Teaching Virtually Revolutionised With Internet Project

Sussex researchers are piloting a new project which could pave the way for a revolution in the training of doctors and health professionals - and the worldwide web is at the helm.

The pioneering venture, dubbed PATSy (Patient Assessment Training System), is a multimedia package which can accept case-based data from virtually any health-related field. It will train students and further the knowledge of researchers and practising clinicians using an unprecedented system of audio-clips, video-clips and interactive tests. It could be used by pathologists, psychiatrists, neuropsychologists - or indeed any health professional who needs to carry out tests on patients to arrive at a diagnosis.

The system is currently proving its potential for revolutionising current teaching practices. It is already an integral part of the speech therapy course at Queen Margaret's College in Edinburgh, and has sparked off interest at York, Newcastle and Sheffield Universities.

Spearheading the project is Dr Richard Cox, a cognitive scientist in COGS. He believes PATSy will become a central tool in universities and medical schools across the country - not just for speech therapy, but for a range of other disciplines too. The programme gives any student who deals with patients a confidence boost, as they can practise dealing with clinical situations many times before they have to encounter a real patient. But it also counteracts the ad hoc basis on which students currently acquire clinical skills training.

It is possible, for example, for speech therapy students to complete a course having only ever encountered a fraction of the conditions which they might confront in their career. With this programme, they can gain virtual experience of a wide range of disorders. Continued on page 2.

Unlocking the Secrets of the Lemur's Jungle Feast

The Madagascan ring-tailed lemur (pictured right) is the focus of a trailblazing international project investigating the relationship between primates and their food. Examining the relationship between primates’ colour vision and the food they chose to eat, the project has piloted some of the most sophisticated equipment available, undertaking complex experiments in some of the world’s wildest locations.

Visual scientist Daniel Osorio (BIOLS) has just returned from observing the magnificent monkeys in their southwestern Madagascar habitat, as part of this Pantropical Primate Project. The project, which is based in Hong Kong, involves researchers from the USA, Africa and the UK. It will also be scrutinising the dietary habits of chimpanzees in Uganda and bowler and spider monkeys in Costa Rica.

Daniel’s role is instrumental - he will be analysing and interpreting the data recorded by field workers in these locations over a two year period.

African primates have full colour vision, like humans, but in Madagascar only a quarter of ring-tailed lemurs can see the full colour spectrum. The scientists will be examining how much of a difference having full colour vision might make. For example, only female ring-tailed lemurs have full colour vision, and they are strongly dominant. The team will be evaluating whether these things are related.

The project will also be examining the chemistry and physics of primates’ food, determining the relationship between colour and nutritional value. What looks like undergrowth to us could be a feast for the ring-tailed lemur - Daniel will now be able to go some way towards telling us why.
Teaching Virtually Revolutionised
With Internet Project

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They are able to ‘administer’ up to 40 tests on the patients in order to reach a diagnosis.

With the speech therapy database, a student can log-on to the site, using a special password, and select a patient from an organised menu of cases. A videoclip is then displayed of the patient speaking with a consultant. The clip is crucial, as Richard points out: "The astute observer can detect patterns of language use, as well as clues from motor movements. Also, it ensures that they see the patient they are dealing with as a real person rather than a disembodied voice." A test can then be ‘administered’ on the patient by the logged-on student. On the TROC test, for example, the patient listens to a stimulus and points to the corresponding picture. An arrow on the screen reveals which pictures the patient has chosen, and the student can make a record of their success rate. Other tests include the patient’s own spoken response to tests, which the student is able to hear and take note of. The students can then make a diagnosis, as they would be able to in a clinical situation.

Richard emphasises that the teaching tool benefits tutors as well as students. The sequence of tests is logged, which means students can be assessed on which tests they have chosen and in what order: "They can print their log off and take it to tutorials for assessments. This presents an unprecedented opportunity for tutors to gain an explicit insight into students’ diagnostic reasoning," he says. It will also be an invaluable resource for researchers who want to discover further details about cases they might read about in journals. Indeed, Richard believes that inclusion on PATSY could eventually become an adjunct to normal ways of academic publishing. And crucially, "PATSY can also help trained clinicians who feel they’ve got a bit rusty, and who want to get some experience with rare cases," he says.

New cases and new disciplines can be added to the database all the time, making it a dynamic, growing resource. Psychiatrists could virtually scrutinise symptoms of rare disorders, clinical psychologists could scour on-line patients for Alzheimer’s Disease, and pathologists could determine the root causes of rare diseases. In the near future, PATSY could be an integral part of every health-related case-based discipline.

Having A Ball

The Summer Ball was held on campus this year in a luxurious marquee decorated in purple and gold satin. Over 900 students attended (five of whom are pictured above) and were entertained by DJ Billy Diamond and bands Mo the Hump, The Mighty F.O.U.D. and the Tom Jones Tribute Band.

Students Launch New Journal

An innovative new student-led journal is being launched at Sussex this week. A group of research students in Social and Political Thought have developed the new journal, Studies in Social and Political Thought, as a means of exchanging ideas and establishing contacts between postgraduates in their field.

The editorial group hope that the journal will provide a forum for interdisciplinary work in social and political theory and its history. They also see it as giving postgraduates a chance to get a first publication alongside work by established academics, and they hope it will provide a platform for stimulating and controversial views of a high academic standard.

The first edition of the journal will include articles and reviews on topics ranging from Adam Smith and Jürgen Habermas to Spare Rib magazine and New Labour. The editorial team believes there is a demand for a publication like this. As one of them puts it, ‘There’s not a lot going on which puts students in touch - it helps to know what colleagues are doing. But also, there will be more freedom to publish polemical pieces than there is in most academic journals. We are hoping it will act as a starting point for debate.’

The journal is due to come out twice a year, and is available from Diane Jordan in Arts E413 at £2.00 a copy. Potential contributors can contact the editors at sptj@sussex.ac.uk.

Electrical Shutdown

Due to refurbishments to the University’s high voltage equipment, there will be a total loss of electricity to the campus for 10 hours on Saturday 26 June starting around 8:00 am. Key personnel, i.e., Building Resource Managers, Building Superintendents, Accommodation Managers etc., are aware of the standby generation provision which will be available to some parts of the University.

Further electrical shutdowns will be required to complete the refurbishment and building controllers will be advised accordingly. If you have any questions or comments regarding this please email Paul Feast at E.P.Feast@sussex.ac.uk.

Staff Development Opportunities

Funding may be available from Staff Development for faculty to attend the following events. Please contact the Staff Development Officer, ext 7188, for further details:

9-10 September 1999 - Teaching and Learning for the new millennium: ‘Facilitating change through self assessment’. Self Assessment in Professional and Higher Education (SAPHE) at University of Bristol.
In Turner’s footsteps - Sussex Project Casts New Light on Art

David Alan Mellor, who teaches history of art in EAM, is hoping to change perceptions of modern art with an exhibition at Petworth House in West Sussex.

The stately home was the inspiration for several of Turner’s greatest paintings in the 1820s and 30s. The artist produced paintings such as Sunset Across Petworth Park in his imposing studio, which is now being restored with a £1 million grant from the National Trust. This historic setting will form a backdrop for David’s project, Tracing Light, which is organised with the company Photoworks and funded by the National Lottery. The project will provoke a crossover of two artistic epochs by encouraging a modern artist to create pictures with Turner’s own inspirations in mind.

Garry Fabian Miller, a Dartmoor-based artist, was chosen for the project. His works embody a fascination with light, the ephemeral and photography - a contemporary take on the same themes which interested Turner. The initial exhibition sets Miller’s existing work alongside some of Turner’s most memorable pieces. The artist will also be in residence at Petworth for the summer, giving educational workshops as well as creating new works of art inspired by the same settings and themes which preoccupied Turner 170 years ago.

The residency will culminate in an exhibition of the pieces Miller creates with this mandate in mind. David will curate this exhibition, as well as writing a book about the project in the autumn, which will focus on Turner’s preoccupation with photography. History of Art students from the University will be helping to research the book - "It’s very exciting stuff," says David, "The students who take part will have a chance to rewrite history."

The Sussex Science Experience

Once again, the summer science school (26 to 30 July) provides a unique opportunity to sample the excitement of Sussex science. Organised by Tim Metham, head of Arts/Science, it promises to be an exuberant and exciting week with maximum participation.

Six courses will run simultaneously, covering such things as the ascent of man, first steps on the internet, seeing the universe, genetic engineering, chemistry in the garden, and environmental issues. The courses will offer plenty of opportunities for discussion, practical demonstration and hands-on activity. In addition, each day will start with a keynote lecture on a topic of general interest to all participants. The distinguished speakers will include Sir Harry Kroto, mathematician John Haigh, author of Taking Chances and radio pundit on the lottery, and physics professor Peter Townsend, author of Bettering Stradivarius, who will be championing the benefits of imperfection in science and music (with his violin).

Three evening sessions, open to all participants (and sisters, cousins and aunts), will explore the portrayal of science in the cinema and media. The first will focus on computing and the issues raised in the film 2001. In the second, Professor John Maynard-Smith will be on hand to deal with the misconceptions of Jurassic Park and in the final evening session, a panel of ‘experts’ will try to answer "Can you really do that?".

Altogether, it promises a lively cross-cultural experience for the intellectually curious: a taste of the science behind the news for a fee of £50 for the week. Details from Tim Metham, CPES (tel 678920, e-mail: t.n.metham@sussex.ac.uk) or CPES School Office.

Research Funding Opportunities

This is a selection of Research Opportunities. More details of these and other opportunities are available from the Research Grants & Contracts Office, contact Debbie, ext 3812 or email: D.Foy-Eveet@sussex.ac.uk. For an extensive listing of funding opportunities see REFUND on the Research Web site: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/research or USIS Home Page, under Research.

The Royal Society, through COFUS, is offering grants to support projects which enable people to access contemporary issues and ideals in science, engineering and technology through debate, demonstration, interaction, exhibition or other pursuits. Three types of grants are available: seed grants up to £3,000; development grants up to £20,000; and setWeek grants up to £3,000 for activities tailored for the National Week of Science, Engineering and Technology in 2000. Deadline: 30 June 1999.

The Department for International Development invites proposals for its programme on "Global Issues and Poverty Elimination". The programme is expected to last three years and cost up to £2 million. The aims are: to elucidate the impact of globalisation on the structure of production, trade and labour markets; to explore the relationship between capital flows, development and poverty reduction; to understand the governance and institutional implications of globalisation. Deadline: letters of intent 2 July; applications 30 July 1999.

The US NIH and the Environment Protection Agency are inviting applications to study the genetic susceptibility and mechanisms of human congenital malformations. Project periods of up to five years and a budget for direct costs of up to £436,000 per year can be requested. Letters of intent: 1 July 1999; applications 20 August 1999.

The EPSRC is inviting proposals for its partnership and public understanding awards. Applications should be from researchers for projects which communicate the challenge and excitement of their work to a wider public. Awards will range from £10,000 to £20,000 but higher awards of £40,000 may be made for exceptional projects. Deadline: 1 September 1999.

The EPSRC is calling for proposals under the engineering and manufacturing programme. Collaborative research proposals in the area of microsystems technology are sought with activities focusing on the design and manufacture of integrated microsystems. Deadline: 10 September 1999.

The EPSRC is accepting applications for the third round of the Water Infrastructure and Treatment Engineering programme. For principle objectives and research themes contact RCGO. Deadline: outline proposals 21 September 1999.
Noticeboard

Lectures, Seminars, Colloquia

Monday 21 June
1.00pm Experimental Psychology Seminar: Dai Stephens. BLR.

5.00pm Women’s Studies Research-in-Progress Seminar: Linda Parker, Marina Green-Thakrar. D610.

Tuesday 22 June
2.15pm SEI Research-in-Progress Seminar: SEI Plenum. A71.

4.15pm Biochemistry and Genetics & Development Seminar: Charles Affourtit, Kinetic action and interaction of mitochondrial respiratory enzymes. BLR.

Wednesday 23 June
1.00pm IDS Seminar: Paddy Coulter (International Broadcasting Trust), What on earth is going on? The paradox of media insularity in the era of globalisation. Room 221.

Friday 25 June
4.00pm Chemical Physics and Materials Seminar: Peter J Derrick (Warwick), Fourier transform ion cyclotron resonance: physics meets biomolecular chemistry. CHI-3R241 (M53).

Workshops, Special Lectures and Conferences

Tuesday 22 June: Lucas Memorial Lecture in London. 7.30pm, St John’s Wood Liberal Synagogue. Organised by Centre for German-Jewish Studies. Henry Soussan (Sussex), The role of Rabbi Dr Leopold Lucas in the development of Wissenschaft des Judentums. If you wish to attend, please inform Diana Franklin, tel. 8771.

Friday 25 June (1.55pm - 7.00pm) & Saturday 26 June (9.30am - 1.00pm): Workshop on Sequential Optimisation. Speakers include P Whittle (Cambridge), H Chernoff (Harvard), A.J. Petkau (BC) and DJ Salmond (Defence Evaluation and Research Agency). For further information, contact Steve Coad, SMS, ext 2903.

Saturday 3 July: Therapeutic Uses of the Literary Arts. A one day conference organised by CCE. Contact Caroline, ext 8040, for further details.

Summer Schools

EURO Languages for Pleasure. Five-day Summer Schools in French, German, Italian, Japanese, Russian and Spanish from 5 - 16 July 1999. Cost £100. If you are interested in these courses, or our weekly courses starting in October, contact the Open Course Assistant on (877)258.

Small Ads

WANTED: For 14-28 August 1999, 2-bed flat or small house in Brighton/Hove, pref close to shops. Tel/fax 326693 or email jsam@powis.u-net.com.

Earn Money and Get Free Drinks!!
During the summer holidays I need volunteers to help with a study on effects of alcohol and lorazepam on mood and liking for alcoholic beverages. You could earn up to £50 for participating. For more information please contact Dr Anne Jackson on 877031, or e-mail: jackson@epunix.sussex.ac.uk

WANTED: Single female, NS, member of faculty, seeks furnished room/shared accommodation from Oct-mid Nov. in Lewes, Brighton or in the countryside. Please contact: Email S.Uszpelskat@sussex.ac.uk, or tel: 01242 229378.

FOR SALE: Volvo 240 DL Estate. W reg. Engine gone as drove without oil but MOT until November, superb mechanical and bodywork. Was extremely reliable and tidy! £180. Dan. 678269/D.Harper@ids.ac.uk.


TO LET: Attractive house, central Lewes (station 6 mins walk). 4 Rooms, Kitchen, Bath, Separate WC, Gas central heating, suit 3 postgraduates, visiting faculty. Rent £650 pcm. (i.e. £50 per week each, 3 people sharing) phone 474017 or 471281.

FOR SALE: MERCEDES 500 SEL (Special Edition), LHD, Auto, FSH, ABS, White, VGC, Climate Control, 1982, Electric all windows & all seats (heated) & mirrors & SR, Alarm, 5 spoke, alloys, Face off stereo, Leather, £3,500 ono, call ext: 2623, 01273 684202 (eve) or e-mail: lerturk@sussex.ac.uk.


The Sussex Innovation Centre will be holding an Open Day on 22 June 1999 between 10.00am and 4.00pm. Find out more information about:
• Sussex Innovation Centre
• Companies in the Centre
• Innovation Support Services
See the website for more details: www.sussexinnovation.co.uk.

Bulletin

The Bulletin appears every Friday during term time with copy deadlines the preceding Friday lunchtime. We welcome any suggestions for news, events, letters and small ads from staff and students of the University.

Please contact the Information Office in Sussex House on (67)8888 or email: Bulletin@sussex.ac.uk.