**eSchools in a Digital Era**

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An eSchool is a school in which eTechnologies (internet in a broader sense) are used extensively. In an eSchool the use of information technology (IT) is an important part of the school’s culture. The school is easy to access by the stakeholders: students, teachers, parents, partners. The teachers´ routine work load is reduced. It offers an opportunity to communicate more frequently and easily. Data for students and teachers, links to literature and lectures is stored digitally.

According to Wikipedia, the Digital Era (also known as the Information Age) is a period in human history characterized by the shift from traditional industry that the Industrial Revolution brought through industrialization, to an economy based on information technology. The definition of what digital (or what information) means continues to change over time as new technologies, user devices, methods of interaction with other humans and devices enter the domain of research, development and market launch. Digital Era is powered by the digitalization of the industrial processes (Industry 4.0) and the robotization. Researching and teaching “e” is recognized as being important.

The universities are processing knowledge and creating new perspectives through reflection and transformation. The structure of a university imposes a strict methodology that teaches the next generation how to engage knowledge critically, to question, and reform - a process only possible if universities exist within a democratic system that allows unrestricted freedom of expression. In a paper *Universities as curators of knowledge,* Lino Guzzella and Gerd Folkers (ETH Zurich, 2018) are recognizing that the technological advances of the digital era fundamentally alter both the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Universities have lost their once dominant role. They now compete with a host of digital knowledge providers accessible 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and worldwide. One thing is certain, they say, significant changes lie ahead for the knowledge business as a whole. Knowledge business is an increasingly important development and research area.

In recent years, there are numerous articles, paper and reports published on a need of incorporating computer programing (coding) as a new course into the curricula of all schools at all levels - from kindergarten, to basic and grammar schools, universities, and third age universities. As suggested by Marina Umaschi Bers (*Why Kids Should Code,* Tufts, 2017), a kindergarten coding is a playground. It offers many opportunities for learning and personal growth, exploration and creativity, mastery of new skills, and ways of thinking. It is beyond the traditional view of coding as a technical skill. Coding is a literacy. Accelerated joint actions of business, government, IT providers and interested individuals are suggested. Current requirements of the employers who are hiring e-skilled school graduates have to be seriously considered by the schools which are expected to respond faster to a changed environment. eSchools eCollaboration with the businesses is essential.

The panel will explore current situation regarding new technologies impacting skills required, the roles of the eSchools’s, the cross-border eCollaboration opportunities in the eRegion. The panelist will suggest what and how could/will be done by working together in the next twelve months.