Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies

Volume 249

Series Editors

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Óscar Mealha · Mihai Dascalu · Tania Di Mascio
Editors

Ludic, Co-design and Tools Supporting Smart Learning Ecosystems and Smart Education

Proceedings of the 6th International Conference on Smart Learning Ecosystems and Regional Development

Springer

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ISSN 2190-3018 ISSN 2190-3026 (electronic)
Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies
ISBN 978-981-16-3929-6 ISBN 978-981-16-3930-2 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-3930-2

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The registered company address is: 152 Beach Road, #21-01/04 Gateway East, Singapore 189721, Singapore

Preface

It is our pleasure to announce another Springer edition of the International SLERD Conference Proceedings, an edition that still results from work and contributions that occurred during the global COVID-19 pandemic. This proceedings also confirms the resilience of our scientific community and the need to come forth with research results and foster solutions for the desired post-pandemic future. In 2020, the pandemic has affected the learning processes all over the world and learning ecosystems have reacted, exhibiting different degrees of resilience and promptness with the emergence of similarities, differences and inequalities. Multiple factors concur—i.e., processes, social communities and individuals—to determine the technological evolution of learning ecosystems and their smartness. The pandemic has generated a higher awareness about the intrinsic nature of the smart learning ecosystems which in return have evolved and have been influenced by the pandemic. The two dimensions that characterize the smart learning ecosystems—physical and virtual/digital (phygital)—are at stake, and a balance has to be re-achieved. Lessons learned with the compulsive global pandemic lockdown and the perpetuated online activity will surely start marking the agenda of a new era, an era with more certainty on the most adequate phygital models for learning ecosystems.

SLERD 2021 was announced with an expected venue in Bucharest, Romania, hosted by the University Politehnica of Bucharest; unfortunately, the global pandemic situation pushed, once again, this scientific event into a virtual fully blown, virtual, online international conference. The event was organized by the University Politehnica of Bucharest, Romania, with the partnership of Association for Smart Learning Ecosystems and Regional Development (ASLERD), an international nonprofit interdisciplinary and scientific–professional association committed to support learning ecosystems to get smarter and play a central role to regional development and social innovation. The University of Aveiro, Portugal, represented by its DigiMedia Research Group, also played a central role in the co-organization of this SLERD virtual edition.

Submissions received had authors from 13 different countries, an indicator of the global interest and partnership in the promoted topics. After a rigorous double-blind peer-review and meta-review process, 17 full papers were accepted to be included in SLERD 2021 Conference Proceedings, published by Springer, in the

Series *Smart Innovation, Systems and Technologies*. The selected scientific papers were organized by the conference topics and structured into four parts: (i) People in Place Centered Design for Smart Learning; (ii) Supportive Technologies and Tools for Smart Learning; (iii) Observing and Studying Learning Ecosystems; and (iv) Methods, Processes, and Communities. We believe this proceedings will be relevant for researchers, postgraduate students, teachers, designers and policy makers concerned with learning ecosystems, methods and empirical evidence of alternatives for post-pandemic learning scenarios.

It has been an honor to belong to this scientific community and serve as publishing chairs in this SLERD edition, with a final selection of papers that represent the excellence of all the authors' work, coupled with rigor throughout the decision and publishing processes. Much of this work would not have been possible without the effort and support of our Conference and Program Committees that included more than 50 international researchers. We would like to thank them all, for their time to organize the event with enthusiasm and commitment.

Aveiro, Portugal — Óscar Mealha
Bucharest, Romania — Mihai Dascalu
L'Aquila, Italy — Tania Di Mascio
May 2021

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