Keynote & Featured Speakers dashboard

Keynotes

In-person keynotes

Keynote in person - Professor David Brown

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Keynote Title: MetaHumans, Virtual Reality and Privacy Preserving Approaches to Support Children and Young People with Learning Disabilities and Autism

Title & Affiliation: Professor David Brown, Professor of Interactive Systems, Nottingham Trent University

Time Schedule: TBA

This talk will explore the role of MetaHumans and Virtual Reality to support the health and wellbeing of children and young people with learning disabilities and autism, whilst being mindful of our collective responsibility to proceed in an ethical manner. Three projects which illustrate these tenets will be covered: (1) Combing electroencephalogram data and VR based spatial navigation performance metrics to detect early cognitive decline in young adults with Down's Syndrome. (2) The use of mimicry tasks to train facial emotion expression recognition in individuals with autism and alexithymia leveraging the MetaHuman Framework. (3) A privacy-preserving approach for 'Meltdown' detection in children with autism using machine learning models combining facial emotional expressions, involuntary gestures and physiological data to infer the very early stages of emotional dysregulation – the "rumble stage", so that teaching staff, parents and carers can introduce evidence-based well-being interventions in a timely manner.

Biography

David is Chair of the International Conference on Disability, Virtual Reality and Associated Technology. He is both a Principal and Co-Investigator on a range of Horizon Europe, British Council and UKRI projects investigating the role of multimodal affect recognition, eXplainable and privacy preserving AI to promote inclusive education, and the positive mental and clinical wellbeing of students with Intellectual Disabilities and Autism. He is Associate Editor for Frontiers: Virtual Reality in Medicine (

https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/virtual-reality/sections/virtual-reality-in-medicine) and Editorial Board Member for Virtual Worlds.

Keynote in person - Professor Eleni A. Kyza

Professor Elenia A. Kyza

Keynote Title: Bridging the Virtual and the Real: Designing XR for Agency, Engagement, and Impact

Title & Affiliation: Professor Eleni A. Kyza, Cyprus University of Technology

Time Schedule: TBA

Extended Reality (XR) technologies can reshape learning by enabling immersive experiences that bridge formal and informal learning. Designing XR for education goes beyond creating engaging experiences: it is a purposeful activity, aiming to foster meaningful skills, attitudes, and knowledge. In my presentation, I will share findings from a design-based research program focused on developing augmented and virtual reality learning environments that promote engagement, motivation, and learner agency. I will discuss evidence from studies conducted with learners ranging from elementary school to higher education, in history education and cultural heritage contexts. Our research employed mixed methods, triangulating data from multiple sources to gain a deeper understanding of how learners engaged with the XR learning ecosystem. Analyses led to insights that can inform efforts to personalize learning in immersive contexts. I will conclude with key takeways, including the potential of GenAI to scale personalized learning and enhance the effectiveness of XR-based experiences.

Biography

Dr. Eleni A. Kyza is a Professor in Information Society in the Department of Communication and Internet Studies at the Cyprus University of Technology, where she leads the Media, Cognition, and Learning Research Group (http://mcl.cut.ac.cy). She has a background in educational technology, cognitive science and the learning sciences, and a continuous interest in how digital technologies can support learning, critical reflection, and the development of active and informed citizens. Her research investigates technology-enhanced learning environments to support motivated, meaningful, and reflective practices. Her work has examined, among others, inquiry-based learning, teacher learning and professional development, scaffolding student learning, collaborative learning, and media & information literacy on social media. With her colleagues, she has developed and empirically investigated learning technologies, such as the web-based learning and teaching platform STOCHASMOS for promoting evidence-based reasoning in science education, TraceReaders, an augmented reality platform for scaffolding students' inquiry learning in informal and non-formal contexts, and CompARe, a mixed reality environment. She has served as Editor-in-Chief of Instructional Science President of the European Association for Research on Learning and Instruction (EARLI) (2021-2023), President of the International Society of the Learning Sciences (ISLS). She is an Inaugural Fellow of ISLS.

Keynote in person - Professor Guido Makransky

Professor Guido Makransky

Keynote Title: Moving from Information to Experience: Exploring the Potential of Virtual Reality in Education

Title & Affiliation: Professor Guido Makransky, University of Copenhagen

Time Schedule: TBA

I will present the current state of the art in research on learning with immersive technology including immersive virtual reality (IVR). I will begin by outlining why this area is of growing importance in education. Next, I will summarize key empirical findings and highlight several theory-driven frameworks that provide insight into the cognitive and affective mechanisms involved in IVR-based individual and collaborative learning. Finally, I will discuss a range of application areas where this knowledge can be used to enhance the effectiveness of education and related fields.

Biography

Professor Guido Makransky is the leader of the Virtual Learning Lab (https://psychology.ku.dk/vll/) and head of the SCOPE section (Social, Cultural, Organisational, Personality and Educational Psychology) at the Department of Psychology, University of Copenhagen. His research explores how emerging technologies such as virtual and extended reality, immersive simulations, and generative AI influence learning, collaboration, and behavioural change. His current projects combine controlled laboratory studies with real world experiments in classrooms and organizations, integrating theories from educational psychology and related fields with contemporary measurement methods. The overarching goal of his research is to provide evidence-based insights for designing learner centered AI and XR supported learning interventions that help educators, trainers, and stakeholders harness emerging technologies to improve the quality of education and training.

Online Keynotes

Online Keynote Professor Barney Dalgarno

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Keynote Title: Exploring Learning Affordances of Mixed Reality Environments

Title & Affiliation: Professor Barney Dalgarno, Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education, University of Canberra

Time Schedule: TBA

This presentation will discuss potential learning affordances of Mixed Reality (MR) environments, extending the 3D Virtual Environment affordance model (Dalgarno & Lee, 2010). The presentation will begin with a discussion of technology changes and new applications since Milgram and Kishino (1994) proposed their virtuality continuum and will identify enhancements required within an

updated MR model. Common and unique characteristics across three MR categories will be identified along with common and unique afforded learning tasks and learning benefits. To help unpack this proposed MR affordance model current and future applications of MR learning environments will be described, harnessing developments in MR and GenAI technologies. Finally, ways in which these applications might align with emerging models of cognition and learning will be discussed.

Dalgarno, B., & Lee, M. J. (2010). What are the learning affordances of 3-D virtual environments? British Journal of Educational Technology, 41(1), 10-32.

Milgram, P., & Kishino, F. (1994). A taxonomy of mixed reality visual displays. IEICE TRANSACTIONS on Information and Systems, 77(12), 1321-1329.

Biography

Professor Barney Dalgarno is Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Canberra in Australia. Professor Dalgarno’s research interests include the educational and social impact of digital technologies, the learning affordances of virtual, augmented and mixed realities, and the future of universities and schools in an age of digital disruption. He has had international influence through 140 publications, award winning online learning innovations and editorship of educational technology journals, books and conference proceedings.

Feature Talks

In-person Feature talks

Feature talk in-person - Dr. Elina Megalou

Dr. Elina Megalou

Feature Talk Title: Interactive and Immersive Learning at Scale: Greece’s National Infrastructure

Title & Affiliation: Dr. Elina Megalou, Director, Directorate of Educational Technologies, Training & Certification, CTI “Diophantus”

Time Schedule: TBA

How can immersive learning scale nationally to benefit every student and teacher in public education? This talk presents Greece’s strategy for advancing interactive and immersive learning by leveraging Open Educational Resources (OERs) and robust national infrastructures: the Photodentro Digital Repositories and National OER Aggregator, the collaborative educational platform e-me, the Digital Library of Interactive Textbooks, and the new Virtual Innovation Center. Developed and maintained by CTI “Diophantus” under the Ministry of Education, these systems ensure equitable access to high-quality interactive content and collaborative learning

across all Greek schools. They host thousands of open digital learning objects, including simulations, visualizations and virtual environments, fostering active, student-centered learning, while the new Innovation Center's repository, icRepo, focuses on immersive resources, including Augmented and Virtual Reality (AR/VR). Through this infrastructure, Greece has built and continues to expand a scalable, sustainable ecosystem that empowers educators and engages students through immersive digital experiences.

Biography

Dr. Elina Megalou is the Director of the Educational Technologies, Training, and Certification Directorate at CTI "Diophantus," the technological arm of the Greek Ministry of Education. With a Diploma in Computer Engineering and a PhD in Data and Knowledge Engineering, she has over 25 years of experience in digital education. Since joining CTI in 1988, she has coordinated numerous national and EU projects, including the large-scale national program "Digital School I & II" (2010–2021) for the digital transformation of Greek schools. She has designed and leads key national platforms, including Photodentro, Greece's ecosystem of Open Educational Resource (OER) Repositories and National Aggregator; the Interactive Textbooks Digital Library; and the "e-me" digital collaborative learning platform, which serves 700,000 users. Her research interests focus on digital educational repositories, OERs, metadata, digital libraries, and platforms that foster active and collaborative learning.

Feature talk in-person - Daniel Mitelpukt

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Feature Talk Title: Turning the head-mounted-device on its head: adventures in further extended reality

Title & Affiliation: Daniel Mitelpukt, Director of Digital Media Lab, Imperial College London

Time Schedule: TBA

At the intersection of creative tech and STEMB higher education, Imperial College London's Digital Media Lab develops interactive simulation and visualization solutions and experiences. Sharing examples of XR and 'further extended reality' work, the session will propose a way of looking afresh at familiar challenges.

From digital twins of physical teaching labs to bespoke 3D-printed VR controllers and pixel-streamed simulations in 'traditional' lecture theatres, work shared would point to the benefit of spending more time on questions, rather than knee-jerking into end-modality-defined projects (or teams).

What if the key to fully scaling in-house VR in universities is not in VR at all? What if ethical adoption of Gen-AI nudges us to question how human our praxis is? What if device affordances and limitations could lead to better learning design? Could investing in better digital learning spaces actually improve our physical ones? Who better to ponder these with than iLRN colleagues..?

Biography

Daniel Mitelpunkt is Founder and Director of the Digital Media Lab at Imperial College London, where he leads strategy, operations, creative direction and R&D in applied media. As the College’s senior applied media officer, he shapes institute-wide policy and planning for digital media and immersive learning. Daniel previously worked as Executive Producer on issues-based and healthcare content for global corporations, NGOs and universities. At Imperial, he has pioneered scalable, cross-disciplinary workflows, collaborating with academic and professional colleagues, as well as students and creative industry practitioners, for improved learner experience. He is a passionate advocate for embedding creative tech within higher education, fostering bi-lateral, national and international collaborations to advance this agenda.

Feature talk in-person - Professor Michalis Paraskevas

Dr. Michalis Paraskevas

Feature Talk Title: From Collaboration to Transformation: How eTwinning shapes digital, STEM and AI-ready teachers

Title & Affiliation: Dr. Michalis Paraskevas, Professor at the University of Peloponnese, Vice-President of the CTI “Diophantus”, Head of NSO eTwinning

Time Schedule: TBA

eTwinning is a flagship programme of the European Commission, that promotes educational innovation, collaborative learning, digital skills and intercultural understanding. Since 2005, Greece has developed an active community of teachers, schools and pedagogical students, implementing numerous collaborative projects that have received recognition at a European level. The Greek National Support Organization (NSO) promotes modern teaching practices and ICT skills through initiatives such as webinars, contact seminars, professional development workshops, online courses, MOOCs, STEM and AI activities, and the Initial Teacher Education (ITE) initiative. Quality labels, national and European conferences, and international competitions further encourage excellence and exchange. Best practices are disseminated through a strong network of ambassadors and institutional partners, and the programme's impact is extended across the education community through publications and digital repositories. Operated by the CTI “Diophantus” in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Greek NSO demonstrates how eTwinning can transform educational culture and build resilient learning communities.

Biography

Dr. Michalis Paraskevas is Professor at the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, University of Peloponnese, specializing in signal processing systems, broadband networks, and telematic services. He is Vice-President of the Computer Technology Institute & Press “Diophantus”, Coordinator of the Greek School Network, and Head of the National eTwinning Support Organization in Greece. He is also responsible for the national stop-bullying.gov.gr platform. His research interests span digital signal processing, information theory, next generation networks, machine learning for image and natural language processing, and the digital

transformation of education. He has published more than 100 papers in international journals and conferences, authored four university textbooks, and served on over 50 editorial boards and program committees. His work has been cited more than 1,000 times and referenced in over 70 patents. With thirty years of professional experience in broadband networks, telecommunications, e-government, and e-learning services, he has directed numerous R&D projects with national and international recognition. He has served as Head of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (2019–2021) and currently coordinates the NetLearn research group at CTI. He teaches undergraduate and postgraduate courses on signal processing, information theory, next generation networks, and advanced educational technologies at the Universities of Peloponnese and Thessaly.

Online Feature Talk Presentations

Feature talk Online - Professor Panayiotis Koutsabasis & Spyros Vosinakis

Online Joint Feature Talk Title: Meaningful Immersion: Human-Centered Design for Learning and Cultural Heritage

Title & Affiliation:

Professor Panayiotis Koutsabasis, University of the Aegean, Associate Professor

Spyros Vosinakis, University of the Aegean

Time Schedule: TBA

The design of immersive experiences in education and cultural heritage is continuously explored to enhance engagement, understanding, and emotional connection. These systems range from mobile and desktop applications to room-scale mixed reality installations that integrate sensing, display, and multimodal interaction technologies. Yet their value lies not in technological novelty but in how they address the cognitive and emotional needs of users, the context of use, and the spatial and interactional affordances of each experience.

This featured talk presents methods and practices for designing and evaluating immersive learning experiences through examples from real-world projects. It highlights how design intent, iterative prototyping, and formative evaluation work together to create engaging, human-centered experiences. Drawing on empirical insights, we identify recurring principles and patterns for designing interactive environments that are both aesthetically compelling and pedagogically effective, and we discuss future directions toward hybrid, tangible, and playful immersive learning.

Biography: Professor Panayiotis Koutsabasis

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Panayiotis Koutsabasis is Professor (Human-Computer Interaction) at the University of the Aegean, Syros island, Greece.

He has been teaching for over 20 years at undergraduate and postgraduate level courses in the subjects of Human-Computer Interaction and Informatics. He has supervised 2 PhD theses, and > 100 M.D. and M.Sc. theses in the above subjects. He is the author of two books (in Greek) on the subject of human-computer communication.

He has published more than 100 papers in international scientific journals, conferences and book chapters, including Int. J. of Human-Computer Studies, Int. J. of Human-Computer Interaction, Behaviour and Information Technology, Virtual Reality, Presence, Design Studies, CoDesign, BJET, ACM Computing in Cultural Heritage, J. of Usability Studies, Mobile HCI, etc. His published work has an h-index: 21 according to Scopus and h-index: 28 according to Google Scholar. He is a regular reviewer of papers in approximately 40 international conferences and 30 journals. He is a regular member of the organizing committee of the ACM CHIGreece conference, which has as its main purpose the interaction and dissemination of results of the Greek community of scientists in the field of Human-Computer Interaction. He is a member of ACM, ACM SIGCHI, ACM SIGCHI Greek chapter, and EUSET.

Research Interests: Human-Computer Interaction and Design (HCI and Design): design methods, procedures, guidelines, models, etc.; Natural user interactions (NUIs), especially kinesthetic and aerial interaction with gestures, interaction with mixed and augmented reality systems, interaction with portable devices, etc.; User experience (usability, accessibility) and evaluation studies of HCI; Research through design in the fields of: digital cultural heritage, education and learning, collaborative work, experiential tourism, etc.

Biography: Associate Professor Spyros Vosinakis

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Spyros Vosinakis is an Associate Professor at the Department of Product and Systems Design Engineering of the University of the Aegean, specializing in Virtual Reality. His research interests include Multi-User Virtual Environments, Intelligent Virtual Agents, Serious Games, and 3D User Interfaces, as well as their applications in the fields of culture, tourism, and education. He has published one book and more than 100 scientific papers in international journals, conference proceedings, and book chapters. His published work has received over 2,400 citations. He has participated as a researcher in seventeen funded research and development projects, serving as coordinator or principal investigator in seven of them, and has over 20 years of experience as a developer of interactive systems and 3D applications for companies and research projects. Since 2019, he has been the Director of the Interactive Systems Design Laboratory.

Feature talk Online - Vassiliki Bouki

Online Feature Talk Title: From Plato’s Cave to Immersive Learning in the AI Era

Title & Affiliation: Dr Vassiliki Bouki, Principal Lecturer, University of Westminster

Time Schedule: TBA

From the dawn of history, “learning” has stood at the heart of human survival and development. The plethora of tools offered by today’s technology allows us to learn in ways we could not have imagined before. Yet, beyond these new opportunities, today’s technology—especially the use of AI—seems to challenge the very heart of learning. It allows us to correctly apply knowledge in almost any subject, even at a deep level, without having truly “learned” it. Knowledge is increasingly detached from the process of learning, and we observe a paradox: although we are able to handle or apply more knowledge, less “actual” learning may occur. This talk will attempt to address this paradox by discussing Plato’s theoretical approach to ‘learning’ as presented in the Allegory of the Cave and his view of ‘automated learning,’ while exploring whether immersive approaches could potentially benefit from the Platonic perspective.

Biography

Dr Vassiliki Bouki is a Principal Lecturer at the School of Computer Science, University of Westminster, London. She has more than 30 years of teaching and research experience in higher education. Her research interests include Educational Technology, Virtual Environments for Training Purposes, and Cognitive Processes. She has numerous publications in journals and refereed international conference proceedings, including award-winning conference paper, and has served on conference editorial committees. She is a founding member of the “Serious Games at Westminster” research group and has participated in several funded research projects. She is also a Fellow of the British Computer Society.

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