



BOLDIC – OPEN LEARNING RESOURCES ONLINE

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Background

The general purpose of the “Boldic – open learning resources online” network is to deepen and bring further the co-operation between Nordic and Baltic organizations dealing with distance education, flexible learning and e-learning by opening the community for new partners from both the Baltic and the Nordic countries. The network has been supported by Nordplus (Founded by The Nordic Council of Ministers) for ten years and we want to disseminate results, discussions and future issues during the EDEN Conference in Barcelona 2015. There is a continuous increase in the demand for technology supported learning material, and especially so for material developed for on-line learning. Most of this material is developed in such a way that it normally is quite easy to change language and in other ways fit the material for use in different countries. I.e. the field is very well set up for exchange of material and for continuous cooperation in development, marketing, etc. In short, we have a demand, what we need is better marketing and simpler exposure of the material between the potential exchangers of the materials. The intention of the network is to establish a major Nordic and Baltic integration project supporting open learning resources online. Apart from better quality in learning, the project proves the benefits possible by simple cooperation between the learning organizations of the different countries. The Boldic network also works for supporting cultural exchanges as the materials often contain cultural parts. (Kågström, 2003, p.25).

Description of the Boldic work

We have described and presented some nominated projects and winners of Boldic Award during the last ten years. Also given examples and showcased progress work done during Boldic project in the field networking in flexible learning, distance education and e-learning. Interesting issues for improvement for better ODL innovative projects will be showcased.

The Boldic Award work seeks to recognize outstanding organisations and people in the open and distance learning field. The Boldic Award winners should support any ODL-activity connected to adult learning meeting one or more of the following criteria: teaching/learning arrangements, support systems (for delivery of learning content or/and learning support), development of activities, content or understanding within the ODL area and the activities should be transferable to other countries and be learner focused, facilitate blended or flexible

learning, be innovative, be scalable, have a sustainable strategy, have a sensible and appropriate approach to technology and involve continuing evaluation. Both persons, projects and organisations can be nominated for the Boldic Award. (Sandström, 2010, p.1)

Previous Boldic Award winners

2005 – Network Upper Secondary School in Jämtland, Sweden

“They have been pioneers and innovators of adult education at a distance, through a flexible combination of distance and campus studies.”

Network Upper Secondary School in Jämtland was nominated as Swedish candidate for the following reasons. They have been pioneers and innovators of adult education at a distance, through a flexible combination of distance and campus studies. They have in a good way combined distance learning for adults and pupils in schools. They have found effective ways of operating learning centres in rural areas.

Course square has paved the way for fruitful collaboration on learning resources, both regionally and nationally. The province developed early its own First Class conference support system This now has a coverage that is higher than any other example in Sweden. This is unique and made more efficient by new linked tools such as online evaluation, short video clips or entire web based courses etc. This advanced First Class system is the technical infrastructure on which the network of study centres in the region is built. Though the study centres are not part of the original NVG project it facilitates easy to use technical help with updated advanced tools suitable for e-learning use, demanded by users who can formulate their needs.

2006 – Nettskolen NKI, Norway

“For promoting a learning concept that adds an innovative new dimension to student aid in flexible distance learning.”

Promotes and develops the Nordic tradition in ODL. The Learning partner concept adds a new, innovative dimension of student support to the flexible distance education.

NKI Nettstudier offers flexible online education within a wide range of disciplines in partnership with recognized colleges and universities. NKI's courses are available 24/7, 365 days a year; so that you can start whenever you want, from anywhere you are, with the help of teachers, study counsellors, and learning partners. Last year, NKI registered approximately 10,000 students. NKI students can choose from a pool of over 300 individual courses and studies. Courses range from IT and communication to business administration, economics and finance, health and social care, and languages which are taught at secondary, college and university level. NKI's administration is made up of more than 40 employees and approximately 150 teachers. Most studies are offered to Norwegian-speaking students, though we are developing coursework in English in partnership with prime Colleges and Universities abroad, such as Berghs School of Communication in Sweden and Danish School of Media and

Journalism in Denmark. NKI courses are mainly in Norwegian, but they are also assessing options for eventually being able to offer studies and courses in Danish, Swedish and English.

2007 – Vitus Bering, Denmark

Vitus Bering in Denmark has developed the e-learning course “Energy-efficient driving for buses and trucks” using mobile technology for drivers. Via mobile phone and iPods the drivers get the video sequences and text and sounds as digital learning resources. Truck and bus drivers in Denmark can learn how to save the energy while they are in the vehicle. The course is very flexible: the drivers have access to the course anywhere in the world. The drivers can practice what they have learned when they get behind the wheel again. The evaluation is ongoing and the student can see how much energy they have saved when the course is completed. The project manager for the course has supported concrete learning outcomes as measured by the fuel consumption on the vehicle. Some drivers have a 10-15 percent saving of fuel after they have done the course. The course is translated and will become offered for German-speaking drivers.

2008 – MKFC Stockholm College, Sweden

“A full commitment in e-learning and activities around internationalization. A popular education in a globalized world, supported by e-learning and modern learning management systems through the Web.”

The reason MKFC was nominated and won the Boldic Award 2008 is that MKFC has shown these key elements: The approach they use is expected to be transferable to the whole Boldic region. It has been a student governance within the competence development. They seem, and allow for flexible learning and they work innovatively and the approach is scalable and has a sustainable strategy. MKFC supports the work to develop a methodology to exchange experience in ODL (Open Distance Learning), creating an infrastructure for network and exchange experiences on “best practice” in ODL education.

2009 – Bergen University Netspank, Norway

“Nettspank is a 100% online course covering the first year of Spanish language and Latin-American studies at bachelor level. Its innovative use of platforms allows of synchronic communication (audio and chat) in combination with PowerPoint presentations. Students are able to follow the online classes from everywhere in the world.”

Online Spanish is 100% online, without attendance. The program recently received a Boldic Award for creative solutions. The project leader from Bergen University Department of Foreign languages received the Boldic Award at a ceremony in Stockholm. This is the result of a social need and academic entrepreneurship at the Department of Foreign Languages, at the University of Bergen. In recent years, Spanish is becoming more and more popular in Norway. From its inception the Spanish course produced 26,000 credits, equivalent to 60 full-time students annually. The figures show that Web Spanish is a middle sized subject at the Faculty of Humanities. The Internet program is located on a so-called 100-level equivalent,

the ancient discipline. In addition, there is also an online introductory course in Spanish at the Department of foreign languages, leading up to the Web Spanish study. Bergen University are happy for BA2009 and it brings also international recognition. There are many people involved in the project and they have worked hard developing the online Spanish course. Both those who have supplied electronics and teachers how many have worked part-time, deserve a big thank you for the good work done in online Spanish.

2010 – Aarhus University ASBCAST video repository, Denmark

“The assessment committee stressed that ASB Media has demonstrated creativity and innovation by combining video presentations with research material.”

ASBCAST is the media archive at Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University (ASB). ASBCAST provides the framework for all media productions in research communication and teaching at ASB. The content is primarily research stories, mini-lectures and recordings of events. Research stories present the core of the researchers' fields. They focus on issues that are topical and relevant to business and society. The form is short and direct, and they introduce new stories every week in association with ASB's own 315 researchers and a variety of visiting international researchers. The platform is a modification of EduMedia – a video service of the Danish Research Network. All material is provided with keywords (Meta tags) and placed in a structure that makes it easy to find relevant topics within the ASB's research areas: Business Law, Marketing and Statistics, Business, Management, Economics, Language and Business Communication. ASBCAST works on all platforms and in the most common browsers on PC and Mac. The video player is Flash-based.

2011 – NKI, Norway, Berghs school of communication, Sweden and Danish School of Media Multimediamjournalistikk, Denmark

“This is a unique collaboration project where Swedish, Danish and Norwegian students participate in blended learning online multimedia journalist courses.”

The criterion is that the award-winning ODL activity can be used in the Nordic and Baltic countries, be learning centred, supporting flexible education, be innovative, durable and easy to use, and promote continued development in the area. Multimedia Journalism is an education in journalism focused on web and online media. All courses in the program will be implemented as online courses and passed the exam for a total of 30 credits from UPDATE Danish Media and Journalism College. The program was developed with support from Norway University and is a Scandinavian cooperation among UPDATE Danish Media and Journalism College, CSI Nettstudier in Norway and Berghs School of Communication. As project manager for this is Morten Flate-Paulsen and he said: “We are happy receiving Boldic Award for our Scandinavian nettstudium in multimediejournalistikk. This is a unique cooperation between Swedish, Danish and Norwegian students who participate in a blended learning environment on the web. The students can start and chose the tempo that match them. Focus is on text, layout and video production for multimedia journalism.

2013 – RIGA Technical University, Latvia

“For the innovative project work done with integration between broadcasting TV, internet based computers and mobile phones for training and courses during the Ebig3 project.”

This project will allow a learner to use a single delivery channel at a particular time (depending on availability and preferences) or a complementary combination of two or three delivery channels thus supporting learning anywhere anytime paradigm. The work on the project solution includes integration of technical issues for cross-media learning content delivery, refinement of pedagogic considerations, development of shared understanding of target user learning contexts in border areas, production of learning content & organizing course pilots. The sample courses on the new system will be related to entrepreneurship or ICTs. Project consortium will develop 10 innovative cross-platform courses in Latvian and Lithuanian. This project will allow not only use traditional internet based systems but uses TV technologies and accessibility mobile technology. The system will combine a wide coverage of TV technology and a wide accessibility of mobile technology with the capacity and flexibility of broadband. This will allow a learner to use a single delivery channel at a particular time (depending on availability and preferences) or a complementary combination of two or three delivery channels thus supporting learning anywhere anytime paradigm. The work on the project solution includes integration of technical issues for cross-media learning content delivery, refinement of pedagogic considerations, development of shared understanding of target user learning contexts in border areas, production of learning content & organizing course pilots. The sample courses on new system will be related to entrepreneurship or ICTs. Project consortium will develop 10 innovative cross-platform courses in Latvian and Lithuanian languages having complementary learning materials on TV, Internet & mobile devices.

2014 – Norwegian digital learning arena NDLA Bergen, Norway

“The overall goal for the project is to deliver open and free digital learning resources (OER) of high quality for all, and involve teachers and students in active and participatory learning processes.”

NDLA, which is co-owned by 18 county councils in Norway, is set up to develop open digital learning resources of high quality for all, and NDLA aims at involving teachers and students in upper secondary education in active and participatory learning processes. The current operating budget for NDLA is approx. 62 MNOK. Today, NDLA work with 37 different subjects in upper secondary education. The subjects cover academic specializations as well as vocational education and training. In total, there are about 340 subjects in upper secondary education. The long term ambition is to offer digital learning resources within all subjects. User statistics show a substantial increase in traffic on the NDLA website, and the awareness among key constituents such as teachers and principals is on the rise. NDLA is a national operation that is set up as a virtual organization without a physical headquarter. The administrative and professional support systems are available via local host organisations (e.g. the county councils) or cloud-based applications. The administrative resources are pooled

from existing resources in order to keep the need for investments in administrative software and services at a minimum level. NDLA has about 100 employees from all parts of Norway, of which 35 are full time and approx. 65 are part-time. Most of them are teachers. A substantial part of the funding from NDLA is used in the digital learning resources industry. NDLA has developed an extensive collaboration with content providers and private developers. Approximately 60% of the total funding of NDLA is being used for acquisition of technology services and digital learning resources from the ICT and content industries.

Future work

Practically the network now stands on the good results from the previous completed Boldic network projects, Nord Plus Voxen, Flexible Learning Network (2005-2007) and Nordic-Perspectives online (2008 -2011) and the ongoing project Boldic Open learning resources online. We work for bringing in new players from the Baltics and Nordic countries and from other sectors of educational and working life. It will also improve on the contact system as well as the Boldic-award system. The Boldic-award system – i.e. to hand out a special award to the project found most interesting in the partner countries – has been a success: lots of discussions and many comments. The partners want to make the award system a more continuous process in the cooperation work between the partners and others. The Boldic OLRO project now presents in newsletters of the partners nominations for Boldic Award at an earlier stage than in previous projects.

The newsletters are brought in as complementary judges to the specialists at the organizations. The aim of this is twofold; to make the project people better present their project – better dissemination – as this will improve their chance of getting the prize, and to make more users in more learning organizations active in their demand. Winners as well as “first proposers” will be welcomed at the winning award at the winning conference.

We will discuss and have a summary on:

1. What are innovative online learning projects?
2. How can a network like Boldic, recognize and award outstanding organisations and people in the open and distance learning field?
3. How can we do more lifelong-learning on different education levels?
4. How can we make sure nobody is excluded from the new learning ways in the digital society when we can see the “theme of inclusion” everywhere?

Target groups: Adult learning, higher education, NGO and primary/secondary/upper secondary schools developing networks in the open and distance learning field.

Boldic open online resources online conference, 2014

Boldic Riga Conference October 2014 had the keynote

- “Learning in the 21th Century – Between Masses and Materiality” Niels Henrik Helms, University College Sjaelland, Denmark;
- “Content Availability Powerful Increase by the Use of Multiscreen E-Learning,” A. Kapenieks, Riga Technical University, Latvia;
- “E-Inclusion Processes Research and Promotion by E-Learning,” MeansI. Vitolina, Riga Technical University, Latvia;
- “New Approach for Creativity Monitoring in Virtual Learning Environment,” J.(sr.) Kapenieks, Riga Technical University, Latvia;
- “Piloting of a New Collaborative Reflection Tool in Riga Technical University,” A. Gorbunovs, Riga Technical University, Latvia;
- “Opening up University Courses,” C. Dalsgaard, Aarhus University, Denmark;
- “Quality in OER/OEPE,” Ossian Nilsson, Lund University, Sweden;
- “Mozilla Open Badges for Assessment” H. Põldoja, Tallinn University, Estonia;
- “Quality in online teaching and learning,” T. Slåtto, Flexible Education, Norway;
- “Collaborative OER development,” H. Pirkkalainen, University Jyväskylä, Finland;
- “Internationalization of educational technology and learning contents,” Ph. Holtkamp, University Jyväskylä, Finland;
- “Open education and OER in Lithuania,” D. Ignataviciute, Vilnius College, Lithuania;
- “Summary,” U. Sandstrom, Swedish Association for Distance Education, SVERD and Coordinator BOLDIC, Sweden.

Results

The following topics are discussed and tested in the Boldic network: webinars, preparation, advertising, implementation, common start-up problems and list of meeting and conference platforms.

For more than ten years we have tried out various sites for holding online meetings (Gunnarsdottir, 2012, p.1). and seminars for different collaborative projects in the Nordic and Baltic region. It began with the Minerva project Boldic and the Nordplus projects Nordflex. It continued in Boldic perspectives online and in SKJÁR. Moreover, there has been extensive testing in the Nordic distance learning network DISTANS (an expert group in the Nordic Network for Adult Learning), and in our own organization, Swedish Association Distance Education (SADE).

We organised large and lengthy conferences, both synchronously and asynchronously (Norberg, 2012). We have used many different meeting platforms, hosting meetings with few participants (e.g. project meetings), and with many participants (up to a hundred) (Sahlin & Sandstrom, 2004, p.5). We have tried out using audio and video synchronously, and we have used audio for some and instant messaging (chat) for others.

Summing up, we have now developed a synchronous format that we use quite frequently, the webinar (combination of web and seminar). Several of us have chosen to purchase a license for a particular online meeting platform, while others alternate between a number of free platforms. On the basis of experience gained over the years (Sterner-Kumm, 2011, p.5), we can in an publication set out advice and suggestions on how webinars can be established and implemented. Boldic project want in the future focus on constructivism and transactional learning theory of cognitive space between instructors and learners in distance education (Edström, 2002).

References

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7. Sterner-Kumm, G. (2011). *Evaluation Boldic Perspectives online*. (10-2012). Available online at <http://www.boldic.org/evaluation-2012/>

Partners

- Swedish Association Distance Education (SVERD) <http://www.sverd.se> (project coordinator)
- Flexible Education Norway (FuN) <http://fleksibelutdanning.no/>
- Aarhus University (Denmark) <http://www.au.dk/>
- Vilniaus Kolegija/University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania) <http://www.ekf.viko.lt/>
- BA School of Business and Finance (Latvia) <http://www.ba.lv/lv/>
- University of Jyväskylä (Finland) <https://www.jyu.fi/>
- Tallinn University (Estonia) <http://www.tlu.ee>