DIGI-FACE
REVIEW

DIGI-FACE

Editorial

Paul Webb and Elisa Adams

The latest DIGI-FACE Project Management Group meeting was held in Oldenburg this July. One of the highlights was meeting Isabell Mering, new Head of Section at DAAD and the person responsible for the African Excellence programme in July in Oldenburg, Germany. During our meeting she was able to guide us in our future planning for the project. This will pave the way for our shared goal of strengthening the network and ensuring the platform's long-term availability.

In this review you will also be able to read about updates on the platform, predatory journals, training successes run by centres, biased AI, an IT conference in Senegal, more runs of our Financial Sustainability courses, the Candy WordPress plugin and Centre and Moodle Manager regional training sessions that will take place in Accra immediately after the Network meeting in late September and in Kenya and Mali in October.

Enjoy your read!

IN THIS ISSUE

Elisa Adams

Training for Centre Administrators in Ghana

Following the DAAD Network Meeting in Ghana we will have a one-and-a-half day training session on-site in Accra. The target group are representatives of the centres who are participating in the Network Meeting and will take place on the Thursday afternoon of the 28th and Friday the 29th of September.

During the training we will have a closer look on the platform and its roles and functionalities and focus on the tasks and responsibilities of the Centre Administrators. Topics will include the registration process of members, editing the centre page, providing news via the blog page, and adding publications.

Regional Training for 'Moodle Managers'

In October we will implement an on-site Training of 'Moodle Managers' of the Centres of Excellence in English and one in French. The training held in English will take place on October the 5th and 6th in Nairobi, Kenya after the CERM-ESA conference. The training held in French will take place on October 19th in Bamako, Mali after the CEGLA conference.

The training groups on-site will be constituted of the Moodle Managers of the Centres of Excellence who are present during the conferences in Kenya and Mali. There is also the possibility for

Moodle Managers to participate online in hybrid form. Moodle managers can also travel and participate in person at the expense of their centres.

These trainings aim to strengthen the skills of Centre Administrators and Moodle Managers, and to foster a quality online learning environment. They offer a unique opportunity to exchange knowledge and good practice, contributing to the continuous improvement of teaching and learning through the DIGI-FACE platform and the integrated Moodle.

The *human spirit* must prevail over technology

Koshala Terblanche

The 16th Edition of the annual e-learning Africa conference was held from the 24–26 May 2023 in Dakar, Senegal. This conference and exhibition, which focuses on education and technology in Africa, attracted 1268 professionals, policymakers, educators, and innovators from 75 countries across the continent and beyond. The conference centre was buzzing with enthusiasts eager to discuss and explore opportunities and challenges related to e-learning and digital education.

The conference provided a platform for sharing knowledge, experiences, and best practices and covered a wide range of topics, including e-learning platforms, digital content development, teacher training, mobile learning, open educational resources, online assessment, and distance learning.

This conference made me think. Pre-covid I always pondered about

the value of conference attendance. Embarrassingly, I admit that I often saw conferences as an extravagance. My experience in Senegal shifted my thinking; I fully appreciate the power of human connection. I now view conferences as an intense skills development opportunity and, more importantly, as offering networking opportunities to connect, collaborate, and form partnerships with like-minded people.

While networking with delegates I realised how little we know about each other's projects. DIGI-FACE was a mystery to so many I spoke to (I was astounded), and their projects were completely new to me. The conference allowed us to bridge these gaps and personal interactions and networking were not only deeply gratifying, authentic and meaningful, they were transcendental and emotionally binding. As such, I must agree with Albert when he said:

"The human spirit must prevail over technology." - Albert Einstein

Conference Booking System

Eldridge van der Westhuizen

In today's fast-paced digital era, efficient conference management systems have become an integral part of organising successful events. With the aim of simplifying the process and enhancing user experience, we are thrilled to introduce the addition of a conference booking system to our DIGI-FACE platform. This revolutionary add-on is designed to streamline conference planning, registration, and management, offering many features that will revolutionise the way conferences are organized.

Registering for conferences has never been easier with the new DIGI-FACE booking system add-on. The system offers a user-friendly and hassle-free registration process, allowing attendees to sign up for their participation in a few simple steps. The tool also provides personalised confirmation emails, reducing administrative overhead and paper waste.

Centre administrators have complete control over creating and managing events. Training will be scheduled for all centre administrators on the use of this powerful new booking tool soon. For participants, all active events/conferences can be accessed from the 'Projects' menu icon and choosing the 'Events' option.

Working with Chalimbana in Zambia
Elmien Waring

Nelson Mandela University (NMU) recently hosted Mr Kizito Zulu, a librarian from the Chalimbana Local Government Training Institute (CLGTI) in Zambia. The visit aimed to strengthen local governance and promote knowledge exchange among African educational institutions.

The visit aimed to strengthen local governance and promote knowledge exchange...

During Mr Zulu's two-week visit in June 2023, he received training and guidance from NMU experts in library management and information and communication technology (ICT). The visit was coordinated by the DIGI-FACE team at NMU, ensuring a fruitful experience for Mr Zulu.

The training covered various aspects of library management, including enhancing library security, optimizing the database and catalogue system, integrating e-books, and promoting open access literature. The visit also addressed ICT concepts, such as hardware and software for PC workstations, network and internet access, maintenance of ICT equipment, and user regulations. Discussions also touched on server security, role management within the learning management system (LMS), e-learning facility development, generating income for ICT maintenance, and improving course content for the Moodle Mobile App.

The collaboration between NMU, Kehl University, and CLGTI exemplifies the significance of international partnerships in advancing education and governance. The knowledge gained from this visit will contribute to the transformation of CLGTI's library into a modern ICT- and Media Centre, capable of meeting the evolving needs of local governance.

This successful visit sets the stage for future collaborations and exchange opportunities, fostering a vibrant and inclusive educational ecosystem in Africa. The expanding DIGI-FACE initiative aims to empower African educational institutions to address local challenges, enhance digital capabilities, and promote good governance in the global South.

Predatory Journals
Maretha Allwright

Predatory journals are a deceptive and exploitive publishing model where no quality checks for plagiarism or ethical approval exists and where authors are charged publication fees with no editorial or publishing services provided. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Predatory_open_access_publishing

Leading scholars and publishers from ten countries defined predatory journals as "Predatory journals and publishers are entities that prioritize self-interest at the expense of scholarship and are characterised by false or misleading information, deviation from best editorial and publication practices, a lack of transparency, and/or the use of aggressive and indiscriminate solicitation practices."

They found that no consistent list exists but that that there are more than 90 checklists to help authors identify predatory journals see https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-03759-y

Publishing an article in a predatory journal affects your reputation as a researcher. Examples of how to withdraw your work from a predatory journal are https://libguides.sjsu.edu/c.php?g=944457&p=6918742, and https://www.cwauthors.com/Search/CategoriesAndArticlesResult?searchString=predatory

There are several useful articles and guides available on the web to help authors identify predatory journals.

For example: https://thinkchecksubmit.org/ and https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7237319/

Online Training Course for Pro-Ruwa Lecturers on E-Learning Transition

Michael Kongo and Youssef Derouiche recently conducted a two-day online training course for Pro-Ruwa lecturers and professors. The training sessions ran via Zoom consecutively on May 24-25, 2023, from 7 am to 12 pm. Participants came from different African countries, namely Cameroon, Benin, and the DRC. Despite the usual challenges of distance teaching and learning, the training went smoothly and was well-received by the participants.

The primary objective of the course was to help participants transition from face-to-face teaching to e-learning using essential skills to design e-learning-suitable PowerPoint courses and create Moodle platform courses. The goal of the training was to enable Pro-Ruwa members to provide hybrid and fully online programs that cater for the current needs of students.

The training focused on designing interactive PowerPoint courses and strategic course design using Moodle. Overall, the participants expressed satisfaction, noting that the intervention was timely, relevant content presented in an accessible manner that addressed their immediate needs.

Follow-up sessions in September aim to build upon the foundational knowledge and skills learned during the first online training sessions and will again be supervised by Thanh Thi Nguyen, a Pro-Ruwa University of Kassel staff member, and offered by DIGI-FACE multipliers.

Michael Kongo

Candy for DIGI-FACE Koshala Terblanche
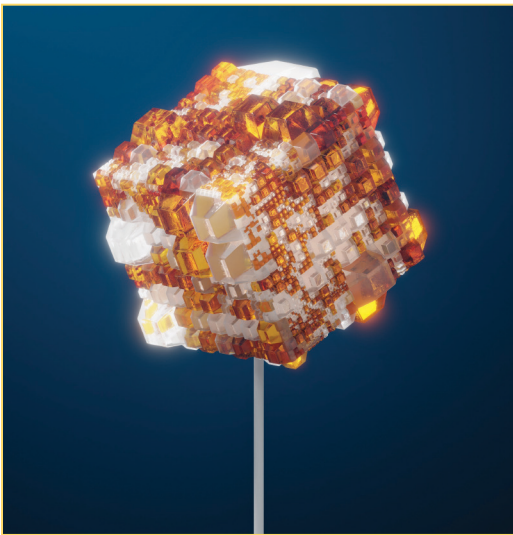
DIGI-FACE is continuously leveraging technology solutions to enrich user experience. The most recent being the SupportCandy WordPress plugin. SupportCandy provides a cohesive and organised support system to streamline communication by providing a centralised platform for members to submit queries, raise concerns, and seek assistance. This system eliminates the need for scattered emails or fragmented communication channels, ensuring that all interactions are organised and easily accessible.

The ticketing system, status updates, internal notes, email notifications, reply by email, and threaded conversations streamline communication, enable collaboration among support agents, and ensure that users receive timely and effective support, which provides a unique identifier, allows one to categorise and prioritise requests based on urgency and importance. This feature ensures that no concern gets overlooked or lost amidst a deluge of emails. Users can submit support tickets with their inquiries or issues, and support agents can access and manage these tickets from a central location in the WordPress dashboard.

> *SupportCandy offers various communication channels, including email, live chat, and web forms.* **This versatility allows DIGI-FACE to cater to different user preferences, making it convenient for anyone to seek help using their preferred mode of communication.** *It also offers various customisation options, allowing us to tailor the ticket system to our specific needs. Overall, the SupportCandy WordPress plugin presents a valuable tool for enhancing user experience.*

AI IS BIASED! Paul Webb

I knew about the debate on the dangers of AI (artificial intelligence) but was not quite sure of what these dangers might be. I first became aware of one issue a few weeks ago through personal experience.

I remembered that between 1940 and 1980 there were reports that the world was entering a new ice age. I asked ChatGPT if it could help me out on the topic. To my astonishment, the algorithm would not tell me! But I knew that there are data on the 'New Ice Age' and asked for references. It then provided four references related to Global Warming. I did not need convincing about Global Warming; I wanted information on something that I know existed. I felt frustrated and asked directly about the mini-ice ages from 1400 to today. It then told of the Spörer Minimum (1450-1550), Maunder Minimum (1645-1715), and the Dalton Minimum Little Ice Age that extended from 1790 into the 19th century with the Thames being frozen over in winter for decades.

I told a colleague about my experiences, and she sent me the following link - ***click here.*** The author accused the algorithm of being woke!

I then asked ChatGPT about the biases in the answers it provides. It said that that "algorithms can be biased if they are trained on data that reflects existing social biases and may perpetuate or amplify those biases".

Now we know; do not blame the algorithm, blame the programmers! See the blog on the issue ***here.***
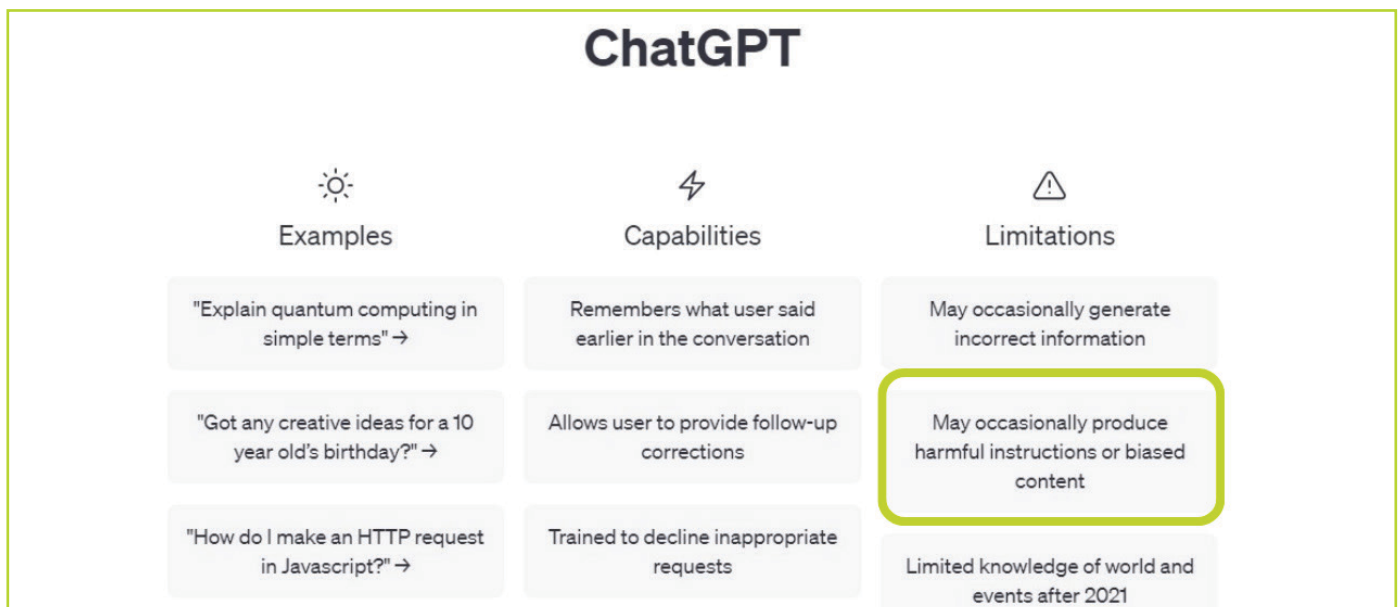
Project Management Tool

Hannes Köninger
Eldridge van der Westhuizen

The Project Management Tool facilitates online collaboration and encourages joint project work by connecting project partners and research teams across the network. The coordinators of the CERM-ESA Centre of Excellence have already started using the Project Management Tool for the scholarship selection.

CERM-ESA coordinator Malve von Moellendorff reports: "We have started using the tool for several projects and it has been very useful! It is helping us, especially when planning future activities and bigger events like our conference in October, where many people are involved in different ways. The tool is great to keep everyone in the loop and have an overview of all the tasks, responsibilities, and the stages in which the

assignments are being completed. Ticking off the tasks on your list and reaching milestones is the best part of it!"

The tool is available to all members at no cost. To access it, simply login to the DIGI-FACE platform and register as a member. To ensure collaboration and enable others to benefit from your knowledge, you can share your work with individual members or the entire network.

You will find help in our "*User Guide*" to organize and structure your work in the best way. An introductory course is in the planning stage and will be offered this year. If you have any comments, we welcome your feedback at *digiface@hs-kehl.de*.

Have fun using the project manager!

Hannes Köninger & Eldridge van der Westhuizen

How to make a change

in the member status section

To do this, you must click on the **"Users of my Centre"** section on your personal dashboard. You must, of course, be logged in with your account as Centre Admin. You can now click on the user's name and then you will be sent to their individual profile where you can do the editing.

If you have any further questions about the member status section, please feel free to contact us at *digiface@hs-kehl.de*; We welcome any form of feedback and comments at the same email address.

Multiplier Testimonials

Faith Nyaberi — MASTER'S STUDENT, MOI UNIVERSITY, KENYA

I really appreciate the golden opportunity granted to me by DIGI-FACE to be a multiplier for the Quantitative Research Methodologies 1 module. I learnt that every participant could learn not just on the same day or in the same way and that the interaction between us was mutually beneficial. My teaching skills were sharpened, and I am looking forward to continuing to impart knowledge and skills to new participants.

Faith Nyaberi

Innocent Muhwezi

Innocent Muhwezi — PhD CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF GHANA-ISSER, GHANA

Immense thanks to DIGI-FACE for this lifetime opportunity to be an Academic Written and Graphical Presentation (AWGP) course multiplier since 2021. Facilitating the course has made me realise the value of teamwork and international networking. I used the knowledge and skills presented in the AWGP course to help me publish three papers in peer reviewed journals and formulate a winning PhD project under the DAAD In-Region/In-country Scholarship Programme. I hope to continue sharing the knowledge and skills with colleagues within our network to promote the production of professional documents and maintain scientific integrity.

Charlotte Kouame — MASTER'S STUDENT, MOI UNIVERSITY, KENYA

Being a DIGI-FACE course multiplier was an exciting first-time experience that enhanced my knowledge in quantitative research methodologies. It built my confidence and enriched my professional experience. I am grateful to the DIGI-FACE team for the golden opportunity and the trust awarded to me. I hope to have more chances to learn and facilitate learning experiences on the platform.

Charlotte Kouame

Nehal Djaouga

Nehal Djaouga — PhD CANDIDATE, UNIVERSITY OF ABOMEY - CALAVI, BENIN

Gaining knowledge and skills and spreading it to others in return was a fantastic experience. Through the diverse backgrounds of our participants, I was able to learn new applications for quantitative research, which not only enhanced my teaching experience but also helped me in my academic endeavours. Working with other facilitators has also been a stimulating intellectual and social experience. I am looking forward to further interesting interactions with DIGI-FACE.

Naomi Mworia — MASTER'S STUDENT, MOI UNIVERSITY, KENYA

Being a Quantitative 1 DIGI-FACE facilitator has been one of my favourite experiences! It has granted me the opportunity to meet new people and share knowledge (and skills). The interaction has helped me hone my communication and presentation skills; which I really appreciate. Thank you so much!

Naomi Mworia

Dr Dorothy Nakiyaga

Dr Dorothy Nakiyaga — UGANDA MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE KAMPALA

I want to take a moment to express my heartfelt appreciation for the incredible experience as a facilitator for the AWGP course since its inception in 2020. The knowledge, insights, and skills I have gained throughout the duration of facilitating the course have truly been invaluable. The participants' creation of a dynamic and engaging learning environment has not gone unnoticed, despite their busy working schedules. I have learned to handle every student in a unique manner and developed the virtue of patience. I found the participants' dedication and resilience remarkable.

2023 Modules

Course name	Date	Duration	Applications	Accepted	Attended	Graduated
Technology Enhanced Teaching and Learning	Jan - Feb	4 weeks	31	31	15	5
Exploring the Online Learning Environment (French)	Feb - Mar	5 weeks	37	37	18	7
Quantitative Research Methodologies 1	Apr - Jun	8 weeks	41	30	15	11
Academic Written and Graphic Presentations (French	Mar - May	6 weeks	17	17	6	4
Academic Written and Graphic Presentations	Apr - May	6 weeks	34	28	14	11
Financial Sustainability 1	Jan - Feb	4 weeks	30	22	20	9
Module Makeover	Feb	2 weeks	16	12	5	5
Financial Sustainability 2	Apr	4 weeks	25	22	12	5
Creating documents with Canva	May	3 weeks	23	23	11	11

Financial Sustainability courses for DAAD-Centres will be offered again this year

The Financial Sustainability I and II modules developed by DIGI-FACE offer a clear and simplified methodology. The courses are based on the use of market research and budgeting tools. These tools are representative of the first phase of any project: identification of needs, target audience, competitors and budgeting. These blended learning modules are based on hands-on activities on Moodle and Zoom sessions to promote experience sharing and provide each centre with the experience or expert perspective on the methodology for developing activities. Under the title "Getting Started", these modules are there to hold hands with project leaders for the creation of e-learning cells in training centres affiliated with the DIGI-FACE network. These project leaders will have the task of convincing, promoting and rallying the administrative team of each centre to the idea that sustainable e-learning practices can be a boon for reducing training costs and improving the quality of institutions' training offers.

With these two new modules, DIGI-FACE hopes to simplify the first steps of identifying needs while popularizing e-learning practices. The final objective for each centre is to find the right economic model to cope with possible reductions in subsidies from international donors and thus sustain online training financially.

The courses are run separately in English and French. Many DAAD Centres have already addressed these issues and participated in the first run of these courses. But not all centres have been involved in these trainings yet – this can change now!

Apply at **https://www.digiface.org/application-forms/**

Youssef Derouiche

Hannes Köninger koeninger@hs-kehl.de, *Elisa Adams* Adams@hs-kehl.de and *Paul Webb* paul.webb@mandela.ac.za

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