

Greeting GOR

As the local coordination team of the Heinrich Heine University Düsseldorf we welcome all contributors and guests to the General Online Research Conference 2011 (GOR)!

If a university hosts an academic conference there are benefits for both. The conference delegates can expect generous hospitality and excellent service in an academically inspiring environment. As conveners of the HHU we also have an ulterior motive:

Hosting a top-class conference like the GOR might raise awareness for an important topic at our university, maybe becoming even an issue worth discussing at the executive board.

In the last few years we made progress on enhancing an eLearning culture at our university. Our eLearning-Support-Team introduced virtual learning environments, blended-learning concepts, video lectures and ePortfolios to lectures of all departments. For our students eLearning is not only a fashionable aspect of teaching, but more efficient. But even today it is not naturally that a university offers besides a computer centre an eLearning-Support-Centre to didactically enhance higher education teaching.

The wide range of online research including online market research, online social research, online media research, online research on teaching and learning, network research, Web 2.0 research, social media research et. al. presented at the GOR emphasize the meaning of virtual communication in our lives. The GOR will remind the members of our executive board that a university cannot ignore the impact of the virtual world. It is essential to actively utilize the benefits of online communication and use them to create an advanced environment for forward-looking teaching and researching.

Imagine the University of the Future, the University 2.0:

The University 2.0 is part of all social networks like Facebook and Xing and on Twitter (micro blogging) to keep in contact with prospective students, present students and alumni students. There is a FAQ-Chat for standard questions by prospective students and the offer to answer individual questions via chat. The University 2.0 uses social media monitoring tools to meet the needs of its target groups. Even electronic letters and forms instead of e.g. frequently send handwritten applications for reimbursement of travel expenses are accepted. The University 2.0 offers unrestricted online access to most research results.

Open Access at the University 2.0; does this mean Open Scientists, too? It seems that the Open-Scientist who publishes online his ideas, data and concepts will be no more than a footnote in the history of the University of the Future.

Furthermore the course content can be downloaded on a regular basis and used via mobile learning. At the University 2.0 game based learning is a common practice in several studies. Like at our university virtual law case studies (<http://casim.hhu.de/>) developed by the Hein@ward winner 2010. In addition augmented reality settings are introduced for several studies to create new learning experiences by combining physical, real-world environments with computer-generated sensory input.

But maybe you prefer now a real walking tour through the historical Düsseldorf Altstadt accompanied by an authentic Rhinelander instead of a virtual sightseeing tour or the help of a Düsseldorf-App (which exists, but in a more or less early stage).

With this in mind we wish you an exiting and pleasant stay in Düsseldorf!
Heiner Barz (on behalf of the conveners of the Heinrich Heine University)