Highlight: Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE) 2012
UNESCO stresses teachers' role in maximizing the potential of ICT in education
For the past two years, the UNESCO Bangkok and Intel Cooperation co-organized Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forums on ICT in Education (AMFIE) for high-level officials to share challenges and updates on innovative ICT policy and practices. This year with cooperation of the Thai Ministry of Education, the 3rd Forum was held under the theme “The Power of ICT in Education Policies: Implications for Educational Practices” from 9-11 September 2012 in Bangkok.

AMFIE 2012 - Summary of the Forum
AMFIE 2012 comprised a series of presentations, seminars, and workshops, including sessions on The Power of ICT Policies, Smart Partnerships and Investment for Infrastructure, Teacher Competencies, and many more. The forum culminated in a ministerial-level dialogue between delegates from twenty nations across the Asia-Pacific region facilitated by UNESCO Bangkok Director Gwang-Jo Kim and Intel Vice President John Davies.

Perspectives from a Participant: AMFIE 2012
Raju Varanasi, Director of the New South Wales (NSW) Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre in Australia is writing about his experience as participant and speaker at AMFIE 2012.

News & Events
Teachers share innovative practices at UNESCO seminar
UNESCO Bangkok, British Council-East Asia, and SK Telecom recently co-organized the second run of the “Innovative ICT Practices in Teaching and Learning: A Regional Seminar” in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 9-11 October 2012. It served as the culminating activity of the three-year “Facilitating ICT-Pedagogy Integration Project” that aims to create an enabling environment for student-centred use of ICT by building stronger partnerships among teacher education institutions (TEIs) and schools using project-based learning and telecollaboration.

EFA crowdsourcing challenge prize winners
UNESCO, Nokia and the Pearson Foundation recently announced the six prize winners of the Education For All (EFA) Crowdsourcing Challenge for educational mobile applications. The EFA Crowdsourcing Challenge winners come from China, India (two prize-winners), Kenya, Switzerland, and the United States.

The WISE Awards honor world’s best initiatives in innovative education
The World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) announces six groundbreaking projects from around the world as Winners of the 2012 WISE Awards under the theme “Transforming Education”.

At UN-backed gathering, Asia-Pacific leaders urged to give region’s women more access to technology jobs
Asia-Pacific leaders attending a high-level United Nations-backed technology gathering heard a
call for an increased presence of women in the region’s media, information and communication technology (ICT), and communications industries.

A world map of Open Educational Resources initiatives: Can the global OER community design and build it together?
An online conversation – to explore whether the OER community worldwide could work together to design and build an OER world map – starting with institutional initiatives and basic information.

Digital divide closing, but still significant, says United Nations telecoms agency
The international ‘digital divide’ is closing as a steady fall in worldwide costs of telephone and broadband Internet services has enabled a number of developing countries to expand their access to information and communication technology (ICT), the United Nations telecoms agency says in a new report.

Programmes & Projects
Successful streak of “Hole-in-the-Wall” continues
The Hole-in-the-Wall had a burst of popularity in 2009 when CNN reported about how the project became the inspiration to the book and Oscar-winning movie “Slum Dog Millionaire”. Three years later, the project continues to show why it is such a hit as an innovative learning methodology.

Resources
Mobile learning and policies: Key issues to consider
A recent paper published by UNESCO entitled “Mobile Learning and Policies: Key Issues to Consider” seeks to help education leaders shape policy environments that are conducive to mobile learning. It examines strategies that can provide learners with cost-effective access to mobile technology as well as ways to ensure that this technology is used productively both inside and outside the classroom.

Technology teaching and learning: Research, experience, & global lessons learned
Globally, technology has been regarded as an instrument of school reform. This monograph examines educational technology initiatives in Lebanon, Jordan, the United Kingdom, and the United States over the past decade and draws lessons that can help nations moving forward with their own national educational technology initiatives.

Report on Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education for Persons with Disabilities
This publication provides a meaningful assessment of the status of access to ICTs for persons with disabilities and identifies both the good practices and the problems and pending needs
that require the most support. It also evinces the need to enhance access to ICTs and the duty for all societal stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, as well as international organizations, to work toward attaining this goal.

**Common sense media - providing trustworthy information in a world of media and technology**
Common sense media aims to provide trustworthy information on media resources, which children and families need in a world of media and technology.

**Physion - Physics simulation software**
Physion is a 2D Physics simulation software. It can be used to easily create a wide range of interactive physics simulations and educational experiments. Teachers may find it particularly useful since it can be used as a virtual physics laboratory through which they can demonstrate some basic physics concepts in the classroom.

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**Highlight: Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE) 2012**

**UNESCO stresses teachers’ role in maximizing use of ICT in education**

Opening the Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education 2012 in Bangkok, Thailand, Director-General of UNESCO, Ms. Irina Bokova quoted the great Thai poet and teacher Sunthorn Phu:

“With knowledge, you can stand on your own two feet,” Sunthorn Phu wrote.

Ms Bokova stressed this is the heart of all education - to build confidence in young women and men and allow them to stand on their own two feet. Information and communication technologies can and must serve this essential goal.

“We must ensure that information and communication technologies are accessible, that they bridge divides and favour inclusive education, that they draw on appropriate content, and that they support quality teaching. This requires effective capacity development and policy dialogue – this is why this annual forum is so important.”

For the past two years, the UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok and Intel Cooperation co-organized Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forums on ICT in Education (AMFIE) for policy makers to present challenges and updates on innovative policy making practices. This year with cooperation of the Thai Ministry of Education, the 3rd Forum was held under the theme “The Power of ICT in Education Policies: Implications for Educational Practices” from 9-11 September 2012 in Bangkok.
Delegates from 20 countries across the Asia Pacific Region including 15 on ministerial level, 36 senior officials and international experts attended the Forum.

Gwang-Jo Kim, Director of UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education said during his inaugural speech: “Information and communication technologies (ICT), if used wisely, can contribute to universal access to quality education in formal, non-formal and informal education settings across sectors. However, ICT in education only works when it is closely aligned with a clear national vision, explicit implementation strategies, feasible action plans and solid monitoring and evaluation.”

Each country has its own educational context and unique challenges. In Asia and the Pacific, the status of integrating ICT in education varies widely – from least developed countries where electricity supply in schools is scarce, to middle income countries where there is high demand for assistance in developing effective ICT policies, to high income countries where concerns relate to the rapidly increasing harmful effects due to over-supply of, and easy access to ICT.

At present China has been promoting equity, aiming to narrow the digital divide among regions and schools, while Malaysia and Indonesia have set focus on improving quality of education through teacher development.

Through the “One Tablet Computer per Child” project, Thailand has been supplying all Grade 1 primary students with a tablet computer in 2012, and distribution will be expanded to Grade 1 secondary students next year.

General Yuthasak Sasiprapha, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand said at the Forum that free WIFI is planned to be provided in future for every school and in many public areas.

“Currently, Thailand’s broadband network reaches only 33 percent of the total population. We aim to expand that coverage to 80 percent of population over the next three years, and to 95 percent of the population by the year 2020,” he said.

The Republic of Korea and Singapore have implemented comprehensive and evolving national technology strategies in education master plans.

Director-General of UNESCO Ms. Bokova, however, strongly emphasized the role of teachers to maximize the use of technology for better learning.

“Technology can be a powerful education multiplier, but we must know how to use it. It is not enough to install technology into classrooms – it must be integrated into learning. Nothing can substitute for a good teacher.

“It is not technology itself that empowers people - empowerment comes from skills and knowledge,” she said.
AMFIE 2012 - Summary of the Forum

By Seth Leighton, Vice President, Global Citizenship Programs, Cogita Education Initiatives

AMFIE 2012 comprised a series of presentations, seminars, and workshops, including sessions on The Power of ICT Policies, Smart Partnerships and Investment for Infrastructure, Teacher Competencies, School Innovation and Emerging Technologies, International Support for Transformation Education Policy, and the Importance of Data-informed Policy and Open EMIS. The forum culminated in a ministerial-level dialogue between delegates from twenty nations across the Asia-Pacific region facilitated by UNESCO Bangkok Director Gwang-Jo Kim and Intel Vice President John Davies.

Forum Themes

The following three themes were evidenced throughout AMFIE 2012 presentations, discussions, and meetings:

- **ICT-in-Education as a means to reduce societal inequities**
  
  Focusing ICT-in-education policies on underserved populations provides a mechanism to bridge both educational and digital divides that restrict opportunities for poor and rural students. The host Ministry of Education of Thailand displayed the recent One-Tablet PC Per Child program as a large-scale example. On the other hand, it was lively discussed and agreed among the participants that the provision of technology alone will not facilitate the deep structural changes necessary to achieve the EFA goals.
• **Translating ICT-in-Education Policies into Action**

Uniting the spread of communications technologies to the expansion of opportunities for a quality education in a coherent plan can place a society on the path to ‘knowledge creation’. Extending the discussion of ICT-in-Education to a broad-ranging societal transformation is critical to ensuring greater success of initiatives.

• **Training, Supporting, and Evaluating Teachers for ICT-in-Education**

While many ICT policies target students, competency frameworks for teachers are critical. Teachers must be provided with the resources to become digital workers and digital learners, utilizing the full range of tools at their disposal in the internet age.

**Outcomes**

Participants declared that the information shared during AMFIE 2012 has provided a spark for numerous initiatives, particularly in the policy development and teachers competencies. Many delegates mentioned a desire to replicate Singapore and to learn more about Thailand’s practices.

However, the main outcome of the AMFIE 2012 was the relationships formed between policymakers across the region. The potential for cross-regional collaboration on ICT-in-Education projects is greatly strengthened by forums of this kind.

**Evaluation results**

A post-forum survey was conducted immediately after the end of all the sessions. According to the findings, Delegates expressed strong aspiration to replicate some of the initiatives that had been presented and discussed during the Forum. These initiatives commonly identified by majority of delegates were the following three: teacher competency, ICT policy, experiences from other nations. A further analysis revealed that the country’s preference on the area of interest is dependent of its economic level, as shown in the table below.
Figure 1. Responses categorized by income level of country

Overall, low to middle-income economies (as categorized by the World Bank) sought general advice on developing ICT policy and improving teacher competency. These results demonstrate that the necessity of establishing basic conditions before moving to explorations of more advanced ICT usage in education. In contrast, high-income economies reported a desire to imitate specific models and practices from other states. With ICT policy already established, smaller ‘projects’ can be considered for their applicability to the overall vision.

What will come next?

- UNESCO Bangkok will soon release the formal AMFIE 2012 outcome document, detailing the various initiatives discussed and recommendations for policy, practice, and sharing.
- Intel and UNESCO have jointly offered an online ‘meeting space’ to allow AMFIE participants and will continue to support discussions and information sharing exercises through the online forum.

UNESCO Delhi is planning a sub-regional High-Level Meeting on ICT in Education for South Asia in the spring of 2013.

Access all presentations, pictures, resources:

- Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE)

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:
What do you think about this topic?

- UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

Perspectives from a Participant: AMFIE 2012
By Raju Varanasi, Director, New South Wales Curriculum and Learning Innovation Centre, Australia

I had the pleasure of being an invited panellist and a participant at the 2012 Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education in the Asia Pacific region held in Bangkok. It’s a great credit for UNESCO and Intel – the leading agencies behind the event – that as many as 20 nations attended and shared their insights in their respective journeys in educational development with a particular focus on ICT policies and their consequent impacts on social and economic development.

The most striking learning point for me was that all participating countries displayed a common baseline of approaches even amidst a great diversity of challenges in their local contexts. It’s the commonality that brings us together to share our perspectives and the diversity urges us to find more individualised solutions for each nation – for there is no single formula for attaining educational excellence or economic development.

Population size, geography, demography and the vast array of socio economic issues across the Asia-Pacific nations make a heady mix which is at once exciting and daunting. It was very impressive, and quite reassuring, to note that the Ministries of Education and their policy makers demonstrated not only a strong knowledge of their individual contexts but also showed deep understanding of the broader challenges facing all nations irrespective of their current achievements. The commitment and determination demonstrated by the delegates augurs well for the respective nations and for the entire region.

The highlights for me were the criticality of high level planning, focussed deployment and structured execution of policies and processes across school systems as evidenced from successes in Singapore, Portugal, Argentina and Turkey; the importance of using frameworks (there are many which are widely accepted) for implementation and knowing clearly where a nation is on its planned roadmap; the crucial link between ICT policies and overall economic development agenda; the necessity to invest in ICT infrastructure using policy levers such as
universal service funds; the power of partnerships with NGOs, industry and international agencies; and most importantly the vision and leadership from the national and provincial governments.

The role of ICTs in Education inevitably led to discussion on teacher preparation and professional development, teacher performance standards, teacher supply and demand, digital content and resources for system wide use, international performance benchmarking, integration of ICTs in pedagogy, 21st century learning, and school reforms.

My main takeaways from the forum are the knowledge ladder from Prof. Kozma; the 5E model of ICT usage from Crescent school, Singapore; the SABER-ICT initiative for policy makers from World Bank, and the large scale school ICT reform projects FATIH and Conectar Igualdad from Turkey and Argentina respectively. The final session on Ministerial dialogue – thanks to masterful facilitation - by Dr Gwang Jo-Kim of UNESCO and John Davies of Intel – synthesised the challenges and issues for all participants.

It was a great networking experience for me. I made contacts with a wide range of stakeholders in Education who I never met despite my 21 years in educational management. These include Ministers, departmental secretaries, policy advisors, programme leads, educational managers, technology experts, industry thought leaders, UN, ITU and World Bank representatives.

The forum aimed to provide a platform for sharing policy, experiences, good practices, and lessons learned from ICT in Education – and it has certainly achieved it – aided by a fine blend of Thai elegance and hospitality.

Access all presentations, pictures, resources:

- [Asia-Pacific Ministerial Forum on ICT in Education (AMFIE)]

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- [UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter]

What do you think about this topic?

- [Visit our on-line forum and share your views]
Teachers share innovative practices at UNESCO seminar

Teacher training initiatives are often limited to “one-time-only” workshops that lack follow-through activities to provide the teacher trainees with continuous guidance and models when they go back to their actual school settings.

In realization of the huge potentials of information and communications technology (ICT) in education, governments have poured huge investments on developing their respective ICT in Education plans and bringing ICT equipment and various tools into schools. Alongside these infrastructure investments came professional development programs for teachers. These programs equip them with knowledge and skills on the use of ICT to support pedagogy appropriately and meaningfully and to enhance the learning experiences among students.

The challenge is how to enable teachers not only to overcome the technology barriers but also to empower them to integrate appropriate technology into the learning process.

With this in mind, UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau for Education in Bangkok, British Council-East Asia, and SK Telecom recently co-organized the second run of the “Innovative ICT Practices in Teaching and Learning: A Regional Seminar” in Seoul, Republic of Korea on 9-11 October 2012. It served as the culminating activity of the three-year “Facilitating ICT-Pedagogy Integration Project” funded by Korean Funds-In-Trust that aims to create an enabling environment for student-centred use of ICT by building stronger partnerships among teacher education institutions (TEIs) and schools using project-based learning and telecollaboration.

“We believe in teachers’ capacity,” said UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau for Education Director, Gwang-Jo Kim in his opening remark of the Seminar. “There can be no quality education without competent and motivated teachers. Teachers are among the many factors that keep children in school and influence learning.”

The objectives of the seminar were to supplement knowledge and skills gained from past workshops by providing a platform for teachers, teacher educators, and school administrators to share and learn about the latest and innovative teaching and learning practices supported by ICT. The workshop also served as a venue for participants to build collaborative networks and carry on the discussions and partnerships initiated during the series of seminars.

Over 60 teachers, teacher educators, and school administrators from nine countries, Bangladesh, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Vietnam attended the Seminar. In addition, thirteen speakers from various international organizations and areas of expertise from Canada, China, Malaysia, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam were invited to present relevant topical ICT in education
programmes and projects. They shared valuable experiences and insights on project-based and collaborative learning as well as initiating and sustaining school-wide innovations and reforms. A number of participatory mini-workshops were also facilitated by ICT in Education key players in the region to showcase various approaches and methodologies that teachers can adopt in their classrooms.

Teacher participants were also invited to display and present the outputs of their innovative teaching and learning practices during an exhibition and poster session. This session, along with the “School Collaboration Corner” and a school visit to Hanyang University’s College of Education and Affiliate High School, provided participants with opportunities to gather ideas on potential integration of ICT into their classes as well as to explore and develop potential collaborative projects towards building a community of innovative teaching practices.

A Key Players’ Meeting was also convened as a side event during the Seminar, where UNESCO and regional partners shared their respective programmes and activities in the area of ICT in Education, hoping to leverage partnerships in providing the necessary support and models for new innovations towards promoting the quality of student learning.

UNESCO Bangkok has been providing technical support for teacher education institutions in various ways, such as through pre-service teacher curriculum development activities, in-service teacher capacity building workshops, education deans’ forums, distribution or publications and resources, and much more.

Under this three-year project, UNESCO trained 460 teachers and teacher educators from 150 schools and teacher education institutions in six countries across the region.

Access the presentations, resources, pictures:

- [Innovative ICT Practices in Teaching and Learning: A Regional Seminar](#)

Related links:

- [Creating a new culture of teaching and learning](#)
- [ICT-Supported Project-based Learning: the Myths and Truths](#)
- [UNESCO Bangkok is kicking off the KFIT International School Project (KISP)](#)
- [Successful series of project based learning (PBL) and telecollaboration workshops continued in Bangladesh](#)
- [Project-Based Learning and Telecollaboration enhances teachers’ confidence in Bangladesh](#)
- [UNESCO Bangkok supports Thailand’s second decade of education reform using project-based learning and ICT](#)
• **Capacity Building Workshop on Project-Based Learning and Telecollaboration**, Chonburi (Thailand)
• **UNESCO launched project-based learning and telecollaboration in Chinese schools**

**Previous issues of the e-newsletter:**

• [UNESCO "ICT in Education” Announcement e-newsletter](#)

**What do you think about this topic?**

• [Visit our on-line forum and share your views](#)

**EFA crowdsourcing challenge prize winners**

UNESCO, Nokia and the Pearson Foundation recently announced the six prize winners of the Education For All (EFA) Crowdsourcing Challenge for educational mobile applications. The selection was made on the recommendation of an international jury, which met on the 28th of August 2012.

The EFA [Crowdsourcing Challenge](#) winners come from China, India (two prize-winners), Kenya, Switzerland, and the United States. They will each receive a prize of US$3,000, offered by the Pearson Foundation. The Foundation will also donate a library of children’s books, worth a further US$3,000, to a not-for-profit organization in the country of each laureate.

The prize winner for application ideas concerning literacy was Test On Texts by Sanjith Yeruva (United States), a mobile application that helps students assess their knowledge via text questions and suggests content in an intuitive manner. This easily implemented idea has social and education potential for a wide range of groups.

The prize winner for Universal Primary Education applications was I-Learn by Swaroop John (India). I-Learn encourages picture-based learning to complement radio broadcasts. The concept of combining radio with mobile technology has enormous potential and can be very powerful.

In the Youth and Adult Learning Needs category, Education Time Bank by Eric Kotonya (Kenya) was selected. The application encourages teens and adults to learn in personalized, interactive short sessions on highly-specialized topics. The proposed app lets anyone credit their account by providing live training through IM or video chat, and later use these credits to purchase training on other topics from community members.
The Quality of Education winner is Start "Mission for the week" programme by Harkirat Singh (India). This mobile application provides teachers with a new mission every week, so that their way of teaching, understanding and helping students gives the best results. An Honorable Mention was awarded to Mobile Education Framework by Simon Botes (South Africa). Mobile Education Framework is a cross platform framework and interactive mobile forum for the distribution of quality mobile educational content.

Mobile Partners in Education by Laura Blackheart (United States) was selected in the Gender Parity and Equality in Education challenge. The application pairs up girls in disadvantaged communities with an advantaged classroom (across the globe or close to home) with mobile technology. A girl who does not have the opportunity to access a good education can join her sponsor class through a mobile device via voice, video, text, and app.

In the Early Childhood Care and Education category, Health Phone by Nand Wadhwani (China) was selected. Health Phone provides information for women to help them make healthy decisions for themselves and their families. Content includes information on nutrition, childhood diseases, pregnancy, childbirth, the first year of life, child survival, growth, learning, development and protection, and women empowerment. Videos, audio recordings, images, and text messages will be produced and delivered to families via mobile phones.

In addition to the grand prizes, Nokia offered six “spot prizes” consisting of a Nokia Lumia 800 phone to the best ideas received during the competition.

Close to one thousand submissions were received in the competition for ideas on how mobile communication can help achieve EFA goals. From 10 October 2011 to 31 May 2012, education experts, teachers, parents, students, software developers and anyone else wanting to participate posted ideas on the platform hosted by Nokia. Each month featured a sub-challenge focusing on one of the six EFA goals.

Further information:

- EFA crowdsourcing challenge prize winners

Related links:

- Inviting public input on the UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Mobile Learning
- UNESCO leads discussion on mobile learning at WSIS Forum
- UNESCO and NOKIA held workshop on mobile technologies for teachers
- Mobile Science Project: Engaging students in science through mobile learning
Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?

- Visit our on-line forum and share your views

The WISE Awards honor world’s best initiatives in innovative education

The World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE) announces six groundbreaking projects from around the world as Winners of the 2012 WISE Awards under the theme “Transforming Education”.

Now in their fourth year, the WISE Awards identify, showcase and promote innovative educational projects from all sectors and regions of the world in order to inspire change in education. Winning projects, which are selected for their concrete, positive impact upon society, receive global visibility and a prize of $20,000 (U.S.).

Hailing from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Chile, Denmark, India and the United States of America, the winning initiatives were selected by a Jury of leading education experts following a pre-selection of 24 WISE Awards finalists from 14 countries. Winning projects have been selected for their tangible, positive impact upon society and their innovative approach to solving important global problems.

“Since 2009, the WISE Awards have recognized successful, transformative projects in education in order to generate a pool of sound practices and to inspire their adoption and adaptation elsewhere,” said H.E. Sheikh Abdulla bin Ali Al-Thani, Ph.D., Chairman of WISE and Chairman of the WISE Awards Jury. “When determining the best projects, we look at what is being achieved as well as how it is done. The winning initiatives were selected because they are successful, but also because of their innovative approach. These are not ordinary education efforts.”

The diverse projects offer unique solutions to today’s most important challenges, from poverty to climate change. Solutions include unconventional business models to assist low-income families with affordable education, as well as original ways of bringing high-quality education to remote and destitute parts of the world.
“It is truly an honor for our project to be recognized as a WISE Awards winner, particularly because WISE’s mission is a reflection of our own: transforming education through innovation and purposeful action,” said Father John P. Foley, Chair Emeritus of Cristo Rey Network, an organization that supports high-school students from low-income families. “We have seen the successful results of our efforts in the US and we are eager to expand our education model globally. With the recognition that being a WISE Awards winner brings to our project, the ability to explore other markets that could benefit from the Cristo Rey Network model is much greater.”

This year one of the WISE Awards is for a project that, in addition to “Transforming Education”, has best provided innovative financing of primary education. The winning project comes from Bangladesh, where solar-powered floating schools ensure year-round primary education to students in flood-prone areas, even during the height of the monsoon period.

This emphasis on primary education reflects the support of Qatar Foundation Chairperson Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser for United Nations Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 2 on achieving universal primary education. The WISE focus in 2012 on an innovative financing project is designed to stimulate efforts worldwide to reach MDG 2.

Finalists and Winners of the WISE Awards will participate in the annual WISE Summit taking place November 13 - 15 at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha, Qatar, under the theme “Collaborating for Change”.

**About the 2012 WISE Awards Winning Education Initiatives:**

**Cristo Rey Network Corporate Work Study Program, United States of America** - Launched in 1996, the Cristo Rey Network gives low-income students access to the high-quality instruction and support they need to be college-ready by the end of high school. Students work five days per month in an entry-level job in a white collar company and the fee for their work is used to underwrite tuition costs. The Corporate Work Study Program gives students knowledge and skills to succeed at college and in the modern workplace, as well as hope of a secure and prosperous future. In the 2011-12 school year, students earned $37 million towards their education. The Cristo Rey Network consists of 25 college preparatory high schools across the USA, serving 7,400 students, and it partners with 1,700 companies.

**PSU Educarchile, Chile** - PSU Educarchile, created in 2006, is the first free, interactive, online college preparation program in Chile. It prepares young people to take the obligatory University Admission Test (PSU - Prueba de Selección Universitaria), combining the delivery of essential content with a flexible and interactive digital platform. Historically, preparation for the PSU test has been through face-to-face classes in a physical, paid facility. Every year PSU Educarchile reaches 1,200,000 students – many of them from low-income backgrounds and in remote areas - through websites and mobile phones. This has narrowed the socio-economic and geographical opportunity gap, and decentralized and improved the quality of Chilean
education. The project is supported by national and regional governments, and by the country’s main telephone companies and communications media.

**RoboBraille, Denmark** - RoboBraille converts textual educational materials into formats such as Braille, mp3 files, structured audio books, e-books and visual Braille for the blind and partially sighted, people with dyslexia or poor reading skills, and the illiterate. It is an e-mail and web-based service that is available free of charge to non-commercial users and without registration requirements. Alternative format texts are time-consuming and costly to produce, and expensive to obtain for people with special needs. Created in 2004, RoboBraille currently serves between 1,000 and 2,000 daily user requests all over the world in several European languages and in Arabic.

**Satya Bharti School Program, India** - The Satya Bharti School Program provides high-quality “end-to-end” education, free of charge, to underprivileged children, particularly girls, in rural India. It was launched by the Bharti Foundation in 2006 and partners with state governments to complement the nation’s education agenda. It has impacted more than 62,000 children, almost half of them girls, in the last six years and currently reaches over 37,500 children in 750 host and neighboring villages, the majority from minority communities.

**Solar-Powered Floating Schools, Bangladesh** (WISE Awards Winner for innovative financing of primary education) - The non-profit organization Shidhulai Swanirvar Sangstha introduced solar-powered floating schools to ensure children’s education even during the height of the monsoon. The boats collect students from riverside villages, dock at a final destination and provide on-board small-group instruction. After class, the boats take students back to their homes and then go on to pick up other groups. Each boat school has a classroom for 30 students, an Internet-linked laptop, a library and electronic resources, and provides basic primary education up to grade IV. The solar lighting makes the school schedule flexible, and after school many students take home a re-charged solar lantern to study by. Parents and villagers receive on-board training on children’s and women’s rights, nutrition, health and hygiene, sustainable farming, marketing systems and climate-change adaptation. Almost 70,000 children have benefited since the start of the project in 2002. The project is funded from multiple sources, including crops, fisheries and the conversion of kerosene lanterns into solar-powered lanterns.

**Cambodian Children’s Fund – Generational Change through Education, Cambodia** - Since 2004, the Cambodian Children’s Fund (CCF) has helped children who reside and work in the Steung Meanchey landfill district, one of the most impoverished and environmentally toxic places in the world, in the outskirts of Phnom Penh. CCF has changed the lives of more than 1,000 families by focusing on education as a primary, basic need. It provides access to clean water, food, healthcare and education, and it cares for children and their families in four residential schools, three satellite schools, a community medical center, a daycare center, a nursery, a maternal care program and outreach programs. CCF’s residential schools offer safe accommodation, healthcare, hot meals, vitamins, and accelerated learning opportunities to nearly 450 children aged 6 to 18. *Source: Wise-Qatar*
Further information:

- The WISE Awards honor world’s best initiatives in innovative education

Related links:

- The WISE Awards - Recognizing innovative and transformative projects

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter

What do you think about this topic?

- Visit our on-line forum and share your views

At UN-backed gathering, Asia-Pacific leaders urged to give region’s women more access to technology jobs

Asia-Pacific leaders attending a high-level United Nations-backed technology gathering heard a call for an increased presence of women in the region’s media, information and communication technology (ICT), and communications industries.

The two-day ‘Women with the Wave’ forum in Seoul, Republic of Korea, urged media industry leaders, governments and international organizations to “work harder to promote greater female representation” in industry workplaces and on the airwaves, according to a joint news release today from the UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Asia Broadcasting Union (ABU), a non-profit, non-government, professional association that aims to advance broadcasting in the region.
The gathering identified the need for a “gender-inclusive” environment in all occupational groups to encourage women and girls to seek on- and off-screen communications and technology jobs, the release said.

The forum also called for women to be given greater access to technological and digital platforms, and argued for a positive, non-stereotypical and balanced portrayal of women and girls across all forms of media and technological platforms.

US actress Geena Davis, who was recently appointed ITU’s Special Envoy for Women and Girls, set the tone for the gathering’s final statement with her endorsement of its aims in her keynote address on the first day of the 10-11 October conference.

“The time for change is now, and all of you in this room are powerful agents of change,” said the Oscar-winning actress. “I’d like to applaud Asian broadcasters, filmmakers, Internet stakeholders, academics and others in taking the lead to change the image of women and girls in ICTs.”

Referring to the televised dramas of the Republic of Korea, and India’s Hindi-language film industry, Ms. Davis added, “From Korea’s famous K-dramas to Bollywood musicals, we need the characters that will inspire tomorrow’s tech-centred professionals.”

ITU’s Secretary-General, Dr. Hamadoun I. Touré, highlighted the agency’s commitment to harnessing ICTs to empower women, citing various initiatives, including ITU’s ‘Tech Needs Girls’ campaign and the new annual ‘Tech Needs Girls Prize,’ which targets girls aged 9-18 “at the time when they are forming opinions and making career choices.”

“Together, the campaign and prize aim to help them see a connection between tech and their daily lives, gain confidence in their skills and find fun in ICT,” Dr. Touré said. He also spoke of the agency’s ‘Girls in ICT Portal,’ saying the “comprehensive, multilingual” site “highlights tech scholarships, training opportunities and mentorship programmes for girls and women around the world.”

Delegates identified ITU, the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia-Pacific (ESCAP), UNESCO and UN Women among international organizations in a position to help advance the forum’s goals as their final statement called on “all who can assist to recognize the digital wave now sweeping the world and to join us in supporting the preparation of women and girls for the opportunities and benefits which the knowledge society is now bringing to families worldwide.”

The forum was one of several events ahead of the 49th ABU General Assembly in the Republic of Korean capital, Seoul.
It concluded as ITU announced from Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, two new initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable development by harnessing smart ICT, in particular mobile broadband.

The initiatives – m-Powering Development and Smart Sustainable Development Model – were launched on the Saving Lives Platform at ITU Telecom World 2012 in Dubai.

M-Powering Development seeks to act as a catalyst to achieve sustainability, according to an ITU press release. The Smart Sustainable Development Model seeks to demonstrate that linking ICT for Development with ICT for Disaster Management leads to “increased sustainable development and optimal resource use without additional financial investment,” according to ITU.

“In a world increasingly threatened by natural disasters brought on by global climate change, we have to seize the opportunities available to us through smart, cutting edge technologies to swing the tide towards achieving sustainable development,” said Dr. Touré. “The deployment of mobile broadband goes beyond merely making a phone call; it brings about a paradigm shift in social and economic empowerment and development. It is truly m-Powering!”

Global roll out of the initiatives, which will be steered by ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau, is expected by April 2014. **Source: UN**

**Further information:**

- [At UN-backed gathering, Asia-Pacific leaders urged to give region’s women more access to technology jobs](#)

**Related links:**

- [Korea promotes e-learning system for women’s career development](#)
- [UN debate stresses need to break down barriers for girls in technology-related careers](#)
- [Twenty eight European companies make a commitment to bring more women into technology industries](#)
- [The dangers and opportunities of girls in cyberspace](#)
- [ICT gender gap: stereotyped thinking continues to impact females’ choice for tech careers](#)
- [Gender differences in teacher computer acceptance](#)
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A world map of Open Educational Resources initiatives: Can the global OER community design and build it together?

*First, an International discussion*
12 – 30 November 2012

*Next, local discussions – organized locally*

An international online conversation – The objective is to explore whether the OER community worldwide could work together to design and build an OER world map – starting with institutional initiatives and basic information.

A definition – Open Educational Resources are teaching, learning, and research resources that reside in the public domain or have been released under an intellectual property license that permits their free use and re-purposing by others. They may be full courses or course materials, modules, textbooks, streaming videos, tests, software, and any other tools, materials, or techniques used to support access to knowledge (William and Flora Hewlett Foundation).

Now a decade of development – a global movement with more and more OER initiatives, in more and more countries. The vision of increasing access to the world’s knowledge through making resources open and accessible is beginning to be realized.

But we still have a problem – we do not have a comprehensive overview of OER projects in the world – how do I know what is going on in my own country? And how do I find contacts in other countries, or contacts working in my own language?
An OER world map – A map would give us the big picture of the global OER movement. It would help us communicate the story of OER. Furthermore, it could be enhanced with information such as OER initiatives by language, and with links to other maps. And it would help us connect.

Community collaboration – Working together the OER community could design and build the map, and then regularly update it. With time, energy and collaboration, the map could become a door to the OER world, helping us communicate with stakeholders and connect with each other.

Outline of the international discussion

**Week 1: What could an OER world map look like?**
12-16 November

- Why map the OER landscape
- Essential information and visual presentation

**Week 2: Could a world map be built collaboratively?**
19-23 November

- Organizational approach for collaboration
- Ensuring the quality of the information

**Week 3: Reflection and next steps**
26-30 November

- Design of an “OER World Map”
- Organization
- Resources available/needed
- Next steps

Join the international conversation

Send an email to oer-community-request@athabascau.ca and type subscribe in the subject line
Digital divide closing, but still significant, says United Nations telecoms agency

The international ‘digital divide’ is closing as a steady fall in worldwide costs of telephone and broadband Internet services has enabled a number of developing countries to expand their access to information and communication technology (ICT), the United Nations telecoms agency says in a new report.

Measuring the Information Society 2012, produced by the UN International Telecommunication Union (ITU), says that developing countries now account for the “lion’s share” of market growth in the mobile sector, according to an ITU press release detailing the report.

The report also shows that the ICT sector has not only become a major contributor to economic growth, but is especially so in developing countries, where global exports of ICT goods accounted for 20 per cent of their merchandise trade in 2010, compared to 12 per cent worldwide.

“While prices in developed economies have stabilized, those in developing countries continue to fall at double-digit rates,” ITU stated in a news release on the report.

But, ITU said, the digital divide – generally defined as the difference in levels of ICT access between developed and developing countries – remains significant.

Developed countries register average “connectivity” values that are twice that of their developing counterparts on the Geneva-based agency’s ICT Development Index (IDI), according to the ITU report, which adds that policy makers should pay “keen attention” to the plight of a group of so-called ‘Least Connected Countries’ that the index identifies as having the lowest connectivity rates.

“The past year has seen continued and almost universal growth in ICT uptake,” said Brahima Sanou, the Director of ITU’s Telecommunication Development Bureau, which authors the annual report. “The surge in numbers of mobile-broadband subscriptions in developing countries has brought the Internet to a multitude of new users.”
She added, “Despite the downward trend, prices remain relatively high in many low-income countries. For mobile broadband to replicate the mobile-cellular miracle and bring more people from developing countries online, 3G network coverage has to be extended and prices have to go down even further.”

Commenting on the report, ITU’s Secretary-General, Hamadoun I. Touré, called it the “annual industry benchmark for technology development.” He said the agency’s reputation as a “wholly impartial and reliable source” renders it the “most comprehensive statistical and analytical report on the shape of ICT markets worldwide.”

The report shows that the Republic of Korea remained the world’s most advanced ICT economy as determined by the IDI, which ranks 155 countries according to their levels of ICT access, use and skills, and takes account of 2011 and 2010 scores.

The next four countries – Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland – were also unchanged from the year before, while the United Kingdom, which moved from 14th place in 2011 to ninth in 2012, was the only new arrival in the top ten.

European countries also filled eight of the top ten spots, with Japan, ranking eighth, as the only non-European country at that level besides top-placed Republic of Korea. All the top 30 were high-income countries, which, ITU said, underlined the “strong link between income and ICT progress.”

ITU noted the report’s findings also include that countries marking the most progress in terms of ICT development were mostly in the developing world. It cites “strong performers” as including Bahrain, Brazil, Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda and Saudi Arabia.

“Mobile-cellular subscriptions registered continuous double-digit growth in developing country markets, for a global total of six billion mobile subscriptions by end 2011,” ITU said, noting that China and India each account for around one billion subscriptions.

“Mobile broadband continues to be the ICT service displaying the sharpest growth rates,” ITU added. “Over the past year, growth in mobile-broadband services continued at 40 per cent globally and 78 per cent in developing countries. There are now twice as many mobile-broadband subscriptions as fixed-broadband subscriptions worldwide.”

The increase in developing world connectivity rates has taken place alongside a rise in the affordability of telecommunication and Internet services.

“The price of ICT services dropped by 30 per cent globally between 2008 and 2011, with the biggest decrease in fixed-broadband Internet services, where average prices have come down by 75 per cent,” ITU said.
Still, ITU highlighted that fixed-broadband services remained “too expensive” in most developing countries, explaining that the price of a basic, monthly fixed-broadband package represented more than 40 per cent of monthly gross national income per capita at the end of 2011, compared to 1.7 per cent in developed economies. *Source: UN*

Further information:

- [Digital divide closing, but still significant, says United Nations telecoms agency](#)

Related links:

- [United Nations’ regional ICT capacity development hub celebrates 6th anniversary with commitment to strengthen capacity building partnerships and knowledge sharing](#)
- [Rio+20 recognizes essential role of ICT and broadband networks as catalyst for sustainable development](#)
- [An update on the use of e-readers in Africa](#)

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- [UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter](#)

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Programmes & Projects

Successful streak of “Hole-in-the-Wall” continues

The Hole-in-the-Wall had a burst of popularity in 2009 when CNN reported about how the project became the inspiration to the book and Oscar-winning movie “Slum Dog Millionaire”. Three years later, the project continues to show why it is such a hit as an innovative learning methodology.
The concept of Hole-in-the-Wall came from NIIT’s Chief Scientist, Dr. Sugata Mitra. Toying with the idea of unsupervised learning and computers back in the eighties, he and his NIIT team set up a freely accessible computer to children by literally carving a hole in the wall that separates the NIIT campus and a slum area in New Delhi. Through this experiment, it became evident that children – with no prior experience – are able to learn how to use the computer on their own. Successful experiments in other communities in India further proved Dr. Mitra’s hypothesis and idea of “Minimally Invasive Education”. The organization Hole-in-the-Wall Limited (HiWEL) was set up by NIIT and International Finance Corporation to conduct further research and to “bridge the digital divide of the underprivileged children in the age range 8-14 years”; to achieve these objectives, HiWEL expanded its coverage and set up similar hole-in-the-wall learning stations across India - and beyond.

Africa became the next destination of the Hole-in-the-Wall, as the Republic of Central Africa (RCA) whole-heartedly received a couple of learning stations from the Indian Government, which were set up in its capital (Bangui). What’s more, the learning stations uses clean energy and runs on solar power. RCA is the ninth country in Africa to have hole-in-the-wall computers.

Bhutan is one of the more recent venues for the project; earlier in the year, the government partnered with HiWEL in order to set up 130 stations across the country. The task of bringing the project to Bhutan’s difficult terrain and scattered population may be daunting, but the partners are determined to cover twenty districts – Dzongkhags –including Bhutan’s rural and underdeveloped areas. Additionally, the initiative does not begin and end with just providing the equipment; localized e-learning content and interface software is also being provided by Bhutan’s Education Department. HiWEL and the Bhutan Board of Education are also developing a set of impact assessment instruments for the project.

Other educational institutions have followed on Dr. Mitra and NIIT’s lead and built on their initial findings. One such example is the Vera Chiluba Basic School in Mozambique, where researchers found evidence of peer modeling. As children form a crowd in front of a “hole-in-the-wall” station, learning is not limited to the child immediately using the computer. Instead, the skills are being passed on to the other kids through the interaction that takes place. Having multiple users in front of the computer at one time also has its drawbacks, as they observed that the boys would not want to give the girls a turn and are hence left out. To address this, the school set ups a schedule so the boys and girls can use the computer alternately.

Through innovation of a simple yet effective concept of a project, children from various parts of the world are not the only ones who are benefiting from the Hole-in-the-Wall. The Hole-in-the-Wall project has also grown to the extent that learning stations for women were set up in India. The Indian Social Welfare Department worked with the state government of Kerala to bring the project to Mahila Mahindran, which are observation homes for widows, divorced, deserted and destitute women. Customized programs suitable to the interests of the women have been prepared (e.g. vocational activities such as jewelry making, carpet weaving). More importantly,
the women are slowly but surely gaining back their confidence as they are provided a platform to learn basic IT skills and self-expression through the Hole-in-the-Wall.

Sources:

Further information:
- [Hole-in-the-Wall website](http://www.hole-in-the-wall.com/index.html)

Related links:
- [Low-cost audio computer helps NGO in its development work](http://example.com)
- [Community Multimedia Centres: Empowering marginalized communities in Nepal](http://example.com)
- [ICT in Education for Rural Development (iERD) project launched](http://example.com)
- [Mobile Science Project: Engaging students in science through mobile learning](http://example.com)
- [Connected Community Learning Centres](http://example.com)

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:
- [UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter](http://example.com)

What do you think about this topic?
- [Visit our on-line forum and share your views](http://example.com)

Resources

New publication: Mobile Learning and Policies: Key Issues to Consider

Today there are over 5.9 billion mobile phone subscriptions worldwide, and for every one person who accesses the internet from a computer, two do so from a mobile device. Sound
educational policies can help ensure these omnipresent technologies improve and facilitate learning, particularly in communities where educational opportunities are scarce.

A recent paper published by UNESCO entitled “Mobile Learning and Policies: Key Issues to Consider” seeks to help education leaders shape policy environments that are conducive to mobile learning. It examines strategies that can provide learners with cost-effective access to mobile technology as well as ways to ensure that this technology is used productively both inside and outside the classroom. Dedicated chapters illustrate how policy decisions can foster the development of mobile content that is relevant to local populations, facilitate the growth of mobile infrastructures, and ensure that new technology investments complement existing educational investments. The paper openly addresses the challenges specific to mobile learning and provides straightforward advice on how to navigate issues related to safety, cost and the sustainability of programmes.

The newly published paper is an important contribution to the larger UNESCO Working Paper Series on Mobile Learning, which seek to ensure that mobile technologies are put to good use for making learning more accessible, equitable and flexible for students everywhere.

Further information:

- Mobile Learning and Policies: Key Issues to Consider (pdf)

Related links:

- Inspiring the young Thais via SMS
- UNESCO leads discussion on mobile learning at WSIS Forum
- New UNESCO paper on mobile learning: Global themes
- UNESCO joins hands with NOKIA for Mobile Education Program
- UNESCO Mobile Learning Week produces tangible results
- First UNESCO Mobile Learning Week
- Mobile learning and life skills
- Driving female literacy through connectivity in Pakistan
- From Illiteracy to mCommunity, Jokko Initiative Empowers Women with mLearning
- The impact of a mobile phone literacy program on educational outcomes
- Mobiles and internet improve the livelihoods of the poorest
- Africa: Mobile phones revolutionizing education
- Mobile learning: Transforming the delivery of education and training
- UNESCO to help community media with mobile content production
- Mobile phones make literacy real
- Mobile learning: Small devices, big Issues
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Report on using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education for persons with disabilities

The “Report on Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education for Persons with Disabilities” is the outgrowth of a joint initiative by UNESCO and the Trust for the Americas. It consisted of a significant study, country by country in South America, Central America, Mexico and the Caribbean, elucidating achievements and shortfalls, while demonstrating that democratizing free access to ICTs for persons with disabilities in the field of education is an attainable goal.

As a result, this publication provides us with a meaningful assessment of the status of access to ICTs for such persons and identifies both the good practices and the problems and pending needs that require the most support. It also evinces the need to enhance access to ICTs and the duty for all societal stakeholders, both governmental and non-governmental, as well as international organizations, to work toward attaining this goal.

UNESCO and the Trust for the Americas hope that this report will be a reference work for planning future projects and adopting public policies aiming for inclusion and free access to ICTs for persons with disabilities.

Further information:

- Report on Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education for Persons with Disabilities - pdf

Related links:
• UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities
• Interactive session on ICT and persons with disabilities
• UNESCO and G3ict sign a partnership on ICT for persons with disabilities
• Access to technology for people with disabilities focus of UN Asia-Pacific forum

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Technology teaching and learning: Research, experience & global lessons learned

This monograph written by Mary Burns examines educational technology initiatives in Lebanon, Jordan, the United Kingdom and the United States over the past decade and draws lessons that can help nations moving forward with their own national educational technology initiatives. The author focuses on lessons learned to help nations move forward with their national educational technology initiatives.

Further information:

• Report on Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Education for Persons with Disabilities - pdf

Related links:

• UNESCO publishes report on ICT for persons with disabilities
• Interactive session on ICT and persons with disabilities
• UNESCO and G3ict sign a partnership on ICT for persons with disabilities
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Common Sense media - providing trustworthy information in a world of media and technology

Common Sense Media is a non-for-profit organization, which provides trustworthy information, education, and independent voice for children in a world of media and technology. By providing trustworthy information the project tries to give positive impact to children through media and digital activities which are essential daily life skill for them.

Media literacy in this era is very important, because it can be an infinite opportunity of learning for students, but there are well-known negative threats such as internet addiction or computer misuse. Furthermore, there is an abundance of media available for consumption such as videos, computer games or movies that can be easily accessed in the digital era by children. For parents and children it is often not easy to pick resources that have quality content and are don’t harm the wellbeing of the children.

By using the rich pool of reviewed and handpicked media resources provided on the website, kids, parents and educators can be positively affected by these contents. First of all, kids can enjoy learning while engaging with well-designed video clips, apps, and other learning tools. Parents can share on the platform some ideas on how deal with media, such as making rules and selecting topics for children. For Educators, participating in the Common Sense Media Digital Literacy and Citizenship Programmes may help them to deliver better media literacy training that guides children to live smart and safe digital lives.

**Further information:**

- [Common Sense Media](#)

**Related links:**

- [From search to research: Developing critical thinking through web research skills](#)
UNESCO and University of Pretoria collaborate to improve information literacy of teachers

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Physion - Physics simulation software

Physion is a 2D Physics simulation software. It can be used to easily create a wide range of interactive physics simulations and educational experiments. Teachers may find it particularly useful since it can be used as a virtual physics laboratory through which they can demonstrate some basic physics concepts in the classroom.

The user, using the tools of Physion, can create various physical objects (circles, polygons, gears, etc.) and joints (e.g. springs, pulleys etc.) that obey the laws of physics. This way user can experiment by creating various scenes/scenarios which can be either simple physics experiments or complex structures/mechanisms.

Users can choose among a variety of readymade scenarios that are pre-installed in the software or can be downloaded through the internet. For instance, a scenario simulating a crash test dummy, similar with safety tests usually executed by car manufacture companies, can help users to understand and experiment physics in an interactive way.

The software is available for Windows and Linux and is free of charge.

Further information:

- Physion
Related links:

- UNESCO Bangkok Teacher Training Series
- The place of computer games in education – Potential and possible repercussions
- Practical use of animations in teacher training
- Immune attack: Biology class in videogame form

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