

MEDIA RELEASE

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ASSOCIATION
FOR LEARNING
TECHNOLOGY



Rethinking the Digital Divide – call for papers issued, and keynote speakers announced for the 2008 Association for Learning Technology Conference

The 2008 Association for Learning Technology Conference will be in Leeds between 9 and 11 September 2008.

Keynote speakers will include: **David Cavallo**, Chief Learning Architect for One Laptop per Child, and Head of the Future of Learning Research Group at MIT Media Lab; **Dr Itiel Dror**, Senior Lecturer in Cognitive Neuroscience at the University of Southampton; and **Hans Rosling**, Professor of International Health, Karolinska Institute, Sweden, and Director of the Gapminder Foundation.

"The digital divide tends to be seen as a problem of access whose 'solution' will bring a myriad of benefits," said Seb Schmoller, Chief Executive of ALT. "The reality may be quite different: technology, once supplied, may fall into disuse; connectivity may be in short supply, or too costly; lack of uptake or use may be a conscious and rational decision. Thus the digital divide is multidimensional, rather than being mainly or only about access."

The closing date for submissions of full research papers for publication in the peer-reviewed Proceedings of ALT-C 2008, and abstracts for demonstrations, posters, short papers, symposia and workshops – via <http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008/> – is **29 February 2008**.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

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Learning technology is the broad range of communication, information and related technologies that can be used to support learning, teaching, and assessment. The Association for Learning Technology (ALT) is the leading UK body bringing together practitioners, researchers, and policy makers in learning technology. Learning technologists are people who are actively involved in managing, researching, supporting or enabling learning with the use of learning technology. For further information about ALT, see: <http://www.alt.ac.uk/>.

Full details of the ALT conference are at <http://www.alt.ac.uk/altc2008/>.

The ALT conference will focus on the following dimensions:

- **Global or local** - for example: What are the dichotomies between global and local interests in, applications of and resources for learning technology? How can experience in the developing world inform the developed world, and vice-versa? Will content and services be provided by country-based organisations or by global players?
- **Institutional or individual** - for example: How can the tensions between personal and institutional networks, and between formal and informal content, be resolved?
- **Pedagogy or technology** - for example: How do we prevent technology and the enthusiasms of developers from skewing things away from the needs of learners? Are pedagogic problems prompting new ways of using technology? Are learners' holistic experiences of learning technologies shifting the emphasis away from 'pedagogy' and into learner-centred technology?
- **Access or exclusion** - for example: How can learning technology enable access rather than cause exclusion? If digital access is improving quickly for those with least, do widening gaps between rich and poor matter, and if yes, what needs to be done?
- **Open or proprietary** - for example: Can a balance be struck, or will the future be open source (and/or open access)?
- **Private or public** - for example: What are the respective roles of the private and public sectors in the provision of content and services for learning? Is the privacy of electronic data still under threat? Are there ongoing problems with identity, surveillance and etiquette regarding private/public personae in social software?
- **For the learner or by the learner** - for example: How can technology empower learners and help them take ownership of their learning? How can it help to negotiate between conflicting demands and respond to multiple voices?

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