Nomination for Boldic Awards 2014.

Since 2002 Dalarna University has invested in distance education by establishing a department especially focused on distance and blended learning. By 2009 Dalarna University became one of the fastest growing institutes of higher education in Sweden. One of the reasons was the development of a system for live-streamed lectures, Videochat. The system has had a major impact for the continuing investment in web-based and blended learning at Dalarna University. In today's increasingly globalised world, knowledge and understanding of other languages and cultures are extremely desirable skills. The large majority of our language education are offered online, and are both well-regarded and well-known throughout Sweden in terms of their sophisticated use of technology and pedagogical quality. The University is constantly investing resources in online education and has been at the national forefront in this field of development for many years. This position has been made by our fantastic teachers as well as our technical and administrative staff and our technical educational tool, such as Videochat.

Videochat is a system that enables teachers, educators, staff and student to gather under lectures despite location. The system gives the same opportunities for students on campus and online to follow lectures and communicate with the teacher. Videochat is so simple that anyone of our teachers could use it without a technician or a wide technical know-how. Simple isn't always better, but in this case it is. Videochat invites users through its design and doesn't scare off teachers from using it. The system is for every generation to use, not only the ones who have grown up during or after the digital revolution. The name Videochat comes from the fact that one of the functions is that the viewer's online also can chat with each other and ask text questions to the teacher. This synchronous communication is one of the reasons why Videochat is such a success. Videochat is accessible via computer, pads and smartphones which means that more students can access the lectures, and from basically anywhere. Videochat enables students both on campus and online to have similar experiences during their education. The educational quality is the same for a student at Falun or Borlänge as it is for a student that's located anywhere else in the world.

Videochat is developed by ourselves since we couldn't find an existing system that met our requirements. The system is unique and has been developed by technicians and pedagogues, a reason why it's being used with great success in education. The success is also proved since other universities and organisations in Sweden have shown interest in the system and the fact that it's our own system we are looking to commercializing Videochat.

With all this considered, you will agree with med that Videochat is an excellent nominee for the Boldic Awards 2014.

Sincerely,

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Programme leader, NGL programme
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Videochat

Project manager: Rodheim, Stefan (Head of NGL Centre)

For many years, Dalarna University has been working at creating conditions to enable web based education. A lot of work has naturally been to create conditions for learning, "Making learning possible" which is the principal mission of the department Next Generation Learning Centre (NGL Centre). The role of NGL Centre is to support the university in its goal to become leading in Next Generation Learning (NGL), Pedagogical development and renewal with the help and support of technical aids. Dalarna University understands the term to mean a forward-thinking pedagogy comprising pedagogical development and technological innovation. This definition underpins the ongoing development of our methods and the support it provides both teachers and students in learning and teaching situations. For many years, Dalarna University has worked purposefully and strategically both to develop methods as well as to improve the opportunities for students' learning. This work will continue for many more years so that Dalarna University reaches our short-time goal and establishes our place as leader in the field of Next Generation Learning. Becoming the leader within the field of NGL doesn't mean that we would stop working and developing the teaching environment. Remaining a force in the field of Next Generation Learning is our long term aim, an aim that demands our continuing development.

This approach has characterized the work and design of the digital learning environment for many years. We have circled three types of basic needs when it comes to education, (information about education, discourse and lectures) where lectures have a special position. Traditionally the lecture as a method has enabled students understanding the course and its literature better. With the technological revolution opportunities have emerged, such as online education. However, if the conditions regarding lectures aren't simple and user friendly, the teachers will struggle and the course and the students will suffer. Therefore we have developed a system for live streamed lectures that will require as little focus from the teacher before, during and after the lecture as possible.

We wanted a system where our teachers could go to a lecture hall, just as before, and hold the lecture like they always had done but with the ability to broadcast their lecture so both people online and in the lecture hall could join in. We also wanted a system that was so simple that anyone of our teachers

could use it without a technician. The system should be so simple that it would not scare the teacher from taking the step to teach online. Of course price was also a factor; we are a small university with limited funds. We couldn't find a system that met our requirements so we decided to develop our own system. That system is Videochat. The name Videochat comes from the fact that one of the functions is that the viewer's online also can chat with each other and ask text questions to the teacher. There is no cost involved in going in and listening to a lecture; however, you must log in to your Dalarna University user account if you want to chat and put questions to other students and the teacher.

The challenge and objectives:

- Enabling teachers with little or no interest/knowledge regarding the technology to handle live lectures with student interaction and produce an edited version of the recording for later use.
- We at Dalarna University are "a big fan of zero administration", our aim is that the teachers themselves have the knowledge to handle the system by their own.
- The system ought to be simplistic, self-instructive if possible, something that everyone have the use of.

The system includes: handling of lecture hall, handling of streaming and recording, handling of student interaction, student-view/Videochat, automatic handling of recordings and metadata. At http://videochat.du.se/Default.aspx students, lecturers and other can get a glimpse of the system and some of the live streams that takes place

Commercializing the system Videochat and making it accessible to other universities and organizations is an important and object. As of 2014 an agreement has been made with Lund University regarding instalment of Videochat as a part of the newly build LUX buildings. This shows that Videochat is a system to be recognized with, regardless if it comes to a university from the 1660's or a relatively new university as Dalarna University, and any other organizations for that matter.

Statistics: At Dalarna University there are 12 lecture halls equipped for live streamed lectures where approximately 3,500 recordings are made each year.