PROFILES OF THE PARTICIPANTS AT THE CHAIR SEMINAR

George Siemens. Connectivism, a key tool for the development of network knowledge
Associate director of the Learning Technologies Centre at the University of Manitoba and author of “Knowing Knowledge”, an exploration into how the context and characteristics of knowledge have changed and what it means for organisations today. He is also the founder and president of Complexive Systems Inc, a learning laboratory focused on helping organisations to develop integrated training in their structures to meet the execution needs of the global strategy.

Promoter of the concept of network connectivism or the interrelation of all its elements. Personal knowledge comprises a network, which is nourished in organisations and institutions, which in turn feed back to the network, and they then continue providing learning to the individual. This network knowledge development cycle allows students to keep up to date in their field through the connections that have been formed.
http://www.elearnspace.org/blog/
http://www.elearnspace.org/

Jay Cross, world expert in informal learning and virtual communities in organisations
Jay Cross, a graduate from the University of Princeton and the Harvard Business School, has been one of the first theoreticians to implement informal learning and the web 2.0 in the business and financial world. A promoter of virtual communities in organisations, he has advised on and developed the informal learning system in such companies and institutions as Cisco, Eaton, IBM, Sun, National Australia Bank, Intel, Genentech, Novartis, HP, Genentech, SmartForce, the CIA and the World Bank. Companies such as Telefónica, La Caixa, Banc de Sabadell and Asepeyo have already introduced the techniques of this learning in their organisations.

Informal learning is the non-programmed learning that workers get spontaneously at work and which promotes new concepts such as the need to share instead of the need to know and professional competence rather than the CV. The key to the success of this learning is borne out by the results: it improves the productivity of workers by between 20% and 30% and reduces rates of stress and absenteeism.
http://togetherlearn.posterous.com/
http://internettime.pbworks.com/

Alejandro Piscitelli, the educational power of Facebook
Philosopher, epistemologist and lecturer in the Faculty of Communication at the University of Buenos Aires (UBA), he is the driving force behind the “Project Facebook” academic programme, in which 250 universities take part and whose aims include seeking to demonstrate how new social network formats redefine the concept of learning. This project studies the role that Facebook plays as a digital literacy tool.

Among his responsibilities, Piscitelli has been the managing director of www.educ.ar, the education portal of the Argentinian government from where he promoted the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) campaign, an educational project based on a laptop computer costing a little over 100 euros that can provide any child in the world with access to education while helping reduce the digital divide in the less developed countries.
http://www.olpc.com/index.html
www.educ.ar
**Laura Czerniewicz, the gender factor and the use of ICT**
Director of the Centre for Educational Technology at the University of Cape Town, she has managed innovation, development, teaching and research groups and projects regarding ICT in education in South Africa. She participates directly and indirectly in research work in online education, in trainer training and, along with Tony Carr, she is the driving force behind the e/merge online conferences, which last two weeks and seek to explore the possibilities of e-learning in Africa, especially in South Africa.

The digital divide between rich and poor countries and gender perspective and the use of ICT are two of her research and project fields. For Laura Czerniewicz, we cannot speak so much of digital divide due to gender but of a digital differentiation regarding the growth and the different models of use of ICT for learning between male and female students.

http://blogs.uct.ac.za/blog/laura-cet

**Tony Carr and e/merge to minimise the digital divide in the less developed countries**
Tony Carr is a lecturer at the Centre for Educational Technology at the University of Cape Town and has focused his professional experience on training educators online, the development of learning communities and the use of online conferences for professional development.

He was the co-founder and principal moderator of e/merge, the project for merging online conferences on the use of educational technology in African universities. His work and research is focused on reducing the digital divide in South Africa and, by extension, the whole of the African continent, and on minimising the inequality of access to technology and education for these countries in a global context of change in teaching and learning.

http://www.cet.uct.ac.za/TonyCarr
http://emerge2008.net

**Stephen Downes, the father of e-learning 2.0**
Stephen Downes is the father of e-learning 2.0, in which network group intelligence is fostered by promoting four main criteria: opening, autonomy, diversity and interactivity. These network learning principles will not only change education but will also change organisations as if they were applied to companies, they would be less rigid and would improve their results.

Downes, who works for the National Research Council of Canada as senior researcher, specialises in the fields of online learning and new media. Recognised by the international community as the central authority for online education in edublogging. He publishes a daily newsletter, *OLDaily*, which is distributed over the internet and by e-mail and RSS to thousands of subscribers worldwide.

http://www.downes.ca/
http://www.downes.ca/me/presentations.htm