
How successful is Swiss Virtual Campus?

Benchmarking with other national
programs

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Survey of national programs

Swiss Virtual Campus

- All universities members
- Funding through bidding
- Cost-sharing
- Original aim of sustainability
- International from first (e.g. refereeing)
- Technology important but not the driver
- Export potential
- Multi-lingual

“National” programs - UK

- England 1: UKeU
- England 2: HEFCE/HEA
- Scotland 1: Scottish Knowledge
- Scotland 2: Interactive University
- Wales
- The end of national programs?

England 1: UKeU



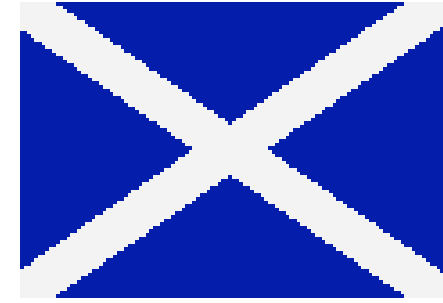
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- Commercial (public-private)
 - Aim for sustainability through sales
 - All English universities potential members
 - But bidding for funds, and less than half were active
 - Market research was optimistically interpreted
 - Obsession with uniform technology

England 2: HEFCE



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- Public sector
 - Aim for sustainability through embedding
 - All English universities potentially involved – but nothing to “join”
 - Bidding for funds, but also funds via formula
 - Market research and export not as relevant
 - Varied technology, partial obsession with standards and frameworks

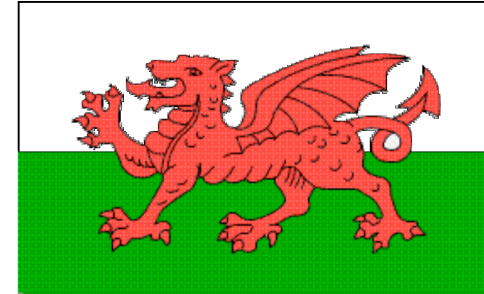
Scotland



- Scottish Knowledge:
 - Was a broker
 - Involved all Scottish universities
 - Was export-oriented
 - Went bankrupt (2002)
- Interactive University:
 - Is export-oriented
 - Has government support
 - But only major player is Heriot Watt



Wales



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- Not a consortium of universities but a country-wide strategy for all sectors
 - 13 objectives – from which key criteria can be drawn for benchmarking (more later)

Programs in rest of Europe

- Finland: Virtual University
- Sweden: Net University
- Estonia: e-University
- Netherlands: Dutch Digital University +...
- Bavaria: Virtual High School
- France: Campus Numeriques

Finland: Virtual University

- Consortium of all Finnish universities
 - But not polytechnics
- Emphasis on collaboration, sharing and rural areas not export
- Unclear relationship with “open university”
- Small courses, few business plans
- Sustainability deferred



Sweden: Net University

- Newer than FVU
- Consortium of most Swedish universities
- Collaboration
- Interesting issue in terms of Swedish recommendations to publish more research in English...
 - Will they go for an export market?



Netherlands: Digital University

- Consortium of 10 universities
- But only about 1/3 of all students
- Two other (much smaller) consortia also funded by government – why?
- Supposed to be closing down
- Curious relationship with Open universiteit
- No export market even to Flanders
 - Yet many Dutch universities teach in English

France: Campus Numériques

- Launched in July 2000
- Over 100 projects, some in training also
- Some non-pedagogic overtones:
 - Francophone Africa
 - Open source
- Little information available on progress
 - Almost no information in English or at UK sites

Rest of world?

- Korea: Cyber-Universities (many)
- New Zealand: e-NZ
- Malaysia: e-Universities (at least four)?
- Arab World: Syrian Virtual University?

Benchmarking

Benchmarking: Definition

a process of self-evaluation and self-improvement through the *systematic* and collaborative comparison of *practice* [process] and *performance* [metrics, KPIs] with competitors [or comparators] in order to identify own strengths and weaknesses, and *learn* how to adapt and improve as conditions change.

(Xerox)

Benchmarking e-learning in UK universities

- Overseen by Higher Education Academy
- Pilot project ongoing with 12 universities:
 - Manchester, Warwick, Leicester, Strathclyde...
 - Three main approaches being piloted
- Phase 1 in autumn with 42 more universities:
 - Birmingham, Middlesex, etc
- Many elite universities waiting for Phase 2...

Criteria

- Typically 15-50 criteria
- Typically scored on 1-5 scale
- Focussed on output (including student perceptions) and process
- Typically draw on work on best practice, often with US provenance
 - Chickering and Gamson/Ehrmann
 - “Quality on the Line” (IHEP)
 - used in Swiss work also

Typical criterion on adoption of VLE

1. Innovators only
2. Early adopters taking it up
3. Early adopters adopted; early majority taking it up
4. Early majority adopted; late majority taking it up
5. All taken up except laggards, who are now taking it up (or retiring or leaving)

Sourcing of criteria for benchmarking national strategies

Sources of criteria

- Some old work (2000-ish) – BENVIC
 - Also TERENA work on NRENs
- Sustainability criteria from SCIL
- Lift up a level the criteria used within universities (not so different)
- Look at criteria other national initiatives have used (e.g. Wales)
- Focus on Critical Success Factors:
 - Think of these as mega-criteria

Sustainability criteria: SCIL

- 30 criteria in the Mandate
- Examples:
 - 05: set up quality management
 - 11: establish technological standards
 - 15: build co-operations
 - 17&18: establish support structures
 - 26: implement incentive structures for teaching
 - 30: support transferability

In-university criteria: Pick & Mix

- 04: usability of e-learning systems
- 05: accessibility (to disabled) – legal force
- 06: strategy formulation and integration
- 10: staff training – planning and delivery
- 12: cost analysis and management
- 14: evaluation strategy
- 15: organisation of e-learning support
- 17: quality and excellence
- 18: staff recognition

Critical Success Factors

- Older synthesis dating from work in 2000-01 by Bacsich, Harasim, Kugemann, etc
- Revised synthesis taking into account failure and “stalling” of several e-university initiatives including Fathom, Cardean, UKeU, NHSU etc

Critical Success Factors (old)

- Binding energy
- Organizational homogeneity or managed diversity
- Stratification
- Linguistic homogeneity

(Bacsich, for UNESCO 2001)

Critical Success Factors (new)

- Branding
- Managing government impatience
- Sustainability (cost, embedding...)
- Market issues: research
time to market, cost of marketing
- Technology (standards, open source...)
- Manage language issues
- Expertise of staff (and consultants)

Some key criteria

A synthesis of criteria

- Coherence: includes stratification, binding energy...
- Expertise
- Branding
- Government issues
- Sustainability
- Market issues
- Linguistic issues
- Technology

Some conclusions

How SVC scores

Coherence	Y? – small country helps
Expertise	Y – e.g. consultants
Branding	Y – <u>one</u> system
Government issues	Y? – political system
Sustainability	Y – tell them at start
Market issues	Y – bleed-over to nearby
Linguistic issues	Y? – seems to work
Technology	Y – relaxed

How others score

Coherence	N: UK, NL; Y? - FI
Expertise	N: many
Branding	N?: NL; Y: SE, FI
Government issues	N: UK, FI
Sustainability	?: FI, SE, FR
Market issues	N: NL
Linguistic issues	N: NL; ?: SE
Technology	N: UK, NL, FR; Y: FI

Thank you

- Paul Bacsich
 - Email: bacsich@matic-media.co.uk
- References:
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 - Critical Success Factors:
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