Preface

This volume presents the proceedings of the 15th edition of the annual International Conference on Web-based Learning (ICWL). The first ICWL event held was in Hong Kong in 2002. Since then it has been held 13 more times, in three continents: Australia (2003), China (2004, 2008, 2010), Hong Kong (2005, 2011, 2015), Malaysia (2006), UK (2007), Germany (2009), Romania (2012), Taiwan (2013), Estonia (2014).

ICWL 2016 was organized by the Sapienza University of Rome – a collegiate research university located in Rome, Italy. It is the largest European university in terms of enrolments (the third one if distance-learning schools are also considered) and one of the oldest in the world, founded in 1303. "Sapienza" educated numerous notable alumni, including many Nobel laureates, presidents of the European Parliament, heads of several nations, notable religious figures, scientists, and astronauts.

One trait of (ancient) Romans is that they were able to learn from their interactions with other countries and make their own civilization better. In ICWL we mean "interactions" in a more peaceful way, yet with the same aim, of making our community's insights and innovative ideas about Technology Enhanced Learning better.

The topics proposed in the ICWL Call For Papers included several relevant issues, ranging over: Learning Models, Collaborative Learning, Serious Games, Technology Enhanced Learning in Education, Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), Mobile Learning, and more.

We had 110 submitted contributions. All submissions were assigned to three members of the Program Committee (PC) for review. All reviews were checked and discussed by the team of PC chairs, and additional reviews or meta-reviews were elicited if necessary. The proceedings include the contributions that were finally presented at the conference: 19 full papers, ten short papers and four posters, for a total of 33 papers, yielding a global acceptance rate of 31.82 %.

ICWL 2016 featured three distinguished keynote presentations, by renowned scholars: Peter Brusilovsky, University of Pittsburgh, USA ("Data-Driven Education: Using Learners' Data to Improve Teaching and Learning"); Carlo Giovannella, Tor Vergata University, Rome, Italy ("Uncovering and Supporting the Smartness of Learning Ecosystems"); and Andreja Istenič Starčič, University of Primorska, Slovenia ("Representations in Contemporary Learning Environments"). The conference also provided a plenary presentation about the European Research Council (ERC), aimed to be attractive and useful for young (and less young) researchers attending the conference.

A doctoral consortium was organized concurrently with the conference and provided an opportunity for PhD students to discuss their work with experienced researchers.

This year ICWL supported the organization of a new initiative, the "First International Symposium on Emerging Technologies for Education" (SETE) at the same location. SETE collected the traditional workshop activities managed by ICWL in the

past years, and additionally featured a novel organization in tracks. Workshops and tracks added new and hot topics on Technology Enhanced Learning, providing a newer 2016 overall conference experience to the ICWL attendees.

Many people contributed to make the conference possible and successful. First of all we thank all the authors who have considered ICWL for their submissions. We also thank the PC members, and the additional reviewers, for their evaluations that made possible the selection of the accepted papers. For the organization effort of ICWL 2016, additional thanks go to the publicity chair, Martin Homola, the poster co-chairs, Damiano Distante, Luigi Laura, and Filippo Sciarrone, the Web chair, Andrea Sterbini, the doctoral consortium co-chairs, Maria De Marsico, Zuzana Kubincova, and Carla Limongelli, and the proceedings chair, Pavlos Fafalios.

We also thank the following sponsors, for their enlightened and much appreciated financial support, which helped make the whole operation sustainable: IAD, Solutions by Competence; Springer, who offered their sponsorship; and UniTelma-Sapienza University, which is also the place where part of the Organizing Committee undertakes research activities in Technology Enhanced Learning.

We hope that the reader of this volume will be pleased with the relevance of the topics and the contents of the papers, possibly being enticed to contribute to next editions of ICWL.

October 2016   Dickson K.W. Chiu
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