

EDITORIAL

Internet, Social Networks and Education

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The impact that the Internet has had, and is still having on creating and furthering social networks is indisputable. Educators and educational institutions, particularly universities, cannot remain oblivious to this phenomenon. For this reason, at RUSC, we have decided to dedicate a monographic to digital culture and creative practices in education.

Digital culture is a concept that is under discussion. Both words, *digital* and *culture*, embrace a wide range of meanings. We might say that the digital world has contributed new forms of artistic expression to culture. A visit to any of the principal museums of modern art offers evidence for this. What is not so evident is the relationship between digital culture and educational practice, especially in higher education, and the relevance and topical nature of the monographic in the current issue stems from this.

The Internet is a space of creativity; it was from the beginning and is becoming more so day by day due to the possibilities of intercommunication that are brought about with ever widening scope. The phenomenon of social networks, getting more and more popular, offers interesting indicators of social participation and collective influence. The question we have to ask is this: How are we using this potential for creativity in our higher education institutions? To our mind the answer should be analysed from an institutional and an educational perspective.

The university, as a key institution in the society of information and knowledge, must foster the generation of spaces for creativity. Creativity generates knowledge and is the basis of the university as an institution. The creation of space for creativity is not founded solely on access to technology or to the Internet. Spaces for creativity are generated and managed, they are the fruit of strategic institutional planning. Universities should reflect on the use of the social network phenomenon and creativity as part of their institutional function and not just as something complementary to their educational activity. The web and its potential for creativity should reach beyond the technology departments and become the base for active institutional policy.

Teaching staff face the challenge of being open to the changes taking place in communicative areas and social usage of the Internet. The real transformation lies in educational dynamics, in the educational process going on in the class room and, increasingly, outside. Active and social use of the Internet cannot be ignored in teachers' planning. Even though some might - erroneously - want to base their teaching on the transmission of knowledge, it is today no longer possible to do so only in a unidirectional way. The creative dynamics of the Internet is of great help to the collaborative building of knowledge, and the current applications analysed in this volume's monographic, as well as future ones, should, in our opinion, be present in the teachers' planning.

I would like to conclude this editorial by pointing out, as we publish the sixth edition of RUSC, that the journal has attained a high level of indexing in journal evaluation databases and that we have achieved noteworthy international positioning, a large number of readers and, most importantly, recognition in the world-wide scientific

and research community. As an electronic journal, we have indisputably contributed to the growing prestige of online publication, thanks to the quality and rigorous work of our editorial board. We reassert our position - a look at our ranking in the indices demonstrates this - and we continue to work with our characteristic excellence and thoroughness. We now present a change in the publication of the journal, maintaining a six-month cycle but changing the publication dates. The current issue marks the changeover, being put online in March, whereas future ones will be published in July and January every year. Another important new feature is that issues will appear in full and not, as until now, in parts over a period of time. These changes reflect a new period for RUSC and are intended to further improve the position and prestige of the journal.