

DIGI-FACE REVIEW



Editorial

Paul Webb and Merlin Kull

It feels like years since we were together at the 'Kick-Off' meeting in Port Elizabeth in March. So much has happened since then. What, in essence, has not changed though is the three major needs of the DIGI-FACE stakeholders that came out of the evaluation of the 'Kick-Off' meeting. These three aspects were the need for information, training in all aspects of digitalisation and opportunities for the diverse membership within the African-German Centres of Excellence family to cooperate.

We hope that this rather long overdue newsletter will help with the first point and that the online training sessions and meetings have contributed, albeit in a limited way, to the second and third needs.

Before the Covid-19 pandemic started to spread all over the globe, we planned to have at least two face-to-face training sessions on technical and pedagogical aspects of the digitalisation process before the year's end. Masks and hand sanitisers were the last things on our minds!

But that was not to be and, even now, we are still not in a position to plan face-to-face activities. However, until we know

more, we will continue digital offerings and activities as specific needs become apparent. Dependent on developments in the African countries, we might be able to conduct face-to-face training in a safe region this year, but most probably without the participation of our German partners. We will carefully follow developments in Africa and keep you posted as to what we are allowed to do.

If we can travel, we will be able to deliver the promised equipment, namely a Padcaster with an iPad (PCStudio-11 /Padcaster: Studio / iPad Pro 11" version), a microphone (Rode VideoMic Compact On-Camera), a laptop (Dell Precision 5540 CTO) and provide the necessary training to start using them. Zoom licences have already been provided to the centres that needed them.

We hope you will enjoy this newsletter and that, as an important facet of DIGI-FACE, you will remain enthusiastic and committed.

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Serious fun at the 'Kick-Off' meeting in March

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The development of business models for long-term sustainability

Nilly Chingate

One of the aims of DIGI-FACE is to develop business models and create a supportive environment for the long-term sustainability of the DIGI-FACE project. In other words, we want to ensure that the project, the platforms, and the contents developed on them, will continue operating at each Centre well beyond the DAAD funding period.

The first activity towards reaching this goal was initiating a needs assessment for the development of sustainable operating and operator solutions for digital tools and procedures at African universities. The Frankfurt School conducted a survey and held Zoom meetings with representatives of each of the African-

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German Centres of Excellence across the continent in order to garner ideas about sustainability. Twenty-six responses to the survey questionnaires were received and eight meetings were held to discuss the concerns and thoughts about sustainability that arose from the survey responses. Most of the Centres are already using e-learning elements (70%) and

over 95% of the respondents expressed interest in offering online short academic or executive courses. The greatest source of revenue was envisaged to be the tuition fee for short courses and executive education programmes.

Currently research is being carried out on best practice business models existing in Africa and Europe. After we have made an initial evaluation of the concepts inherent in these business

models we will begin to develop tools to calculate the cost of setting up e-learning projects at each Centre, a toolkit on how to set up a business model for each Centre, and a business model for the entire project. The process of developing sustainable business models include going through implementation, evaluation, capitalization, adaptation and advice phases.

Merlin Kull notes that "At the kick-off meeting, and when the Frankfurt School exchanged ideas with each Centre of Excellence via zoom, the phrase 'topping up budget' was used. However, we prefer to describe this budget as supplementary financial incentives for launching DIGI-FACE activities at the centres".

These budgets, namely 12 500 EUR (2020), 43 200 EUR (2021) and 43 200 EUR (2022), are financial incentives for developing and disseminating content material that can be included on the DIGI-FACE platform.

Such activities are closely linked to the project's emerging sustainability plan as they help identify concrete mid- and long-term activities that will contribute to co-operative products that will remain well beyond the DAAD funding period.



Nilly Chingate

New DIGI-FACE Team Members

We are very happy to inform you about our two new DIGI-FACE team members who joined us on the 1st of September.

SONJA EBBING Oldenburg University



the coming years.

With her experience in education, digital teaching formats and pedagogy, Sonja will support the DIGI-FACE module development and training activities. She hopes that soon it will be possible to travel again so that she can meet the DIGI-FACE partners in person! **Contact:** sonja.ebbing@uol.de

ELISA ADAMS Kehl University



Elisa studied political science and intercultural communication. She is already familiar with the African Excellence program as she completed a six-month internship in the West-African Centre for Local Governance (CEGLA) at the University of Kehl and its partner institution CESAG in Dakar. She has been supporting the project DIGI-FACE since its inception.

Elisa is responsible for the financial and administrative management of the DIGI-FACE project at University of Applied Sciences Kehl.

Elisa said "I am looking forward to get in contact with all participants and partners of the African Excellence program and I am highly motivated to support the program's digitalisation processes." **Contact:** adams@hs-kehl.de

Exploring the online learning environment

Elmien Waring



Elmien Waring

The need to keep our promise to introduce our learning management system by going online became obvious almost immediately after the DIGI-FACE 'kick-off' meeting in Port Elizabeth. As countries began locking down and travel was suspended, Elmien Waring sprang to the rescue by hastily creating her 'Exploring the Online Learning Environment' course.

She offered what was initially an emergency remote teaching programme via Zoom to two clusters of African-German Centres of Excellence, namely the East African and Southern and West African (Anglophone) clusters. The six-unit course aimed at covering the basics of using Moodle, explored logging in, setting up profiles, creating activities, using interactive presentations, assessments (quizzes and assignments) and using video. Johan van Niekerk and Mike Swanepoel ably assisted by going into more detail on some of the functionalities within the system.

Merlin Kull reported that Alexandre Martinez, a digital training expert adapted and replicated the course in French for the Francophone Centres (with support from Ewald Eisenberg and Merlin). These centres were divided into two cohorts, Niamey with Bamako (both CEGLA) and Dakar (CEGLA) with Niamey (WAC-SRT) and Kinshasa (CCAM). Five training sessions were offered per cohort.

Merlin said "These sessions provided the participants with rich experiences via simulated digital course material. They created short videos and tested the extensive toolboxes available". He added "This first introduction course was an empowering starting point for the digitalisation of the Centres and allowed CEGLA to mirror the structure on Moodle in anticipation of developing and adapting their own curricular needs in a digital format."

An important aspect of the training was for the participants to experience online learning both as a student and as a lecturer. A practice course site was provided and the attendees were tasked with creating course material on their own. Participant feedback in forum posts was very positive.

On the basis of such positive feedback, further offerings of the course were made.

Professor John Chang'ach and Dr Susan Kurgat, CERM-ESA Project Leader and Co-ordinator respectively, took things one step further and became the first 'multipliers' in DIGI-FACE by presenting the course to 19 of their peers in the School of Education at Moi University, Kenya. See Susan Kurgat's article Digital Multipliers of Online Education at Moi University.



PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

"I have been using our MUSOMI (Moi University System of Managing Instruction) but on a limited scope. I am now getting re-energised by this platform and will definitely hit the road running.

Thank you for this opportunity!"

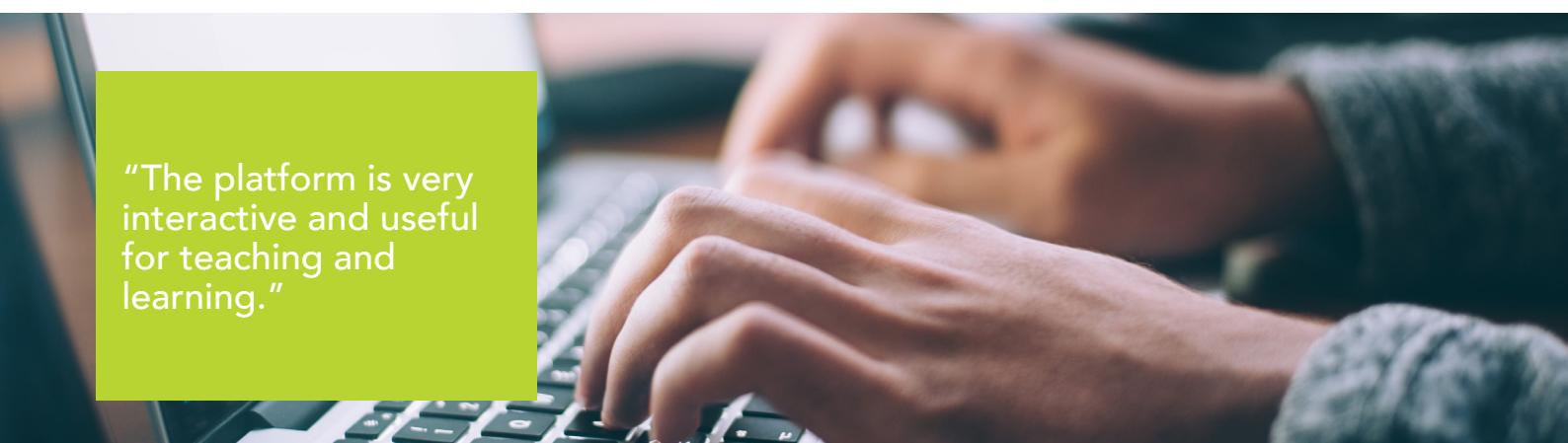
"This platform will revitalise our energy during this difficult time to reach our colleagues and students. Bravo DIGI-FACE and the dedicated team."

"Waiting for the next training, the introduction course was fantastic."

"I feel encouraged to up skill my knowledge on online teaching. Indeed Digi-face provides an opportunity for me to expand my capabilities on teaching online using electronic gadgets; smartphone and computers. In fact, it will be useful for me to learn more about zoom meetings. I look forward to getting more engaged in this course."

"The platform is easy to navigate through. There are many options to upload materials in the Moodle. I am very eager to learn the remaining parts. Kudos to the whole Digi-Face team."

"The platform is very interactive and useful for teaching and learning."



Testing the online waters

Paul Webb



Paul Webb

An online course for postgraduate students on Academic Written and Graphic Presentations was piloted by Paul Webb and Karlien Potgieter with CERM-ESA postgraduate scholarship holders in August. Sixteen students from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and South Africa participated voluntarily and the data generated by their experiences provided some helpful insights for course development.

Only two of the participating students used their cell phones to complete the course. The rest used laptops for most of the time while five never used their phones for accessing the course at all. As expected, connectivity was an issue to a greater or lesser degree for the majority of the students.

One of the students said "Logging in took me (so long) sometime so I felt

miserable. Sometimes I got disconnected automatically because of very weak connection and my laptop could indicate 'your connection is weak'. Some other time I had to move round the neighbourhood with my laptop just to get access."

Another said "Currently in the Village here in Kenya, I had to travel to the nearby centre to get connect on electricity."

There seemed to have been no real issues concerning navigating the course with more than half of the participants noting that they 'seldom got lost' while the other half stated that they had no problems at all in terms of navigating the course.

The students were given opportunities to interact with each other via the online forums on each section of the course and during one-hour Zoom class sessions that were offered each week. Bi-weekly one-on-one or small group support sessions were held by invitation. All but one of the students said that they felt a sense of inclusion in the group, even those who had not communicated personally with anyone.

The majority of the students felt that the course is well suited for online presentation but some noted that parts of the course might have been better for them in a 'normal classroom'. Considering that the pilot course was far from complete in terms of aesthetics and other design features, the positive responses from the students was heartening. For example one student said: "I am Soo much grateful to you for your tireless input towards

making learning in this course a success. After doing the corrections I realised how much interesting the course was. And am Soo much motivated to do it over again

I am SO grateful to you for your tireless input towards making learning in this course a success. After doing the corrections I realised how interesting the course was.

and grasp every Concept. It's really a super manual in Academic Written and presentation."



Dorothy Nakiyaga received an extra award for being the 'most engaged' student and Ayanda Simayi was recognised as 'the most socially engaged student'.



Devices Used



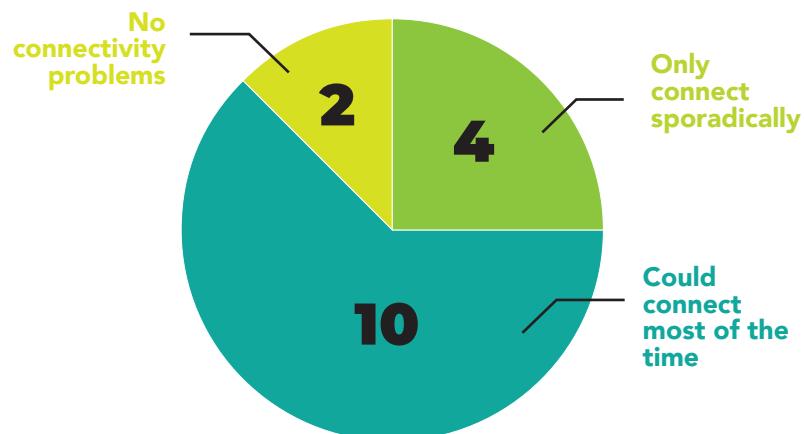
Most participants used laptops to complete the course.

2
5

of the participating students used their cell phones to complete the course

never used their phones at all for accessing the course

Connectivity Issues



Degrees of access to connectivity during the duration of the course (n=16).

Digital Multipliers of Online Education at Moi University

Susan Kurgat

After completing the Exploring the Online Learning Environment course offered by our Nelson Mandela University colleagues, it was our privilege to replicate the course with 19 academic staff members who teach and supervise our CERM-ESA scholarship holders in the School of Education at Moi University. Seventeen out of the 19 lecturers persevered to the end of the course. The two who dropped out due to personal reasons opted to join our second cohort offering which will take place at a time when they will be able to take the course without interruption.

John Chang'ach, lead presenter of the course said, "In the initial stages we had a multitude of challenges. We had to learn how to teach lecturers who have deep knowledge in their field of study, but who still revel in traditional methods of knowledge transfer. Other challenges included unexpected things like getting everyone to log into the platform, the time it takes familiarize 'digital immigrants' with the layout and functions of the LMS, and generally getting everyone to communicate online. It took

two hour-long Zoom sessions to bring everyone onto the 'same page' before we could delve into the course itself."

Despite, or perhaps because of, the multiple challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the lecturers broke out of their comfort zones and embraced the DIGI-FACE online platform with far more vigour and enthusiasm than we had expected. Many lecturers engaged with us on various occasions in the 'remedial sessions' we offered out of the official times set aside for the online training course.

Our technical expert in the team, Ray Sawe, had this to say:

"I facilitated and offered guidance to one lecturer who was struggling with how to remove and add content in the platform that her own students would find valuable. Through numerous conversations via phone and online, I took the liberty to guide her in a user-friendly manner how to overcome those bottlenecks preventing her from achieving personal fulfilment with the programme".

In closing, our mandate turned out to have been larger than we first anticipated, however, the value we created far outweighed the problems we faced while conducting the tutelage. This is a journey that we were honored to take with the team and look forward to establishing online education as the next leap into the future. We owe a great deal of gratitude to the DIGI-FACE project leadership and our initial trainers, Elmien, Johan and Mike.

Bravo to us all as we touch and transform lives through Education.



Susan Kurgat, Ray Sawe and John Chang'ach



Our Digital Portal and Platforms

Eldridge van der Westhuizen

Work started in the first quarter of 2020 on creating a digital platform for DIGI-FACE instructors, students, administrators and influencers from our African-German Centres of Excellence. A server rack, multiple servers and fibre-channelled high-speed storage was purchased. Open Source (free to use software) was used and other software to run the system virtual environment (VMWare environment) was bought. The servers were physically installed at the first assigned DIGI-FACE Hub – the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth. The secure server room is protected by Uninterruptable Power Supplies and generators to ensure high-speed redundant internet at all times.

Emergency Remote Teaching of the Exploring the Online Learning Environment course was done on a practice site provided by the Nelson Mandela University. Once our server was up the DIGI-FACE Moodle platform was opened for teaching and learning purposes. A WordPress portal that will allow access

to all DIGI-FACE members to a powerful open source Project Management environment, blogs, databases, and connect to the Tumefika Alumni and centre websites, is in the process of being developed. The portal and its platforms are in the final stages of testing and everything should go live by October 2020. Once live, the Moodle Learning Management system will be accessible together with all the platforms described above connected via a single sign-on at <https://www.digiface.org>

The platform will also allow designated users to register as administrators of their Centres of Excellence site and allow them to manage their pages and blogs. A rich user profile has been created to allow a wide range of information on individuals and upload their credentials, history of papers published, etc. Below are some screenshots of how the system, still hidden from users until it goes live in October, will appear.

Login page

User Account

The Centres Blog Learn Members Publications Alumni-Network

Home - User Account

Login

Username * Enter user name

Password * Enter password

Remember me

Login

Forgot password

Blogs

LATEST BLOGS

CEMEREM at the DIGI-FACE Kick-Off Meeting

CEMEREM 2020 ADVERT

WEBINAR: DIGITALISED WAYS OF DOCTORAL STUDIES IN COVID-19

Impressions of the DIGI-FACE Kick-Off Meeting

Search and view all < >

Centres

OUR CENTRES IN AFRICA

African-German Research Network for Transnational Criminal Justice (TRANSCRIM)

East and South African-German Centre for Educational Research, Methodologies and Management (CERM-ESA)

Kenyan German Centre for Mining, Environmental Engineering and Resource Management (CEMEREM)

South African German Centre for Development Research (SA GER CDR)

West African German Centre for Local Governance in Africa (CEGLA)

Congolese German Centre for Microfinance (CCAM)

Ghanalan-German Centre for Development Studies (GGCDS)

Namibian German Centre for Logistics (NGCL)

Tanzanian German Centre for Eastern African Legal Studies (TGCL)

West African German Centre for Sustainable Rural Transformation (WAC-SRT)

Moodle home page

DIGIFACE KICK-OFF

The DIGIFACE project was launched in February 2020 at the Nelson Mandela University in Port Elizabeth. It will receive funding for implementation, development and promotion.

DIGI-FACE African Centres of Excellence

CCAM
Microfinance

CEGLA
Gouvernance

CEMEREM
Mining and
Production Planning

CENTIGEA
ICT

CEMRM-ESA
Education

GGCDS
Development Studies

NGCL
Logistics

SA-GER-COR
Development
Studies

TGCL
Logistics

TRANSCRIM
Law

WAC-SRT
Sustainable
Rural

DIGI-FACE
Digital
Governance

Latest Courses

PMI SALES

click college

PMI PARTNER

click college

PMI SOUTH AFRICA

Moodle courses

SAWA Exploring the Online Learning Environment
Teacher: Elmar Kull, Karlien Poggenpohl, Mica Swartepoel, Dorian van Nieuwenhoven, Elmar Wiering, Paul Webb
[Click to enter this course](#)

Practice Course SAWA
Practice Course for SAWA Participants.
Teacher: Isabell Abusou, Isaac Alango, Iasas Anaph, Mariam Arzani, Rajah Arman, Kofi Asante, Mestra Avio, Michael Ayimaga, Aemra Balida, Ales Cernotil, Greg Davis, Emmanuel Derbile, Amina Doud, Samuel Donkor, Ewald Eisenberg, Enyekulu Hems, John-Mark Ito, Oscar Kekoa, Frederic Kieni, Pauly-Kekoa, Doffi Kekoa, Razak Kieni, Abdou Khedre Llo, Amadou Konate, Aline Lopera, Fredrik Malmstrom, Meagan Martin, Julian May, Mamie Mayo, Niamhna Mazzanne, Henni Muangja, Monisha Narayage, Maurice Neiss, Esther Nkonda, Aminata Ouattara, Alina Perea, Freda Phlaphile, Asmera Roy, Reiphi Seni Lance Scheepers, Brigette Shireene, Abduu Tarmuu, Lessona Tote, Blance Tsimane, Mafisa Vacca, Elmar Wiering, Paul Webb, Kompe Winkler
[Click to enter this course](#)

Explorer Environnement Online
Teacher: Martin Kull, Alessandra Martinez, Karlien Poggenpohl
[Click to enter this course](#)

Exploring the Online Learning Environment
This course will introduce participants to the DIGI-FACE online learning management system and allow them to explore while learning how to create activities.
Teacher: Karlien Poggenpohl, Johan van Nieuwenhoven
[Click to enter this course](#)

Members

MEMBERS

[Random order](#) [A-Z](#) [Z-A](#)

	Dorothée Weyler Senior Expert Institutional Building in Higher Education in Africa German Academic Exchange Office (DAAD)
	Bernd Schillinger
	Karsten Speck
	Ina Grieb
	Paul Webb Project Leader CERM-ESA Project Leader South Africa Coordinator
	Merlin Kull Project Coordinator DIGI-FACE University of Applied Sciences Kehl

Project management tool

[Overview](#) [Activities](#) [Discussions](#) [Task Lists](#) [Milestones](#) [Files](#)

0 Discussions	4 Task Lists	11 Tasks	0 Comments	0 Files	0 Milestones
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Last 30 days

Date	Activity	Task
Aug 06	0	0
Aug 07	0	0
Aug 08	0	0
Aug 09	0	0
Aug 10	0	0
Aug 11	0	0
Aug 12	0	0
Aug 13	10	0
Aug 14	0	0
Aug 15	0	0
Aug 16	0	0
Aug 17	0	0
Aug 18	0	0
Aug 19	0	0
Aug 20	0	0
Aug 21	0	0
Aug 22	0	0
Aug 23	0	0
Aug 24	0	0
Aug 25	0	1
Aug 26	2	0
Aug 27	1	0
Aug 28	0	0
Aug 29	0	0
Aug 30	0	0
Aug 31	0	0
Sep 01	0	0
Sep 02	0	0
Sep 03	0	0
Sep 04	0	0
Sep 05	0	0
Sep 06	0	0

A word from the wise

Lance Scheepers of the Institute for Social Development at the University of the Western Cape is a veteran when it comes to online learning. He has used his institution's Learning Management System for the past eight years. After being introduced to the DIGI-FACE Moodle platform he had the following to say.

"The DIGI-FACE platform is much more open ended yet simpler than the one I am used to. It is user friendly and very powerful."

He said that he enjoys added features such as the prerequisite where students have to complete a section before they can move on to the next level and the flexible options available when setting up assessments.

Lance added that he also enjoys all the plugins and the fact that the system integrates easily with Zoom, G-suite and Office365. Another factor that he appreciates is that the DIGI-FACE system is not dependent on coding and therefore there is no concomitant downtime every time there is a problem.



Lance Scheepers

Questions & Answers

Since the 'Kick-Off' meeting in port Elizabeth in March this year there have been a number of questions about DIGI-FACE. We have answered four of the more interesting/challenging ones below.

How safe are my materials and intellectual property if I put up a course on the DIGI-FACE Moodle platform?

The first question was "how will institutions and individuals retain their patents and copyright of materials and resources once they have been loaded onto the platform?" The source of this question was the belief that materials and resources would be freely accessible to all institutions in DIGI-FACE.

The answer is that your content and materials are perfectly safe (or as least as safe as they are when you do normal classroom teaching). Any course on the DIGI-FACE learn platform can be made visible at the owner's request, but no one can access them without their permission. The following description illustrates how the development process ensures such safety.

- An academic user (teacher) wants to present an online course on the DIGI-FACE platform.
- He or she contacts the DIGI-FACE Moodle administrator and requests a blank course template.
- A template is opened that only the teacher and the administrator can see the empty course.
- The teacher populates his/her course.
- The teacher identifies his/her course participants and enrols them on the course. Only the teacher and the students who have been enrolled can enter and see the contents.
- The teacher opens the course for his/her students on a certain date and closes it on another chosen date.
- Once the course is over the teacher un-enrols the students and they cannot enter it anymore.

As can be seen, no other centre or persons can access your materials or teaching programme unless you want them to – you can enrol whoever you want to view your course and can un-enrol them whenever you like. The power stays with you. Your work is your IP and the materials belong to wherever they come from according to your institution's regulations.

One point of weakness is that, as is the case in any normal classroom teaching situation, once your students get the material you can't control what they do with it. Apart from that your material is safe – by creating a course you are not making it available to anyone else (unless you want to).

Can I take my course off the DIGI-FACE platform and put it on my university's server?

Yes you can, but only your own courses, not anyone else's.

Where can I keep my videos?

At the moment, your videos can be securely stored on the DIGI-FACE Moodle server in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. However, due to the size of videos and the forecasted growth of using multimedia one possibility is to enrol in online video hosting and streaming services. In such a case you can upload your videos onto this online platform and only embed a link to this video in the Moodle course. The benefits are that the streaming server will handle the compression of the video stream to the client device and provide the best stream based on the connection speed of the client. We will let you know when and if there are changes to an online provider.

When are we going to get our equipment and be trained to use them?

The only answer we have at the moment is 'Who knows?' Perhaps by the time you have received this newsletter COVID-19 restrictions will have changed and we will have a plan.

The Digital Initiative for African Centres of Excellence (DIGI-FACE) includes all DAAD funded African-German Centres of Excellence

www.african-excellence.de

DAAD

Deutscher Akademischer
Austauschdienst (DAAD)
with support of the
Federal Foreign Office (AA)




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