Project in the framework of its training activities. As for the Summer School, the underlying principle is to take advantage of the EATEL framework to pass the baton to operating consortiums for ensuring the logistics and providing the necessary resources. Additionally, the aim is also to avoid the multiplication of Doctoral Consortium to reach a proper critical mass and a rich competence portfolio.

2.3 Thematic workshops

The Summer School (Section 2.1) and the EC-TEL conference (Section 3.1) constitute major events for building and maintaining a strong interdisciplinary TEL community of junior and senior scientists. They also constitute instruments to recognize new research trends and to consolidate fundamental ones. The formation of interest groups in this framework is therefore a natural by-product and a seed for the organizing of self-sustaining thematic workshops.

Moreover, the intent of EATEL is to setup a Think Tank series on TEL trends in the framework of the EC-TEL Conference (see Section 3.1) and the Summer School to take advantage of the presence of leading experts. These Think Thanks that could also be considered as thematic workshops should help in redefining every year *exploratory research actions* on innovative or disruptive ideas. Commercial partners, policy makers and representative of strategic academic bodies should be included in these events. Think Tank topics should serve to redefine every year the programme of the next Summer School.

3 Scientific Leadership

3.1 EC-TEL

In only two years, EC-TEL has established itself an essential event for the European TEL community and is gaining visibility world-wide. Despite a too large number of e-Learning oriented conferences, the unique features of EC-TEL have contributed to its recognition. These features will also contribute to its sustainability. First, the EC-TEL scientific committee and the review panel integrate most of the prominent European academic players in TEL, which guarantees an effective diffusion and welcome of the call for papers. Second, the presence of the above players motivates not only the setup of scientific sessions, but also workshops, TEL project meetings and doctoral activities. Participants registered for EC-TEL naturally support the organizing of collocated project meetings. Then, people joining these meetings naturally submit scientific contributions. Hence, a sort of cross-reinforcement is taking place with a full benefit for the visibility of the event. Third, the collocation of project meetings also brings leading-edge TEL practitioners and commercial partners to the academic conference. Such proximity of top academic and professional actors is seldom achieved in other settings. It enables rich cross-fertilization and collaboration opportunities. Last but not least, EC-TEL is one of the few academic conferences where people of various domains, such as educational and computer scientists, get a chance to meet together, bringing an additional dimension fro cross-fertilization and collaboration.

The sustainability plan for EC-TEL builds on the above features and on the full implication of the European TEL community federated under the EATEL umbrella. Leaders of TEL initiatives and research groups are selected for the scientific committee and the review panel.

The next EC-TEL conference will be held in Maastricht, The Netherlands, September 18-19, 2008 (http://www.ectel08.org/). Additional details on this edition are given in D10.10, section 3.1. The two 2008 Program Chairs bring the legacy of both PROLEARN and Kaleidoscope Networks of Excellence. The organizing committee integrates partners of ongoing TEL projects having the actual resources and incentive to dedicated themselves to the success of the event.

3.2 Journals

The ultimate academic achievement recognition results from publications in indexed peer-reviewed journals. The lack of such journals in TEL has been one of the barriers for a large acceptance of TEL as an academic research domain and for a real research involvement of faculty members world-wide.

The visibility of the PROLEARN academic community and the achievements of the Network, as well as of other similar initiatives, have contributed to solve partially this problem. Traditional journals in Computer Sciences, Human Computer Interaction, Information and Communication Systems, Knowledge Management or Education, just to mention a few, have published special issues on TEL. The presence of PROLEARN core and associated partners in key editorial boards and review panels has been instrumental toward such a success. The leverage effect of the Network size was also a strong contributing factor. Thanks to this momentum and to the raised awareness on the importance of multidisciplinary TEL research, as well as the associated investigation and validation methodologies, this trend will reinforced itself in the future.

In addition to special issues, the Network also succeeded in contributing to the creation of new high-potential academic journals with the necessary backing of recognized associations. The first one is **the IEEE Transactions on Learning Technologies** (TLT) that will be launched in 2008, with Wolfgang Nejdl (L3S, core partner) as Editor in Chief, Peter Brusilovsky (Pittsburgh, associate partner) as Associate Editor in Chief, several PROLEARN members as Editorial Board Members, and Erik Duval (KU Leuven, core partner) as member of the TLT Steering Committee. It is a joint publication of the IEEE Computer Society and the IEEE Education Society. It will provide a new and important major venue for archival research papers and critical survey papers on all areas related to learning technologies. Topics within the scope of this new journal include technology advances in online learning systems; intelligent tutors; educational software applications and games; simulation systems for education and training; collaborative learning tools, devices and interfaces for learning; interactive techniques for learning; tools for formative and summative assessment; ontologies for learning systems; standards and Web services that support learning; authoring tools for learning materials; computer support for peer tutoring and learning via discovery or project work or field or lab work; and creation and management of learning objects. See http://www.ewh.ieee.org/soc/es/tlt.html for more detailed information. The second one is the **International Journal of Technology Enhanced Learning** (IJTEL) published by Inderscience. It is a joint effort of representatives from numerous PROLEARN core and associate partners. For example, two of its Editors-in-Chief are Ambjörn Naeve (KTH, core partner) and Miltiadis Lytras, (University of Patras, associate partner). The Regional Editor Europe is Peter Scott (UKOU, core partner). The first issue will be published in Spring 2008. See http://www.inderscience.com/browse/index.php?journalCODE=ijtel for more detailed information. The focus of IJTEL is on improving learning with the help of technology.

The multidisciplinary background of the editorial boards of these two journals will enable further spreading and recognition of TEL research. The mid and long term positive effects will hopefully be the emergence of a generation of TEL-enabled faculty members and entrepreneurs having got their PhD and recognized publications in carrying out TEL research as their main academic activity.

4 Technology Infrastructure

The main component of the PROLEARN Technology Infrastructure developed to support the PROLEARN Academy was the Academy Portal. Over the years, this portal became a key instrument for the construction of the PROLEARN academy identity and for the visibility of the PROLEARN Academy excellence. To build on this momentum for supporting ongoing and future TEL academy initiatives, it has been decided to secure its operation and to ensure its development as describe in Section 4.1. Other components of the PROLEARN Technology Infrastructure have been exploited to support the PROLEARN Academy activities, especially the Summer School. As these components were instrumental in helping to build a strong TEL research community and in supporting further academic interactions among participants and experts, most of them continue to be supported and will be exploited in ongoing and future TEL academy initiatives. As their application scope is broader that the academic activities, their detailed sustainability plan is given in D10.10. Only a summary is provided here in Section 4.2.

4.1 PROLEARN Academy Portal

The Academy portal (www.prolearn-academy.org) is a dynamic and collaborative platform that can constantly be edited online through a Web browser. It provides an opportunity for wiki-like collaborative content creation, thus insuring the participation and commitment of all members of the TEL community. The Academy portal serves the function of a brokerage system and includes the following services:

- Access to tools developed at PROLEARN core and associate partner institutions. These include tools for exchange of knowledge resources (e.g. EducaNext, BibSonomy, Confolio, PROLEARN TV), tools for collaborative content creation and modelling (e.g. Conzilla), and tools for collaborative activities over the Internet (e.g. Flashmeeting, Hexagon, Isabel);

- Links to projects in the field of technology enhanced learning, such as iCamp, TENCompetence, PROLIX, APOSDLE, MACE, MELT, LUISA, and Organic.Edunet;

- TEL events (e.g. conferences, workshops, summer schools, virtual meetings), news, call for papers, and RSS feeds to syndicate news, event announcements, and new published content;

- A publication database. Everyone can easily log in and use the interface to edit the existing publications or add new ones. Different browsing and search possibilities and RSS feeds are also provided;

- A mentorship database and a flash map to visualize the mentorship relationships. This service is instrumental in matching experts and PhD students interests for setting up annually the Doctoral Consortium;

- A media base and associated measure tools. Information from mailing lists, newsletters, blogs, RSS feeds, Web sites, podcasts, etc. is stored in the media base. A series of SNA tools for analysis and visualization of the digital media networks in the media base are also provided.

RWTH have undertaken to continue hosting and maintaining the Academy portal (Figure 2) and offering the integrated services to the learning research community. All community members will have the opportunity to access the Academy portal to e.g. provide and consume information, and use the social networking services of the Academy media base. Also technical updates of the portal will be made and a technical support for the users will be available. The Academy portal will also remain the host of major future EATEL events such as the 2008 summer school (www.prolearn-academy.org/Events/summer-school-2008).

Figure 2: The PROLEARN Academy Portal.

4.2 Other components of the PROLEARN Technology Infrastructure

The sustainability plan for the other components of the PROLEARN technology infrastructure are given in D10.10 in the following sections:

Components	Sections in D10.10	Plans
Confolio	6.7	Sustained in an eContent+ context
Conzilla	6.8	Sustained by the KTH Centre SUSTAIN (http://www.csc.kth.se/sustain/)
FlashMeeting	6.9	Sustained in the EATEL framework
EducaNext	4.3	Sustained in the framework of the new EducaNext association (www.educanext.org)

The infrastructure and the production systems will continue to be presented to the PROLEARN business community via the VCC and to ongoing Academy activities, such as the Summer School, via EATEL sponsorship. Both the VCC and EATEL website feature a 'systems' page which lists this amongst other PROLEARN Infrastructure and Tools that will be sustained by work that extends beyond the funding of the Network of Excellence.

The Academy Portal (see Section 4.1), Confolio and the EducaNext infrastructures (see Section 4.2) will continue to be available as repositories and distribution platforms for the aforementioned learning resources.

Currently, EducaNext already hosts various resources regarding TEL and e-Learning. Advanced search for various keywords yield following results:

- technology enhanced learning: 207 results (142 in English)

- e-learning: 44 results (10 in English)

- eLearning: 38 results (30 in English)

Collections (composite resources) for this topics are for example:

1. I-KNOW'05 ProLearn Workshop: Technology Enhanced Professional Learning
   http://www.educanext.org/ubp/PUSH/search@srchDetailsLR?lrID=lr-wuw-wild-1135258018026

2. ProLearn 1st Thematic Workshop: Technology Enhanced Learning for Learning Organisations
   http://www.educanext.org/ubp/PUSH/search@srchDetailsLR?lrID=lr-wuw-wild-1135259729607

3. 2nd ProLearn Thematic Workshop: Context for Learning Objects
   http://www.educanext.org/ubp/PUSH/search@srchDetailsLR?lrID=lr-wuw-wild-1135262106482

4. ProLearn Summer School 2006
   http://www.educanext.org/ubp/PUSH/search@srchDetailsLR?lrID=lr-wuw-wild-1151595422304

5. 3rd ProLearn Thematic Workshop: Collaborative Working Environments for Professional Learning
   http://www.educanext.org/ubp/PUSH/search@srchDetailsLR?lrID=lr-wuw-wild-1135259558166

KTH has undertaken to host the Conzilla/Confolio networked information structure developed within PROLEARN[1], which includes the Conzilla model of the PROLEARN Roadmapping process[2], and to continue providing the Confolios for the PROLEARN summer schools[3]. Moreover these tools will be further developed through the involvement of KTH in various projects at the national and international level. Two examples of such "funding projects" are the Centre for Sustainable Communications at KTH (a 10 year centre of excellence funded by VINNOVA and various industry partners – including Ericsson), which started in 2006, and the Organic.Edunet project[4] (eContent+), which started in October 2007 and will continue until October 2010. Moreover, through its Student portal project, Uppsala University (associate PROLEARN partner) is planning to adopt the Confolio system as the e-portfolio system for their 40.000 students, which will provide a sustainable budget for deployment and development.

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[1] http://www.conzilla.org/projects/roadmapping/presentation/CM#87070109b7c16962241

[2] http://www.conzilla.org/projects/roadmapping/presentation/CM#15a94f1105ee8e827

[3] http://my.confolio.org/portfolio/main?manifest=Prolearn&cmd=open

[4] www.organic-edunet.eu