

Ansprache anlässlich des Studienbeginns der ISNM am 11.10.2002

Prof. Dr. Michael Herczeg

Ladies and Gentlemen,

this is an important day for Lübeck, for it's University and especially of course for the International School of New Media, it's students and it's staff.

When we started this project with some first ideas and sketches in 1998 we could be not so sure that this ambitious vision will finally come true. I am very pleased to welcome quite exactly 4 years later our first students from all over the world. 4 years seem to be a long time, especially in the field of digital media. But actually it is not when you are aware what happened in the meantime. We have one of the most progressive study programs in the world which has been officially acknowledged by the ministry, we have a supporting foundation, we have an outstanding building in a beautiful historic place filled with some of the finest media technology. We have several startup companies within this building starting their businesses in the digital domain. And, what makes me personally happy is, that my own research institute, the Institute for Multimedia and Interactive Systems, is now located as well in this building, directly above this room.

The ISNM is one of the very few academic schools addressing the problems and questions of today's and tomorrow's visions, developments and applications of digital media in a very broad and interdisciplinary sense. It is not quite a simple task to explain to non-experts the difference between a standard academic IT or media program and a generalistic and interdisciplinary program like the Digital Media program of the ISNM. And the reason for this difficulty is from my point of view

the reason for the school itself. With other words, if everybody would understand immediately and clearly what the program is about, it would not be that important to have this program. The problems we faced in the last few years in the new economy and especially in the digital media and computer area is, that there is a severe and basic lack of understanding, what it means to set up a new economy and a new culture for a new medium embedding nearly all of the older media into the one and being connected within not more than 10 years to 1.000 million people in the world. This is what the ISNM is about. But how will this start.

To be the first student or the first teacher of a new program means to be a pioneer. And to be a pioneer means going to trampel the paths or to eventually even build the first small road for the ones coming after of you. Being a pioneer means as well being in the place where changes happen. These pioneers will be asked to form and improve this new school, especially its content and its methods of teaching, working together and connecting permanently to the outside world, especially to companies, to governmental and cultural institutions and of course to partner universities all over the world. So everone of you might not only leave a set of records in the administration but will leave important footprints for the next ones to come. As an example of the networking already taking place I would like to welcome or colleage Prof. Michael Docherty from our first partner, the University of Queensland in Australia, who will be teaching for 2 month at the ISNM.

Before I close, I will address one very important aspect of the future of the ISNM. Being an academic institution, the ISNM has soon to do the next step. Up to date teaching requires up to date research. Academic teaching comes from research and research is done by those who teach and learn. Therefore the next important step for the ISNM will be starting a research program. I expect this to happen within the next 12 month. To perform this there will be at least 6 professors, 5 of them

will be selected out more than 50 applications we received. I expect that together with my research institute, other institutes of the university and many other cooperation partners we will set up an interesting research program in areas like digital archives, e-learning and e-business, mobile computing and communication, virtual and mixed reality. Especially in times when business gets rough, it's important to think about new products and services which fit better into the society and its economy than those having failed. As a consequence of the concept of the ISNM, the students will play a major role in these projects because every student will have a research topic from the beginning and will finish this with his or her master thesis. So the ISNM students will be part of the research from the first day at school. This will create knowledge and skills that will be needed in their future positions after having finished their Master of Science.

I am sure that students, their teachers and their cooperating partners will have an exciting time together in this demanding and interesting task and I would like to personally thank all, especially the Government of Schleswig-Holstein, the Hanseatic City of Lübeck, the partners from trade and industry, the colleagues of my university and ISNM and many others who made this project possible.

Thank you very much for your attention and support in the past and hopefully in the future as well.