- First Announcement -

SILVA Network Annual Conference

7 - 8 July, 2021

DIGITALIZATION IN HIGHER FOREST EDUCATION -
TEACHING AND LEARNING REVISITED

It is a pleasure for us to announce the 2021 Annual Conference on higher forestry education! The topic of digitalization is more actual than ever. Due to the pandemic circumstances, we will convene in a digital form this year. The event is co-organized by the IUFRO Forest Education Group.

Tentative Schedule

Wednesday: 7th July	
13:30-17:30	keynotes, technical sessions
Thursday: 8th July	
09:00-12:00, 13:30-17:30	technical sessions, SILVA Network general assembly

https://blog.zoom.us/using-zoom-breakout-rooms/

Topic and Call for Contributions:

Digitalization in higher forest education – teaching and learning revisited

As one of the megatrends in modern societies, digitalization has influenced all aspects of human life for several decades. With regard to the consequences for teaching and learning in forest sciences and related fields of study, SILVA Network has dedicated two previous conferences to Information and Communication Technologies[1]). Many things have changed since that time, both with regard to the technological possibilities and the framework conditions at higher education institutions. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic boosted the transition towards digitalization and distance learning in a breathtaking velocity.

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[1] *SILVA Network Publications 1, Tahvanainen & Pelkonen 2004*

While there are software solutions for all fields of education available today, universities and universities of applied sciences are adopting digitalization (or e-learning-) strategies to an increasing extent that are reaching far beyond the instrumental use of ICT. Rather, these strategies highlight overarching purposes like e.g. individualization of learning; social learning in virtual groups; strengthening the orientation towards competences in addition to knowledge. There are many examples where e-technologies are used in higher forest education, ranging from GIS-courses, marteloscopes, virtual forests to e-portfolios and overarching concepts like mobile learning. Additionally, in 2020 distance exams were replacing those in the lecture halls to a great extent.

However, against the background of the "fast track" digitalization at schools and universities, and efforts towards "Forestry 4.0", new challenges are arising. Are we addressing these adequately?

Join us in sharing experiences!

We are looking forward to contributions from students, lecturers and administrative staff with regard to…

...higher education policy:

- ➤ Should forest universities and –faculties be forerunners or "deliberate laggards" with regard to digitalization?
- ➤ Which kinds of resources are needed to develop and implement digitalization strategies in forest sciences education?
- ➤ Which role should be assigned to physical (lecture hall, forest) and virtual learning environments in past-Corona-times?

…teaching methods and techniques:

- ➤ Blackboard and chalk vs. tablet and smartboard; paperless education: Which techniques are preferable for students' learning with regard to different competences?
- ➤ For which steps of the learning process (preparation for the lessons, repeating/strengthening knowledge; assessment of learning performance) have e-technologies been applied successfully?
- ➤ How does digitalization change the role, tasks and workload of lecturers, e.g. in the concept of flipped classrooms?
- ➤ Which experiences have been gained in application of hybrid teaching?

…communication within and between groups at universities:

- ➤ What are the strengths and limitations of multi-purpose learning platforms and special software for teaching and learning?
- ➤ How do students appreciate communication instruments like chats, fora, blogs or wikis?
- ➤ Are tools like WhatsApp, Twitter etc. useful channels in academia?
- ➤ What are the experiences with student lifecycle management (SLM) tools?+

…job markets, further education and lifelong learning:

- ➢ Does digitalization lead to more specialized BS. and MSc programmes in connection with the job market?
- ➢ How do we balance our syllabi for "digital competences and contents", such as needed for "forestry & timber 4.0", in an ideal way?
- ➢ Does digitalization reduce the hurdles for BSc graduates to come back to the university for a MSc programme after some years of professional experience?
- ➢ Is the hype around "MOOCS" over?

Participants are welcome to prepare an abstract till **May 30, 2021**. Details for submission will be communicated in the Second Announcement. The SILVA Board will decide on contributions (oral presentations / posters for a virtual exhibition) and all applicants will be informed as soon as possible after the deadline.

Confirmed and peer-reviewed papers will be published in the proceedings volume SILVA Network Publications 18.

Venue
Digital platform

Fees
The regular conference fee is 50 € (special rate for students: 20 €)

Registration
For registration, an online form will be provided with the second announcement that should be filled in not later than **May 1, 2021**

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