
e-University at the University of Latvia

**Virtual University Education and Co-operation
in the Baltic Sea Area Seminar**

**Helsinki, March 21, 2005
Māris Treimanis**

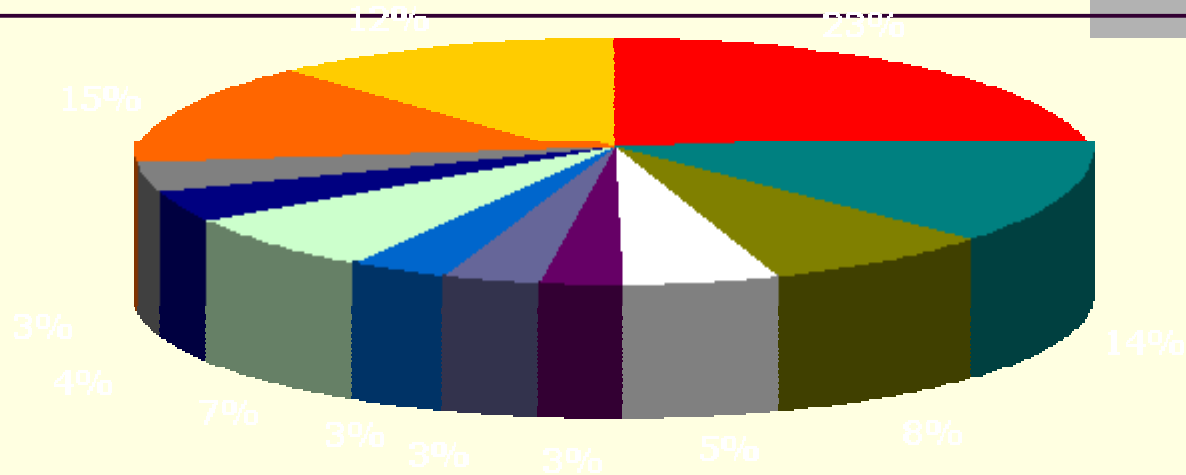
Presentation Outline

- **Context**
- **Approach**
- **Results**
- **Lessons learned**
- **Next steps**
- **Conclusion**

Context: Higher Education in Latvia

- 34 higher education institutions
(5 universities, 15 public non-university type, 14 private)
- 55 branches of 14 higher education institutions
- More than 4 100 faculty members and 113 000 students
- More than 1 200 students from 48 countries
- Distribution of students by subject:
 - => Social Sciences – 52,7%
 - => Teachers Training and Educations – 15,2%
 - => Engineering and Technologies – 11,7%
 - => Humanities – 6,9 %
 - => Natural Sciences – 5,3%
 - => Health – 3,5%
 - => Services – 2,7%
 - => Agriculture – 1,8%

Context: Higher Education in Latvia (cont'd)



■ University of Latvia	(23%)
■ Riga Technical University	(14%)
■ Latvia University of Agriculture	(8%)
■ Daugavpils University	(5%)
■ Riga Stradina University	(3%)
■ RPIVA	(3%)
■ Liepaja Academy of Pedagogy	(3%)
■ The Baltic Russian Institute	(7%)
■ School of Business Administration "Turiba"	(4%)
■ Riga International School of Economics and Business Administration	
■ Other 22 Public Institutions	(15%)
■ Other 16 Private Institutions	(12%)

Context: Higher Education in Latvia (cont'd)

Summary:

- many small and few large players
(market share of the University of Latvia – 23%)
- high level of competition
- high level of demand:
 - => institutions are forced to establish branches
 - => a number of students increases every year
(year, 1994 - 38 000, year, 2004 - 122 000)
 - => more & more students study part time (39%) & cover study expenses by themselves (77%)
- small number of students from other countries
- only few e-learning opportunities for students

**E-learning – opportunity & challenge for Higher Education
in Latvia !**

E-University: Approach (*Why?*)

- **The e-University initiative, as one of the strategic priorities of the University of Latvia , was defined by decision of Senate in November, 2001 and launched in April, 2002**
- **The aims of the e-University initiative were:**
 - => to improve, diversify and extend university's services
 - => to be more effective and efficient
 - => to be more attractive and competitive in a local and global market

E-University: Approach (*What?*)

- **e-University is translation of key relationships and services, as well as academic, outreach and business processes through the use of Internet technologies [2]**
- **e-University framework consists of [3]:**
 - => people
 - => e-business and e-learning as a priority
 - => business process redesign
 - => ITT infrastructure

[2] Edgar, P.Mc.Questen. E-university: transforming process and culture, - the University of Texas at Austin, March, 2000

[3] T.Dodds. The UBC e-Strategy framework. – University of British Columbia, October 2, 2002

E-University: Approach (*How?*)

The following planning principles were applied [4]:

- Focus on pragmatic obstacles to achieving objectives, as much as on vision and competencies
- Comprehend what was happened and plan for it, rather than attempt to predict future
- Develop several plausible scenarios for evolution, not one most-likely scenario
- Create multiple categories of investment objectives
- Transcend the gap between knowing what to do and doing it

[4] B.Rosser. Strategic Planning in the Internet Time, - Gartner Group TG-11-4993, September 12, 2000

E-University: Approach (*How?*)

- **E-learning and the people were defined as priorities**
(e-learning experience and human resources readiness to e-learning were the weakest “link of chain” in the e-University initiative)
- **The approach was to involve professors – “pioneers” from all of the university’s departments and so that they might disseminate information to their colleagues**
- **WebCT was defined as e-learning environment**
(taking in account experience the University of Latvia had and to avoid endless debates about the best environment)

E-University: Approach (*How? - cont'd.*)

- **No strict requirements were set out on the e-content design methodology and the relevant quality standards:**
 - => There were several teaching strategies and methodologies [5], but none of these was perfect. Each theoretical school prefers to use its own approach.
 - => Such constraints might scare off those faculty members with no experience in the area of e-learning

[5] D. Laurillard. Rethinking University Teaching. 2nd edition, - RoutledgeFalmer Taylor & Francis Group, 2002

E-University: First Stage (*Outcomes*)

1. The main e-learning outcomes:

- => More than 70 e-course developers were trained
- => 31 e-courses were launched (to facilitate face-to-face classes in the autumn of 2002 with more than 1200 students involved)
- => Pilot project of delivery of two e-courses for the students of “Ventspils Augstskola”
- => Draft of the intellectual property policy for the e-content at the University of Latvia was developed

E-University: First Stage (*Outcomes -cont'd.*)

2. The main technical outcomes:

- => E-university Project office was established
- => E-learning environment WebCT Focus Edition was installed
- => Requirements to university portal and integration of university's services were developed

3. The main strategic outcomes of the first stage were:

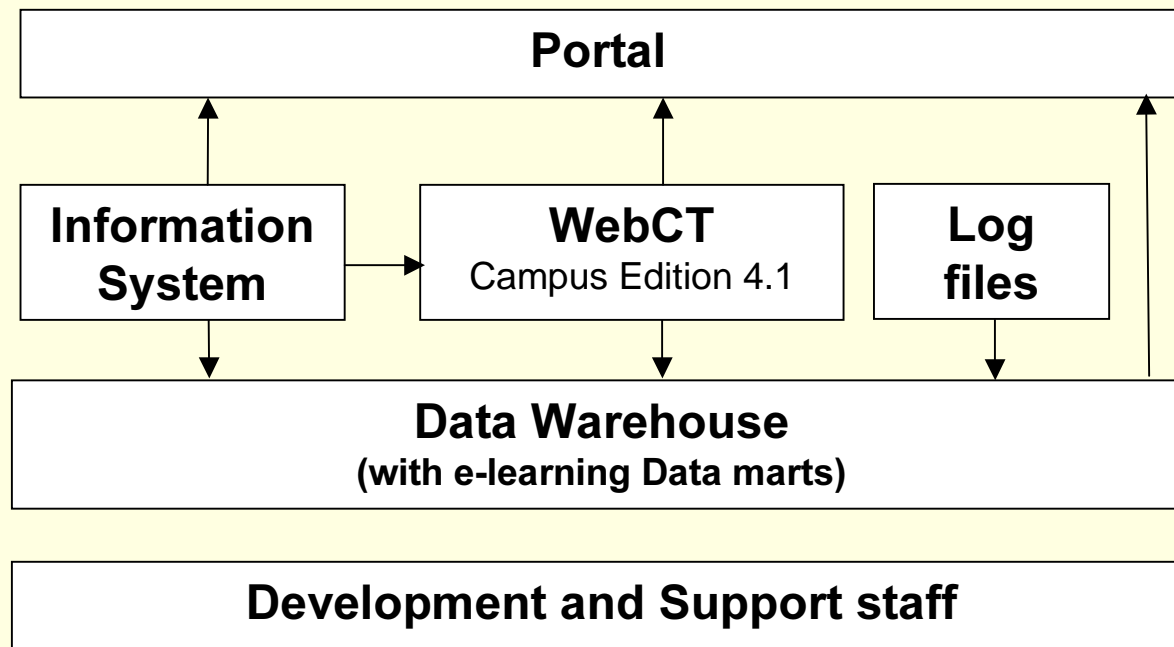
- => Professors and students involved are mostly satisfied with process and outcomes of e-learning
- => More than 100 professors expressed their will to participate in the e-learning initiative in the year 2003

E-University: Year, 2004 (*Outcomes*)

- **E- learning technical infrastructure was established**
- **University's Intellectual property policy was implemented and accepted by faculty members**
- **More than 300 faculties (35%) from all of 13 departments use approximately 400 e-courses to facilitate their face-to-face classes**
- **Public access is supported to parts of e-course developed from year 2004**
- **40 students at average used every of 220 e-courses in fall 2004 and every of 171 e-courses in spring 2005**
- **Top management and faculties continue to support e-learning initiative**

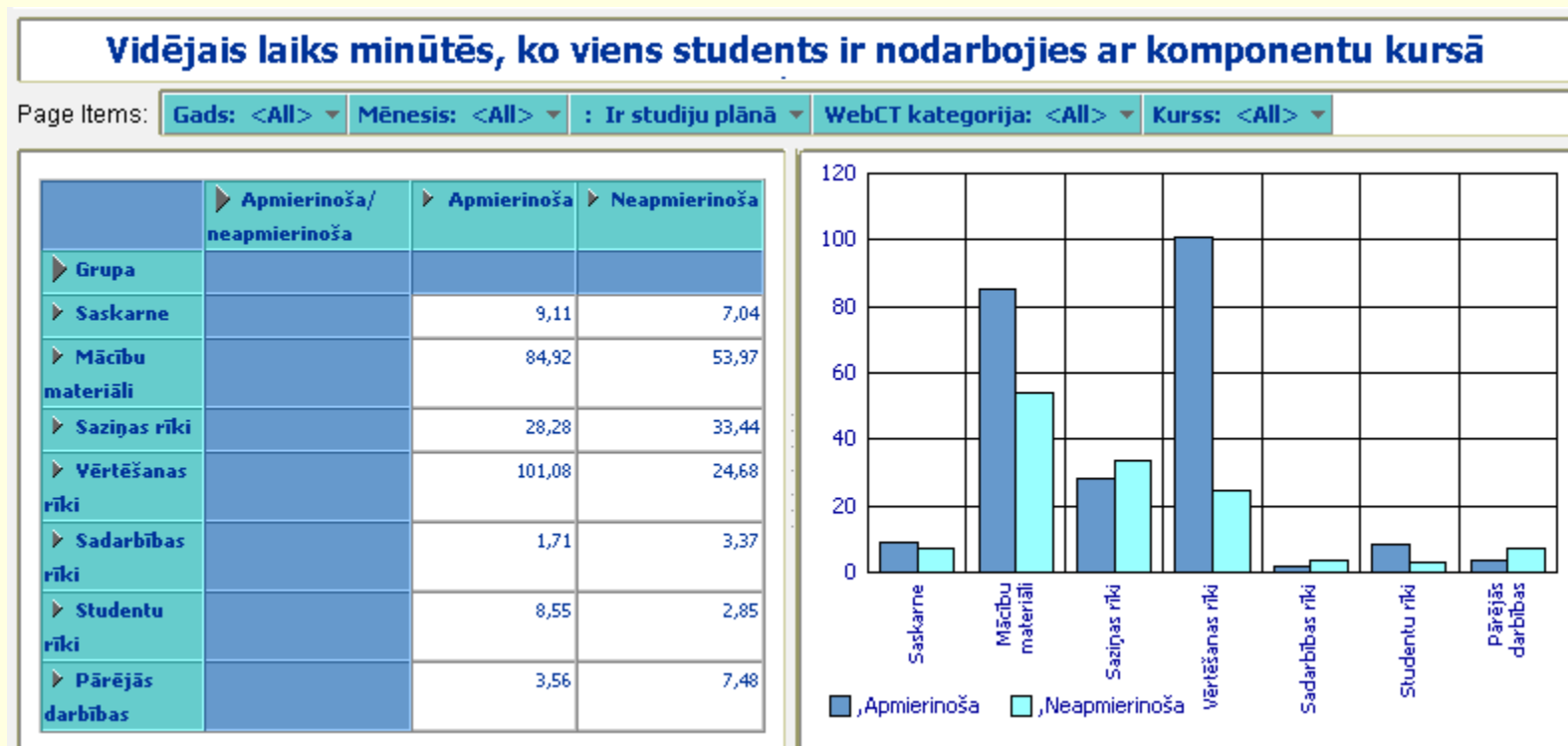
E-University: Year, 2004 (*Outcomes -cont'd.*)

- **E- learning technical infrastructure (Architecture):**



E-University: Year, 2004 (*Outcomes -cont'd.*)

■ E- learning technical infrastructure (Data Warehouse):



E-University: Next Stages (*Outcomes -cont'd.*)

■ E- learning technical infrastructure (Portal):

The screenshot displays a WebCT portal interface for the course "DatZ3023 : IT projektu vadība". The browser window title is "DatZ3023 : IT projektu vadība - WebCT 4.1.4 - Microsoft Internet Explorer". The address bar shows the URL: http://webct.lanet.lv/SCRIPT/2DAT3014/scripts/serve_home. The interface includes a navigation menu with options like "myWebCT", "Resume Course", "Course Map", "Check Browser", and "Log Out". A "Control Panel" is visible, and the main content area is titled "Homepage".

The main content area features several icons and links for course materials:

- Syllabus
- Course Content
- Assignment & Activities
- Communication Tools
- Student Tools
- Student presentations
- Student Homepages
- Eksāmena atzīmes
- Kalendārs

On the right side, there is a section titled "Mani e-kursi (WebCT)" listing various courses:

- Biol1107 : Vispārīgā bioloģija. Mikrobioloģijas pamati
- Biol1177 : Vispārīgā bioloģija. Ievads botānikā
- Biol1178 : Ievads Zooloģijā
- Biol2011 : Biometrija
- Biol2085 : Šūnu bioloģija
- Biol2089 : Botānika un Latvijas flora: ziedaugu sistemātika
- Biol3019 : Mikrobioloģija II
- Biol3122 : Mikroorganismu ģenētika
- Biol5212 : Biomedicīniskās optikas pamati I
- Biol6213 : Biomedicīniskās optikas pamati II
- BiolP138 : Mikrobioloģijas un biotehnoloģijas pasniegšanas metodika skolā
- DatZ1020 : Eksperimentālo datu datorapstrāde
- DatZ1024 : Datorsistēmu uzbūve un datortīkli I
- DatZ1024 : Datorsistēmu uzbūve un datortīkli I
- DatZ1033 : Ekonomikas informātika II
- DatZ1054 : Deklaratīvā programmēšana
- DatZ1056 : Datori un programmēšana I
- DatZ1058 : Datori un programmēšana II
- DatZ1060 : Ekonomikas informātika I

The bottom of the screenshot shows the Windows taskbar with the Start button, system tray, and active windows including "Helsinki", "Microsoft PowerPoint...", "LU portāls - Microsoft...", and "DatZ3023 : IT projekt...". The system clock shows 19:22 on 10/10/2004.

E-University: Lessons learned

- **E-learning ITT infrastructure is not the main challenge**
- **The main challenges are:**
 - => involvement and attitude of people (students and faculties)
 - => change of traditional teaching/learning strategies
- **The following issues are crucial:**
 - => the quick launch of the e-learning initiative
 - => political will and support of top management
 - => involvement, support and motivation of “pioneers” – faculty members all over the university

E-University: Next Steps

- **To continue work to provide e-learning sustainability**
- **To define and measure indicators of effectiveness and efficiency of e-learning**
- **To define legal and normative framework for e-learning at the University of Latvia**
- **To launch some pilot courses in distance mode**
- **To offer e-learning services for other educational institutions in Latvia**
- **To look for different forms of local and international co-operation**

E-University: Conclusion

**The e-world does not wait for tried and tested solutions;
nor must the e-university [6]**

More information:

<http://www.lu.lv/>

[6] Q.Thompson, K.Baker, A.Cromwell, P.Gist, R.Rhys, A.Wolfe. Business Model for the e-University, - Higher Education Funding Council of England, 2000.