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**Education in Cultural Understanding, Technologically-Enhanced**

**Collaborative Project (ICT-2009.4.2)  
Technology-Enhanced learning**

Start date of project: **01/09/2010**

Duration: **36 months**

**(D8.1). (On-line Presence)**

Due date of deliverable: month 1

Actual submission date: 28 October 2010



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STATUS: [Final]

<b>Project co-funded by the European Commission within the Seventh Framework Programme</b>		
<b>Dissemination Level</b>		
<b>PU</b>	Public	X
<b>PP</b>	Restricted to other programme participants (including the Commission Services)	
<b>RE</b>	Restricted to a group specified by the consortium (including the Commission services)	
<b>CO</b>	Confidential, only for members of the consortium (including the Commission Services)	

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## **1. Purpose of Document:**

This document D8.1, described some of the requirements needed for the creation of the web presence for the eCute project. The main result of the deliverable is the development of a web site (web-based content management system) that would support the eCute team in its activities and help in achieving dissemination targets. This involves the production of web content and dissemination materials for the project.

This document presents the design, content and technical considerations taken in achieving the team's web site and presents a first prototype of the web presence for the project.

## **2. Executive Overview:**

This deliverable describes the first instalment of the eCute web site. The design of a web site should not be overlooked and plays an important role in dissemination and information exercises. The structural design of a web site conditions greatly the effectiveness and ultimately repeated use of a web presence.

After a brief introduction in section 3, section 4 presents the design strategy for establishing a web presence for the eCute project. First, web types are considered and the type of web functionalities such a web site should aim at covering. Then, we identify the target audience for our web presence and consider the motivations for each of the identified target audience to consult the web site. Finally, in this section, we deliver a list of likely informative sections for the web presence.

In section 5, we look at first at the technical aspect of the web presence and the technology in use in the development of the web site and then illustrate our work on this particular deliverable by presenting a series of screenshots of the actual web presence for the eCute project.

### **3. Introduction**

The eCute web site (<http://www.ecute.eu>) has been designed in order to support the Framework VII EU project eCute (Education in Cultural Understanding, technologically enhanced). The website's aim is to clearly explain and describe the motivations and achievements of the project team and is to be included into the dissemination exercise.

## 4. Content of the Website:

### 4.1. Content information

Currently the project website features a first iteration of a content structure (with necessary sections focussing on early stage dissemination and areas for future dissemination.) This initial content includes the following:

- 1) A description of the project and its aims.
- 2) Detailed background information on the project.
- 3) Resume details on people involved in the project.
- 4) Links to institutions.
- 5) Background reading on some of the research domain topics.
- 6) A geographic representation of project partners.

Several types of information will be developed for the project web site. These include the followings:

#### 1- Project information

- eCute – What is the project?
- Project aims
- Project partners
- Project team
- Project experience
- Map of Partner Locations

#### 2 - Background

- Culturally-Specific Expressive Behaviour
- Pedagogical approaches to education in cultural awareness
- Synthetic cultures, scenarios and affective states

#### 3- Publications

All the publications in the project will be listed here.

#### 4- Contact information

- General enquiries
- Web manager contact.
- Admin contact

#### 5- Document information

- Brochures
- Official documentation
- Presentations

#### 9- Media Information

- Videos etc.

#### 10- Resources

- Links

#### 11- Event calendar

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## 5. Web Technology Used

The project web site and its different functionalities are going to be incrementally developed and implemented as the information and data become available.

The website is built using wordpress ([www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)) which offers highly customisable, but structured, website creation. The platform was chosen based on the following requirements/considerations:

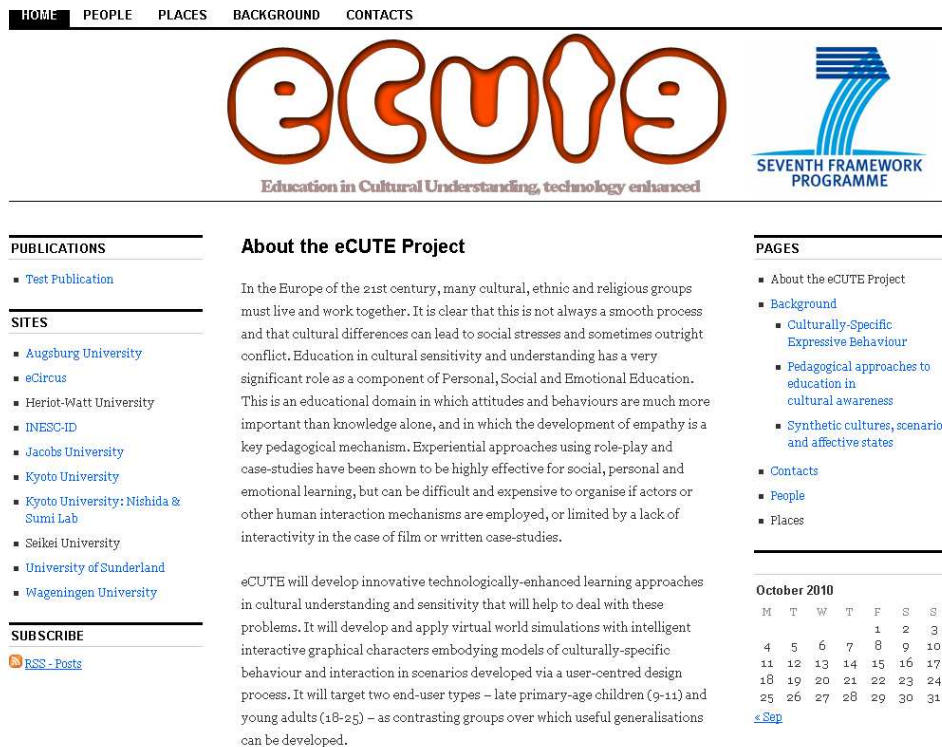
- 1) **Robustness and Reliability.** The platform is widely used and proven to be reliable. It is also a standard means for setting up websites with collaboratively generated content.
- 2) **Ease of implementation and Editing.** The website can be easily edited with effective built in tools, while retaining integrity. Also, many levels of access privileges can be granted so that many people can edit the site content while ensuring overall integrity and structure isn't jeopardised.
- 3) **Standards Compliance.** The wordpress platform conforms to many web standards (e.g. RSS) that allow it to integrate to wider information and social networks.
- 4) **Quality of user experience.** The platform allows collaborative access and high customisation while still keeping the overall quality, especially important from a user experience point of view.

At the moment the site is hosted by wordpress but, by using a remapped URL, the webpage appears to the user as [www.ecute.eu](http://www.ecute.eu) (with all sub-sections of the site appearing as sub-sections of [www.ecute.eu](http://www.ecute.eu).)

Wordpress also offer an open source implementation of the platform ([www.wordpress.org](http://www.wordpress.org)). Should a deeper level of customisation be needed the website can be re-implemented using the open-source platform (for example, if it's decided to host the service from a proprietary server).

## 6. Screenshots

The website has an attractive design which will be updated along with the content over the time of the project.



The screenshot shows the main page of the eCUTE website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for HOME, PEOPLE, PLACES, BACKGROUND, and CONTACTS. Below the menu is the eCUTE logo, which consists of the letters 'eCUTE' in a stylized, rounded font. To the right of the logo is the Seventh Framework Programme logo. Below the logo, the text 'Education in Cultural Understanding, technology enhanced' is displayed. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column contains sections for PUBLICATIONS (with a link to 'Test Publication'), SITES (listing various universities and research centers), and SUBSCRIBE (with an RSS - Posts link). The middle column features the 'About the eCUTE Project' section, which includes a paragraph about cultural differences and a paragraph about the project's goals. The right column contains a 'PAGES' section with links to 'About the eCUTE Project', 'Background', 'Contacts', 'People', and 'Places', and a calendar for October 2010.

**HOME PEOPLE PLACES BACKGROUND CONTACTS**

**eCUTE**  
Education in Cultural Understanding, technology enhanced

**SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME**

**PUBLICATIONS**

- Test Publication

**SITES**

- Augsburg University
- eCircus
- Heriot-Watt University
- INESC-ID
- Jacobs University
- Kyoto University
- Kyoto University: Nishida & Sumi Lab
- Seikei University
- University of Sunderland
- Wageningen University

**SUBSCRIBE**

- RSS - Posts

**About the eCUTE Project**

In the Europe of the 21st century, many cultural, ethnic and religious groups must live and work together. It is clear that this is not always a smooth process and that cultural differences can lead to social stresses and sometimes outright conflict. Education in cultural sensitivity and understanding has a very significant role as a component of Personal, Social and Emotional Education. This is an educational domain in which attitudes and behaviours are much more important than knowledge alone, and in which the development of empathy is a key pedagogical mechanism. Experiential approaches using role-play and case-studies have been shown to be highly effective for social, personal and emotional learning, but can be difficult and expensive to organise if actors or other human interaction mechanisms are employed, or limited by a lack of interactivity in the case of film or written case-studies.

eCUTE will develop innovative technologically-enhanced learning approaches in cultural understanding and sensitivity that will help to deal with these problems. It will develop and apply virtual world simulations with intelligent interactive graphical characters embodying models of culturally-specific behaviour and interaction in scenarios developed via a user-centred design process. It will target two end-user types – late primary-age children (9-11) and young adults (18-25) – as contrasting groups over which useful generalisations can be developed.

**PAGES**

- About the eCUTE Project
- Background
  - Culturally-Specific Expressive Behaviour
  - Pedagogical approaches to education in cultural awareness
  - Synthetic cultures, scenarios and affective states
- Contacts
- People
- Places

**October 2010**

M	T	W	T	F	S	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

[< Sep](#)

*Main page with the links*





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## Places

A map of the eCute world.



[View Larger Map](#)

*Locations of the partners on an interactive map.*



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## Culturally-Specific Expressive Behaviour

A very large proportion of human-human communication is non-verbal (Mehrabian & Ferris 1967), carried by facial expression, glance, gesture and posture. It is well-known in the field that, despite the biological universals underpinning some nonverbal behaviour, cultural differences involve variations in expressive behaviour (e.g., Elfenbein and Ambady 2002). For example, the extent to which people look directly at each other, the meaning of specific gestures and facial expressions, and the context in which they should be used vary over cultures. Thus, it is not obvious whether a smile is a sign of joy or of embarrassment, without being adapted to the cultural context. Proper responses to expressive behaviour are, however, a vital part of successful interaction (Kappas and Descôteaux 2003). These behaviours are used to track the intentions and goals of the interaction partner and to support the Theory of Mind, the human ability of attributing mental states such as intentions, beliefs, and values, not only to oneself but to others as well.

Because the processing of expressive behaviour takes place largely below the level of consciousness, culturally-specific assumptions about what it means can be particularly difficult to deal with in intercultural interactions (Singelis 1994). They may be heavily involved in the generation of Negative Red Flags (Seelye 1996) in which human interaction suddenly breaks down as the expectations of one or both interaction partners are suddenly confounded. Rising into consciousness the processing of expressive behaviour is an important issue in education in intercultural interaction since, as with the negative affective states already referred to, it allows people to understand and modify their behaviour. While this has typically been carried out through descriptive case studies (Singelis 1994), the use of responsive and interacting virtual agents offers a much more dramatic and engaging avenue for dealing with this issue.

While eCute showcases would easily support the use of avatars controlled by users as well as autonomous characters, the latter have strong advantages.

### *1 Consistent and repeatable expressive behaviour*

Asking users to explicitly control expressive behaviour poses a high cognitive load, and unless such users are experts, and/or briefed actors, inconsistent or erroneous behaviour may result. The use of whole body and complete facial motion tracking could be used as an alternative control mode but still does not guarantee consistent and repeatable behaviour as well as being expensive and intrusive.

## *An example of the page about background*