

## **4ht ICODL 2007**

### **FORMS OF DEMOCRACY IN EDUCATION: Open Access and Distance Education–Athens, Greece**

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The 4th International Conference in Open and Distance Learning - Forms of Democracy in Education: Open Access and Distance Education (ICODL 2007) had a special role to play this time: it was focused on the relationship between distance education and democratic principles which are connected and interrelated to each other. These principles identify a new social role of distance education. Educational applications can be more flexible and effective when they follow some basic democratic principles and reflect the ideals of human rights.

From the early beginning open universities and alternative forms of education have defined a democratic framework for educational systems. Their connection with the conventional educational system has influenced to a great extent new innovations in the system. With this approach we can realize that distance learning may become a bridge between these innovations and the initial ideals of democracy and human rights.

ICODL 2007 took place in Athens, Greece, from 23 to 25 of November 2007. There were 160 papers presented from 36 countries: Greece, Cyprus, Belgium, Spain, Iran, Canada, Turkey, South Africa, Italy, Palestine, France, Ireland, Japan, Nigeria, Bulgaria, USA, Austria, Finland, Pakistan, Great Britain, Ukraine, Egypt, Lithuania, Israel, India, Czech Republic, Brazil, Portugal, Botswana, Barbados–West Indies, Rumania, Australia, Bangladesh, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Taiwan.

The key-note speakers of ICODL 2007 were Professor Alan Tait, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, The Open University/UK, with the title "What are Open Universities for?", Professor Michael Grahame Moore, the Pennsylvania State University and Editor of the American Journal of Distance Education with the title "The scholarship of distance education: a review of the 40 years of growth and achievement" and Professor Paul Clark, Senior Research Fellow in the IET at the UK Open University with the title "Web 2.0 and Learning Design: competition or collaboration".