Call for papers – Special issue
The Digital Turn in Internationalization.
Concepts, strategies and practices

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Outline

Virtual mobility, *MOOCs, blended mobility, Erasmus without Papers*, *OER* or courses offered entirely online – these are just a few of the areas where internationalization and digitalization intersect and are incorporated into higher education practice. As part of the digital turn in higher education (HOCHSCHULFORUM DIGITALISIERUNG, 2016), digitalization opens up new potential for the comprehensive internationalization of higher education institutions (HEIs), be it in teaching, in supporting physical mobility, or in the design of partnerships.

Universities have been shaped by internationalization for a long time. For decades, traditional forms of physical mobility of students and faculty have been the main manifestations of higher education internationalization. More recently, said concept has been expanded with approaches of an "internationalization at home" (BEELEN & JONES, 2015). Digitalization has captured both of these pillars of internationalization and takes them to a new level: In the hybridity of digital and analog spaces (CASTELLS, 2010), the boundaries between "at home" and "abroad" blur. Seamless transitions from domestic to international experiences and back foster the internationalization of the curriculum (HOCHSCHULFORUM DIGITALISIERUNG, 2016). HEIs are supported in their international engagement – and even study programs can cross borders virtually. For some years now, the trend has been observed that the connection between university internationalization and digitalization has been strengthened in internationalization strategies, as the examples of UNIVERSITÄT POTSDAM (2019), FERNUNIVERSITÄT IN HAGEN (2019) or TECHNISCHE UNIVERSITÄT CLAUSTHAL (2017) show.

In addition, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have forced universities in Germany and worldwide to reassess their current practices, especially regarding teaching ("emergency remote teaching", HODGES et al., 2020). Within weeks, a virtual form of internationalization became the only way to maintain international connections, to keep international students involved in their host institution's university life, and to offer domestic students an international experience.

This special issue on the *Digital Turn in Internationalization* aims at promoting the academic discourse in this field. It invites contributions that shed light on the various connections between internationalization and digitalization in the higher education field. We welcome academic as well as practice-based contributions that address this topic, challenge it, demonstrate practical implications, and further advance theory-building in the field.

Thinking ahead about the connection between digitalization and internationalization

Digitalization and internationalization have so far mainly been pursued in separate discourses. Concepts attempting a comprehensive approach to their intersection include *virtual internationalization* (BRUHN, 2020, in preparation) or *internationalization at a distance* for the teaching context (MITTELMEIER et al., 2020). They open up a field for new theoretical perspectives and questions. Here are some of the issues in need of discussion:

- How can the connection between digitalization and internationalization of universities be conceptualized and put to use for comprehensive university development?
- What overarching implications does digitalization have for university development with regard to its internationalization?
- How should digitalization and internationalization be conceptually grounded within the European higher education area and in the context of the Bologna process?
- What are the perspectives for topics such as mobility, academic and societal outreach, sustainability or inclusion?

Developing universities digitally and internationally

The strategic development and positioning of universities draws on both internationalization and digitalization (DE WIT et al., 2015). At the same time, only a few universities in Germany, for instance, have included aspects of digitalization in their internationalization strategies in the recent past (ZAWACKI-RICHTER & BEDENLIER, 2015). Further approaches in theory and practice are required that explore the strategic potential and address, for example, the following questions:

- How do institutions deal with the strategic integration of digitalization and internationalization in the context of university development, spanning the areas of research, teaching and service?
- What external influences do universities react to when they combine digitalization and internationalization? What role, for instance, does the COVID-19 crisis play?
- What is the intrinsic motivation for universities to combine digitalization and internationalization?
- How can comprehensive internationalization be realized with digital means (HELMS & BRAJKOVIC, 2017) – also concerning, for example, administrative units outside of international offices and promoting junior faculty and their career paths?
- What effects, "lessons learned" and good practices can be reported from strategy development in this field?

Linking curricula digitally and internationally

Conceptual approaches and practices, such as Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) (RUBIN & GUTH, 2015) or virtual mobility (UBACHS & HENDERIKX, 2018) refer to the possibilities of interlinking university curricula and individual courses internationally and digitally.

They complement and expand "internationalization at home". Specific questions regarding research and implementation are:

- What measures and formats are being piloted at the micro level of the teaching-learning situation and how can these be further developed regarding study programmes, continuing education and professional development offered by HEIs?
- How do these curricular approaches relate to forms of physical and virtual mobility for students and faculty?
- What are requirements for *good* international digital teaching?

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Guidelines regarding the journal

The ZFHE is a peer-reviewed online journal that publishes scientific contributions of practical relevance concerning current higher education development issues. The focus is on didactical, structural, and cultural developments in teaching and learning. Topics that are innovative and still regarded as open in respect of their design options are preferred.

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Submission information

English contributions may be submitted in two possible formats:

Scientific contributions within the main theme should comply with the following criteria:
The contribution...

- presents innovative perspectives, arguments, problem analyses etc. on the key topic;
- focuses on essential aspects of the key topic;
- is theoretically supported (i.e. it offers a clear connection to the scientific discourse of the topic under discussion);
- provides scientific insights with added value at least in some parts;
- clearly elucidates the methodology used to acquire knowledge;
- follows the relevant citation rules consistently (APA style, 6th edition);
- comprises up to 33,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information)

Workshop reports comprise the instructional presentation of practical experience, good practice examples, design concepts, pilot projects, etc. Workshop reports should comply with the following criteria:

- demonstrates potential for knowledge transfer;
- describes illustrative aspects and factors for the purpose of theory formation;
- systematically and transparently presented (e.g., no incomprehensible clues to details in an area of practice);
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- up to 21,600 characters (incl. spaces, as well as cover page, bibliography and author information).

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January 15, 2021 – Submission deadline for complete articles:
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Mai 7, 2021 – Revision deadline: Where necessary, contributions may be revised according to feedback and recommendations from the reviews.

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Review Process

All submitted contributions will be examined in a double-blind peer review process to guarantee scientific quality. The editors of the current issue propose the reviewers for the respective theme and allocate individual contributions to the reviewers; they also determine which contributions will be accepted. The selection of reviewers and the review process for each thematic issue are always supervised by a member of the editorial board.

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Questions?

If you have any questions regarding the content of the issue, please contact the editors (svenja.bedenlier@ili.fau.de or elisa.bruhn@giz.de).
For technical and organizational questions, please contact Michael Raunig (office@zfhe.at).

We look forward to your submissions!

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