On the Disappearing Boundary Between Digital and Physical Spaces in Academia

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SEAD | Software Engineering and Design

Lero
THE IRISH SOFTWARE
RESEARCH CENTRE

The Open University

- **Context**
    - Distance Education
    - Distributed Research

- **Themes**
    - Groups
    - Values
    - Intertwined spaces

- **Challenges**
    - Scale
    - Personalisation

- **Takeaways**

Lero – The Irish Software Research Centre

Founded **2005** | grown to **11** HEIs

~€100m Funding

70 Nationalities

~2,500 Publications

€1 → €5.25 To Irish Economy

~285 Researchers

11 HEIs

52 Industry partners

80+ Industry projects

36 Patents

HEIs = Higher Ed. Institutions

The Open University – UK's Largest University

173,927
formal students

34%
enter with two
A Levels or less

88%
of the FTSE 100
have sponsored
staff with the OU
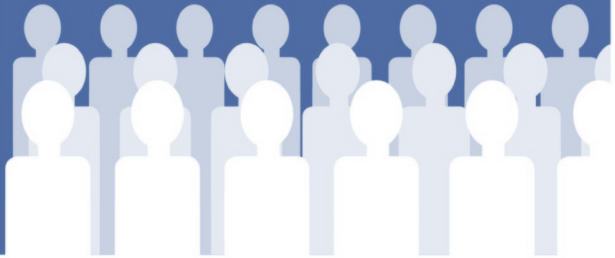
3 in 4
students are
already in work

61,000
STEM
students

Open University – Lero Collaboration
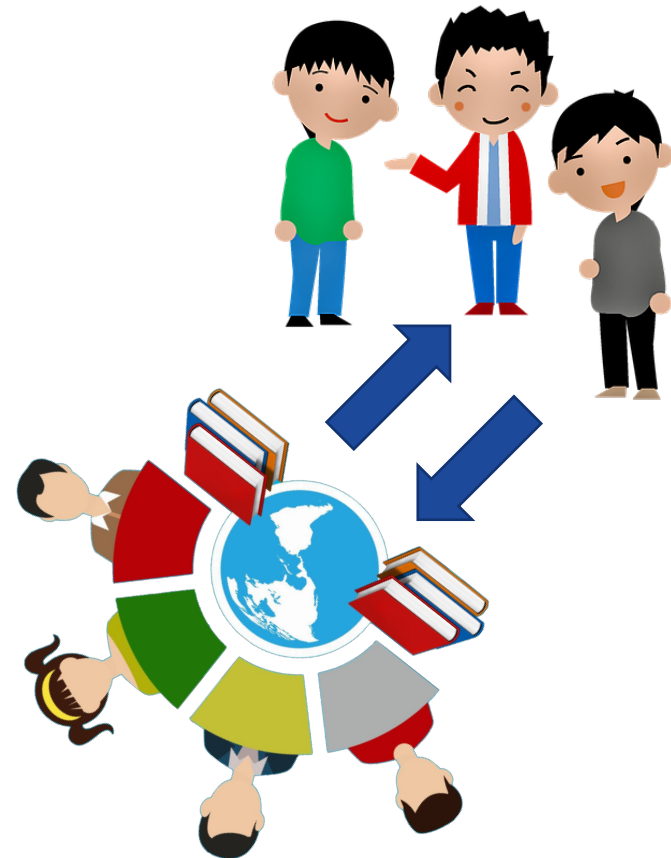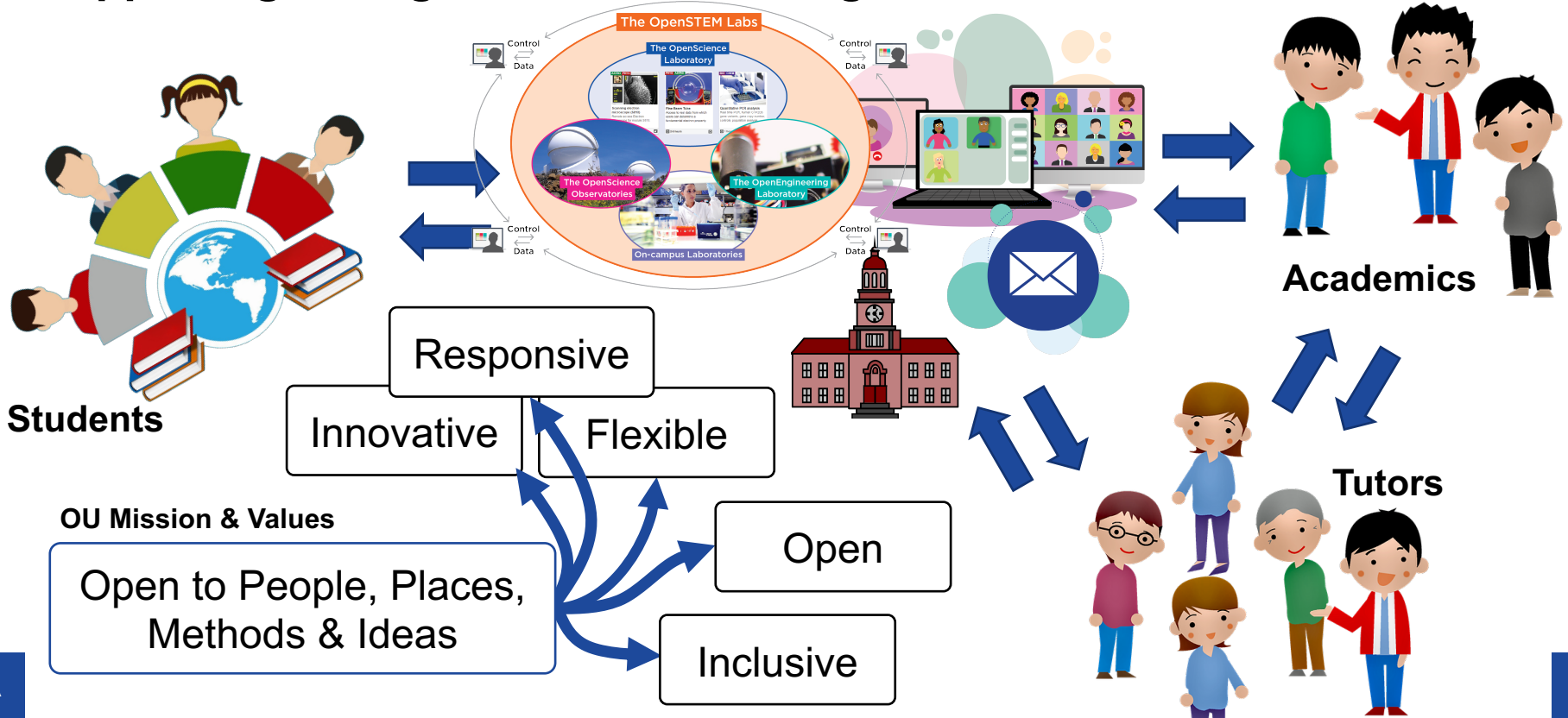
Distance Learning

- **Multiple models of delivery**
  - Online lectures
  - Blended learning

- **Challenges**
  - Developing practical skills
  - Building community

- **Shifting landscape**
  - Higher education finance policy
  - Changing competition
  - Shifts in media

Supporting Dialogues, Understanding Values

Students

Academics

Tutors

Responsive

Innovative

Flexible

OU Mission & Values

Open to People, Places, Methods & Ideas

Open

Inclusive

The OpenSTEM Labs

The OpenScience Laboratory

The OpenScience Observatories

The OpenEngineering Laboratory

On-campus Laboratories

Control / Data

Groups, Departments, Centres, Institutes

- **KIT – Keeping in Touch**
  - Random & Social
  - Non technical

- **WIT – Working in Teams**
  - Thematic & functional
  - Project aligned

- **SPIT – Spontaneous Interactions**
  - Creative and unconstrained
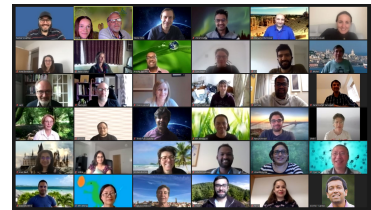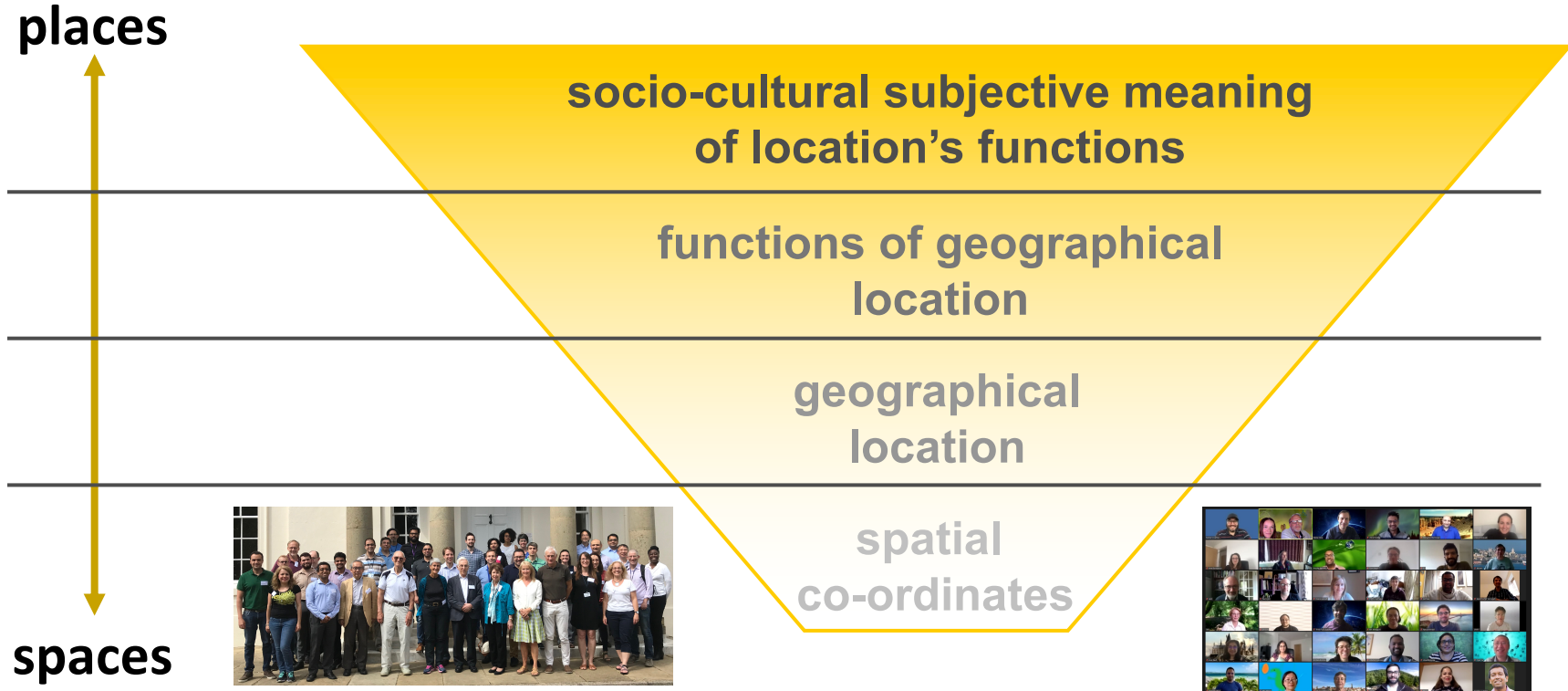 - Inter-disciplinary
  - Collaborative

Values We Live By

- **How we work**
  - Excellence
  - Inter-disciplinarity
  - Collaboration

- **The way we live**
  - Justice & Discrimination
  - Wellbeing & Disease
  - Happiness & Fear
  - Diversity & Integration
  - Sustainability & Development
  - Me & Us

- **Making a difference**
  - Responsible Software Engineering

B

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From spaces to places

places

socio-cultural subjective meaning of location's functions

functions of geographical location

geographical location

spatial co-ordinates

spaces

Supporting Scale

- **Opportunities**
  - Greater geographic reach
  - Support larger groups
  - Include diverse perspectives

- **Challenges**
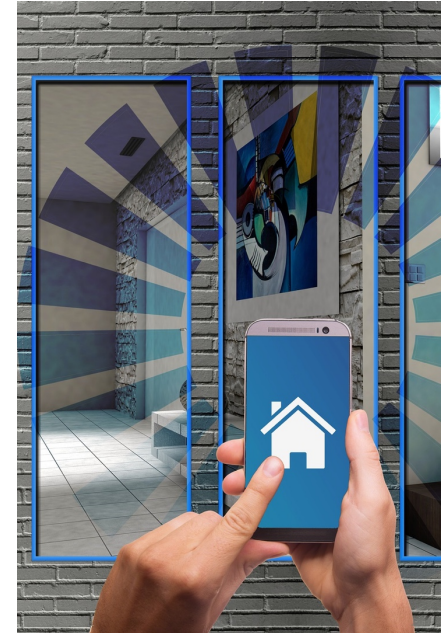 - Need to consider values
  - Limits to economies of scale

Enabling Personalisation

- **Divide & Conquer**
  - Using group structures & dynamics

- **Technological Solutions**
  - Learning analytics
  - Chat bots
  - etc

Understanding the Disappearing Boundaries

Wisdom of Groups

Shared Values

Places & Spaces

THANK YOU

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