

# Changing universities

## The role of technology

by Hannelore B. Rader

**M**arch 27–30, 2001, the European University Information Systems (EUNIS) held the 7th International Conference in Berlin, Germany, at Humboldt University.

Humboldt University, founded in 1810, currently has an enrollment of 33,000 students. It has produced many Nobel prize winners and major research in the past. During the time of the divided Germany, 1948–1990, Humboldt University was located in East Berlin under the governance of the German Democratic Republic (GDR).

Humboldt University's library now has many computer services and is assisting the university in changing academic publishing to accommodate the electronic environment.

European universities, like their counterparts in the United States, are involved in teaching, learning, research and service, and technology is greatly affecting all of these areas. Restructuring is needed and many European universities are looking to the United States for help and guidance.

Approximately 460 persons attended the conference representing more than 300 universities from 39 countries in Europe. Seven participants represented the United States and one represented Canada. The theme of the conference addressed how universities are changing in the age of technology. The conference included five preconference seminars addressing: information system strategies; streaming media; wireless LAN structures and

concepts; electronic publishing and document servers; and digital images in teaching.

Eight keynote speakers from higher education, government, and private companies addressed such topics as:

- "Virtuality: Strategies for Universities in Transition" discussed the virtual university in terms of learning, student expectations, the global education market, meeting learners' needs in times of mass provision, and lifelong learning.
- "Multimedia in the Digital Age
- "Strategic Network Development in Higher Education"



The Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

### About the author

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• “Cooperation and Coordination of Information and Communication Services at German Universities” described current efforts of Germany universities to cooperate more with one another using technology for research and education.

• “The Six Webs or Why One Web Won’t Do” was presented by Sun Microsystems.

• “Top Performance and Partnership,” was presented by another vendor, Fujitsu Siemens Co.

• “Portals and E-business in Higher Education,” was presented by EDUCAUSE from the United States.

Speakers from various European countries, the United States, and Canada also presented 124 different papers related to the conference themes:<sup>1</sup>

• **Cooperation between European Universities.** In the 21st century, European universities will benefit from cooperating across boundaries and various examples of cooperation were presented.

• **Information Technology and Network Computing Security.** Universities have to face many potential security problems in the use of information technology in teaching and research and the use of networks. Procedures need to be established to deal with security-related incidents, training and education in network computing security is needed, and new trends in information security will affect universities and knowledge management.

• **Changes in University Organization and Structures.** Use of technology is leading to major changes in university administration in most European universities. Technology has a major impact on the structure of management, security, funding, and staffing. Technology is enabling European universities to cooperate more and offer more learning advantages to their students.

• **New Technologies, New Capabilities and New Opportunities.** Supercomputing, cluster computing, computational grids and metacomputing, and virtual reality are examples of capabilities now becoming more and more important for scientific computing at universities.

• **Supporting Change in Teaching and Learning.** New media and international educational developments have helped develop new approaches to teaching in universities. Examples were provided for online learning,

Web-based instruction, and distance learning. Discussions centered on effective cooperation across national boundaries using online learning and teaching. Also presented was information on collaborative learning in medicine using the Internet.

• **Libraries in the Digital Age.** Libraries and multimedia and computer centers have overlapping activities. Some convergence, partnerships, and new structures are being considered. A variety of collaborations can result in positive and negative effects. Discussions on the changing role of librarians prevailed throughout the track within the conference. Also covered were the use of the Internet for delivery and management of information, the UNESCO guide to electronic theses and dissertations and a variety of library consortia.

## Note

1. Many of the papers have been published as the *Proceedings of the 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference of European University Information Systems* by Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany. ■

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(“Bibliographic . . .” continued from page 527)

please; I had the CSRs to please. They were my customers, just as the students are my customers/patrons now. And great customer, great patron service is what being a librarian is all about.

## Notes

1. Malcolm Knowles, *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*, 3rd ed. (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company Book Division, 1986).

2. Edward E. Scannell and John W. Newstrom, *The Complete Games Trainers Play: Experiential Learning Exercises* (New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, 1994). ■

## Correction

In the article “Print book bibliographies on the Web,” (*C&RL News*, March 2001), the author refers to a *New York Times* article that was not cited. It is Doreen Carvajal’s “The Book’s in Print but its Bibliography Lives on in Cyberspace,” *New York Times*, May 29, 2000, A1.



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