EDITORIAL PREFACE

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Edition 3(1) of the *International Journal of Virtual and Personal Learning Environments* (IJVPLE) contains four research articles and one book review. In the first paper, "Click If You Want to Speak: Reframing CA for Research into Multimodal Conversations in Online Learning," Professor Marie-Noëlle Lamy from the UK Open University focuses on the neglected area of data collection vis-a-vis audiographic platforms. Emphasising the importance of researching conversations in language learning, Lamy argues that neither computer-assisted language learning (CALL) nor conversation analysis (CA) has adequately produced a methodology for analysing these interactions. In conclusion Lamy suggests that it is necessary to move to a crossdisciplinary approach in which constructs from CA are used alongside those from social semiotics to provide a way forward for researchers.

In the second paper, "The Development of E-Portfolio Evaluation Criteria and Application to the Blackboard LMS E-Portfolio," Gary F. McKenna and Mark H. Stansfied address a gap in the literature on e-portfolios following an extensive process of research concerning publications between 1995 and 2010. Although e-portfolios have become increasingly popular across the educational spectrum few research studies have focused on the development of e-portfolio effective practice frameworks. The paper examines the use of an e-portfolio to support Personal Development Plans and provides a much-required starting point for further research on the topic.

In "A Virtual World Workshop Environment for Learning Agile Software Development Techniques," David Parsons and Rosemary Stockdale present findings from a longitudinal research project using Multi-User Virtual Environments (MUVE). Adopting a design-based research approach grounded in cycles of learning and reflection, the paper examines the trajectory from a real world workshop to its virtual incarnation in the MUVE. The paper concludes by discussing the insights vis-à-vis learner perceptions and practical implementations arising from the research.

In the final research paper in this edition, "Utilization of Intelligent Software Agent Features for Improving E-Learning Efforts: A Comprehensive Investigation," Mandana Farzaneh, Iman Raeesi Vanani, and Babak Sohrabi illustrate the importance of comprehensive categorization of intelligent software agent features which can be used in the virtual world of learning and training. The agents are particularly important for the implementation and improvement of e-learning information systems, and the paper provides an extensive exploration of agent-related international papers focusing on a wide range of internationally accepted features. The agents enable the online learning mechanisms to be potentially more

efficient and effective than traditional learning systems. The paper argues that the use of agents can help instructors transfer knowledge easier, faster, and in a more targeted fashion to the intended audience.

This edition is completed by Iffaf Kahn's book review of *Second Language Distance Learning and Teaching: Theoretical Perspectives and Didactic Ergonomics* by Jean-Claude Bertin, Patrick Gravé and Jean-Paule Narcy-Combes and published by IGI Global.

We hope you enjoy reading this volume and that you will consider contributing to the journal in future editions.

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