

HEA Future-Focus Forum

Digital Transformation and Empowering Technologies in Higher Education

19th February 2019

Herbert Park Hotel, Dublin 4

Overview

Higher education will change significantly over the next number of years due to digital transformation. The development of a *Higher Education Digital Transformation Framework* is a key action in the HEA Strategic Plan 2017-2021. In addition, the *Action Plan for Jobs 2018* commits to the completion of a new Government National Digital Strategy, to position Ireland to maximise economic and societal benefits from digitalisation.

In order, to place Irish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) at the forefront of the digital transformation agenda, and to harness the opportunities of an increasingly digital world, and prepare for the challenges, some critical questions must be explored: How can our HEIs provide leadership in ensuring an ethical and responsible use of technology and data? How do we empower people to build a data-first culture and future proof our digital infrastructure? What are the challenges and how do we prepare for them? What international best practice exists to inform a national approach to digital transformation in higher education?

These questions form the basis for the first Future Focus Forum. The objective is to stimulate disruptive thinking and look ahead at the emerging challenges and likely opportunities which could shape immediate and future policy for higher education in Ireland. The *Higher Education Digital Transformation Framework* to be developed by the HEA will be informed by the discussion at this Future Focus Forum.

Programme

08.30 *Registration and refreshments*

09.00 **Welcome:** Paul O'Toole, Chief Executive, Higher Education Authority, Ireland

09.05 **Opening Address:** Mary Mitchell-O'Connor, Minister for Higher Education, Ireland

09:15 **Context setting:** Gemma Irvine, Head of Policy and Strategic Planning, Higher Education Authority, Ireland

09:20 **Future proofing digital infrastructure for Higher Education**

What international best practice exists to showcase a national approach to digital transformation in higher education? How do we empower people to build a data-first culture and future proof our digital infrastructure in higher education? How can we ensure excellence in terms of Open Education and Open Data? Does the technological capability of the HEA, the HEIs and HEAnet need to be continually enhanced to underpin their role in digital transformation across the Irish higher education sector.

Moderator: Vivienne Patterson, Head of Skills, Engagement and Statistics, Higher Education Authority, Ireland

Presenter:

- Tim Fowler, Chief Executive, Tertiary Education Commission, New Zealand.

Panel contributors and Q&A with audience:

- Regina Murray, Senior Director, EMEA Higher Education Sector, Microsoft Ireland
- Paul Doyle, Head of Professional Development Programmes in Computer Science, Technological University Dublin, Ireland
- Oisín Hassan, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Union of Students in Ireland (USI), Ireland

11:00 *Refreshment break*

11:15 **The Cyber Effect: The Impact of Technology on Humankind**

Cyberpsychology is the study of the impact of technology on human behaviour. The iPhone child is now 10 years old, yet we are struggling to assess behavioural effects resulting from continuous engagement with digital technologies. Whilst we are more connected, we are experiencing greater

levels of anxiety, depression and social isolation in young people. Future cyber issues and trends will be explored, and a number of challenges will be considered; How do we balance competing priorities and interests in cyberspace? What is the impact of the cyber ecosystem in a developmental context? How do we prepare to meet the needs of the student of the future and what elements, both positive and negative, do HEIs need to consider in order to prepare?

Presenter: Mary Aiken, Adjunct Associate Professor, University College Dublin, Ireland

Q&A with audience

12:00

Providing leadership in responsible and ethical technology

Alignment with lifelong learning and UN sustainable development goals must inform our practice. How can HEIs empower sustainable lifelong learning, personal learning environments are one proposed approach? How can HEIs provide leadership in ensuring ethical and responsible use of technology and data?

Moderator: Orla Murphy, Head of Digital Arts and Humanities, University College Cork, Ireland

Presenter:

- Gerald Bast, Rector of the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, Austria

Panel contributors and Q&A with audience:

- Brendan Guenther, Chief Academic Digital Officer, Michigan State University, United States
- Síona Cahill, President of the Union of Students in Ireland (USI), Ireland

13.30

Light Lunch & Networking