

Rome-based International Telematic University Uninettuno, a wholly online institution, claims to be a pioneer of educational technology. It has more than 25,000 students in 167 countries and enrolments jumped by 40% this academic year. It teaches programmes via nine languages – Arabic, English, French, Italian, Greek, and more recently taught in Chinese, Spanish and Russian.

Its students learn in interactive virtual classrooms incorporating augmented reality environments such as Second Life. And the entire platform is used as a research laboratory to test and apply new software to teaching and learning – talking textbooks and 3D holographic technology are among the developments currently being studied.

The research activities are led by President and Rector Maria Amata Garito, a professor emeritus of psychotechnologies in the university's faculty of psychology, who as a researcher focuses on training structures and methodologies, comparative education and new technologies applied to teaching and learning processes.

Garito designed and directed the first Italian distance university in 1992, NETTUNO Consortium, she designed the Arab Open University in Kuwait on behalf of UNESCO and designed and directed the only European television of knowledge, RAI NETTUNO SAT.

The university has also developed a prototype of an augmented reality (AR) textbook, complete with interactive virtual reality (VR) learning applications. The textbook is called 'Talking Textbooks' (Libri che parlano) and the course material literally comes alive when pointing a smartphone in front of the computer screen, allowing students to view videos and interactive 3D reconstructions of people, places and things about the topic in question. (Fonte: B. Dionisi, UWN 20-10-18)