

PREFACE TO THE PROCEEDINGS

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This is the eighteenth edition of the International Conference on Information, Communications Technologies in Education (ICICTE), and that number signifies that this conference has staying power... that its scientific excellence, its great networking capabilities, its (dare I say) legendary social calendar, all contribute towards it having been around for this long. Along the years ICICTE has gathered a core group of dedicated participants... the conference family... that have spurred it on into ever more excellent directions. And each new participant that it adds to its roll call quickly falls into place as one of the family – because it is one based on the need to explore, to know, to understand and, ultimately, to provide solutions.

And this is absolutely necessary in a day and age when technology has taken over so much of our daily existence. We eat, breathe and dream technology. It is no longer a peripheral part of society, but it has ingrained itself into the very foundations of existence. We cannot conceptualise a world without the dominating presence of technology, and therefore, how is it even remotely possible that technology not govern that most influential of all places: the hall of learning?

Though, let's admit it, "hall" has become very much a symbolic word, because the hall of learning can be online through distance education, potentially even as part of a MOOCs involving thousands of participants, or, on the other hand, that hall can be individual, a person alone with a mobile phone, absorbing information that interests him and that is accessed on the go... just as the whim strikes.

The second decade of the twenty-first century has been dominated by mobile technologies that make learning on the go a way of life for many, creating the classroom in someone's pocket, fuelling individual-independent learning, extending the educator's reach infinitesimally. Even though this particular educator might have been an unwitting one. Not a professional educator at all, but an individual who, nonetheless, educates through the facilities provided by omnipresent technology.

And where does this leave the physical "hall" of learning? Schools and brick and mortar universities have also embraced technology, though to varying degrees, as they cater for students shaped by the equipment with which they co-exist and from which they draw even procedural skills.

That is why conferences like ICICTE are so important, because they bring together scholars on the cutting edge of the technological advances that are ever present across education. They are the ones who innovate, who examine, who understand and who, yes, solve the problems that such a complex new society and the way it has transformed cognition brings with it.

These *Proceedings* clearly show the variety of experimentation and depth of understanding that our participants have undertaken. This collection of papers should prove to be

stimulating reading for all education professionals who go beyond the curricular routine and are willing to push the envelope in favour of innovation.

On behalf of the Steering Committee, it is my great pleasure to welcome all those attending this annual conference, be they presenters, workshop leaders, or participants. I would like to say that you are now part of the ICICTE tradition. This “family” conference contains a mixture of the scientific and social and this has proved to be a very successful base on which to build a friendship-based scholarship. It is also wonderful to be back in Chania, where we had a very successful conference in 2013. The conference had previously been in Crete in 2007, but that time it was held in Heraklion. The backdrop provided by wonderful Greek islands like Crete create the atmosphere necessary for disseminating knowledge in both plenary and social settings, creating a real community spirit that is at the heart of what this conference is to all its participants past and present. This is a “Greek” conference in that sense, though the community in it is vastly international, both on the organisational and on the participant sides.

ICICTE would not be even remotely feasible without the tireless work of the Conference Director, Nancy Pyrini, who deals not only with the indispensable logistics, but also is the face of the conference to our many delegates. Nancy is both the mind and heart of ICICTE. There would not be this annual get-together of friends without her.

These *Proceedings* are the result of a symbiotic process which involves the members of the Scientific Committee, ably led for many years by Dr Greg Anderson, and the editing work of Dr Linda Morris. The members of the Scientific Committee two-way blind review papers (though there are times when the review process goes through multiple phases), and Dr Morris scrupulously edits and formats the papers that are then produced by myself to form this assembled volume.

But there are a lot of people involved in the success story that ICICTE has become. Once again, this conference has been successfully organised by Solent University of the United Kingdom, represented by Dr Chris Barlow, who chairs the Steering Committee. This is done in collaboration with the Justice Institute of British Columbia, Canada, represented by Dr Anderson. We are also aided greatly by Dr Costas Tsolakidis of the University of the Aegean, George Sarrigeorgiou, and Marie Louise Kold, among others.

We sincerely hope you find these *Proceedings* illuminating, and if they are of use to you in ways that make you utilise what you read here in your own professional capacity, then we have succeeded. Please do contact any of the authors with whose work you find you share an affinity and make sure that you join us in the annual sojourn of creative, innovative scholarship that is ICICTE.