



Principles, organisation, and methods of digitally transformed universities

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Abstract

Higher education institutions (HEIs) face challenges in adopting digital practices. Neither newly founded nor existing institutions can yet be considered digitally transformed. One important reason for this is the lack of experts which are capable of driving digital transformation (Dx). This shortage of skilled labour for Dx is not only visible in HEIs but throughout society. The solution to this shortage may lie in providing qualified teaching of Dx at the university level in a highly digitised ecosystem that applies Dx to itself. Experiencing digital transformation in problem-based learning scenarios can facilitate a deeper understanding of the methods involved. Breaking up academic programmes into smaller learning units may facilitate lifelong learning and professional development, particularly for experienced individuals. This paper presents the organisational, educational, and scientific perspective of the Digital University (DU) as a mature digital ecosystem which implements this vision for society. The highly interrelated principles between the core functions of the DU enable optimal growth as well as financial and environmental sustainability. The paper discusses bootstrapping new institutions as well as transforming existing universities into this digital ecosystem. In consequence, this paper envisions the DU as a realistic future scenario, which might develop a disruptive power enabling Dx for all HEIs in the long run.

Keywords: Digital Ecosystem, Higher Education, Digital Transformation, Dx, Digital Platform, Sustainability, Microdegree, Disruption

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1 Introduction

Today universities are primarily dedicated to education, research, and public service. Their organisational principles embrace autonomy, academic freedom, equity and inclusion, accountability and quality assurance, and sustainability, distinguishing them from typical digitally transformed organisations such as entrepreneurial start-ups.

The organisation of universities is designed to support academic freedom, the creation and dissemination of knowledge, and the holistic development of students. Universities often feature shared governance, involving faculty, administrators, and sometimes students in decision-making processes. This model supports academic freedom and collective responsibility but can lead to slow decision-making. Typically, universities do not have a centralised decision-making structure, with executives making strategic decisions quickly to respond to market demands. Universities are generally structured around academic departments, faculties, and research centres, with significant autonomy granted to each unit to pursue academic objectives. Their organisational structures are not built around service or project delivery and business development. They are typically not organised around practice areas, with teams formed dynamically to work on specific projects, with a particular emphasis on flexibility and responsiveness.

Financially, universities rely on a mix of tuition fees, government funding, philanthropy, and research grants. This diversification can influence their governance and strategic priorities, with a need to balance educational goals with financial sustainability. However, universities are typically not funded by venture capital or bootstrapping, and focus on growth and scalability to secure further investment or achieve profitability. As a result, there is rarely a direct link between performance in terms of growth or market share and their decisions. Universities evaluate performance based on teaching quality, research output, and contribution to the academic community. Tenure and promotion processes reflect these priorities. In contrast, universities do not focus on monetary results and scalability based e.g., on growth metrics, market penetration and investor satisfaction.

But why are universities trying to look like they are transforming themselves into digital organisations? Have universities been asking the right questions about this transformation? What might digital disruption look like if the primary goals of universities are maintained? Could a digitally transformed university be built from scratch like a start-up company? Many similar questions have been asked by Ehlers & Eigbrecht (2024) and answered by a large team of authors in their recent book. However, there is no specific approach on how to build the universities of the future with the next skills at their core. The following article outlines a vision based on organisational principles of digitally transformed business models combined with future skills and a problem-based learning approach.

2 Motivation and vision

Our vision is to support society in an age of digital disruption and change. By shaping the future through learning and communication, we can make progress along this path. Today's higher education institutions (HEIs) are facing an accelerated need for digital change (von der Heyde, 2022), but have failed to guide this through appropriate enterprise architecture and other core methodologies (von der Heyde & Hartmann, 2023). To consistently pursue our vision, we believe that teaching digital transformation (Dx) by people who have experienced Dx themselves is a key mission.

The mission is based on the following hypothesis: Applying Dx to teaching, learning, research, and university administration is essential for acquiring, understanding, and improving the relevant future skills and Dx competencies - and thus, evolve into a digitally transformed HEI.

The approach requires a radical shift to digital-readiness, breaking with some university traditions. At the same time, it is important to maintain a focus on humanity e. g. applying the United Nations' sustainability goals from the very beginning. All human activities must be sustainable as early as possible. Therefore, any future university must comply with this and mindsets yet to come.

The envisioned Digital University (DU) is best described as a scaling digital ecosystem for co-created learning and research, following the generic idea of von der Heyde et al. (2019a,b). We propose that all core areas of the university, including research, teaching and learning, as well as any supporting function, are based on participation. Learning is facilitated by matching personal interests with Dx specific extensions of the future skills, as proposed by Ehlers (2020). Selection and sponsorship of research topics follow a similar approach, involving both companies and public interests. They are matched with the time, budget, and corresponding competencies of the researchers. Supporting administrative processes result from similar matching procedures. All activities follow a generic pattern of short units (sprints) of problem based learning (PBL). See Dolmans et al. (2005) or Thomassen & Stentoft (2020) on the application of PBL in HEIs. Elements of building an agile organisation as described by Bondar et al. (2017) and Alghamdi (2021) can be applied. However, our concept is more focused on matching supply and demands corresponding competencies - a key feature of successful digital platforms. Agility is essential though, as markets and customers expect fast lifecycles and response times. Similarly, the hybrid approach to localisation is crucial to the digital nature of the organisation. Although some university facilities require physical space, most teaching, learning, research and administration activities do not. Therefore, all activities at the DU are hybrid by default. See Raes et al. (2020) for a systematic literature review of the gaps identified in hybrid learning environments.

This paper discusses building a (hypothetical) DU from scratch or transforming an existing organisation into a digital transformed DU, considering the financial effort required. An alternative concept of participatory cost sharing and long-term benefits for all members is presented as having high potential for the sustainable and beneficial realisation of the DU's vision. The upcoming sections will introduce the core concept of such a DU.

While this approach is expected to work best for advanced students and professional development in Dx, it is not limited to this area. This concept has the potential to be applied to most academic topics once universities of this organisational type are established. Therefore, it has the capability to transform or disrupt higher education itself.

3 Thinking a university as digital ecosystem

3.1 Build a platform by co-creation and participation

As previously mentioned, DU is best described as a digital ecosystem for education and research. The concept is based on the idea that digitally transformed organisations often replace traditional governance structures with modern digital platforms. Starting from scratch, we introduce a definition, an operating model, and relevant success factors of this new platform.

The role of digital platforms has been widely discussed e.g., by Kenney & Zysman (2016) and de Reuver et al. (2018). Digital platforms match supply and demand in innovative ways - thinking along the value proposition of AirBnB or Uber. In higher education, typical examples include social networks like ResearchGate or MOOC providers such as Coursera, Udacity, and edX. However, these digital platforms do not encompass the complete ecosystem of the symbiosis between teaching, learning, and research.

As proposed by von der Heyde et al. (2019a,b) a digital platform's ability to scale itself is based on seven factors, which can be viewed from business, market, and organisational perspectives. The

platform's growth is driven by these factors, with at least three (connectedness, rating/credibility, and global offer) acting in positive reinforcing feedback. The remaining factors (openness, payment/billing, private resources, and the common legal context) amplify the platform's scale.

Participation is one of the biggest drivers for the success of a platform. Therefore, DU as a platform is built as a product of co-creation. All university stakeholders enter a clear digital path tailored to their needs and demands. Students find content and peers - teachers find learners interested in their content - researchers find funding - enterprises find researchers applying their skills to real-world problems. Everyone participates, contributes, and benefits from the interactions facilitated by the DU; the more people participate, the better the model succeeds.

The following paragraphs present the specific matching problem (and solution) of DU as a platform. The envisioned DU is a scaling digital platform building an digital ecosystem for education and research about and powered by Dx.

3.2 Match learning and teaching

As a platform, DU is designed to match supply and demand for education. In combination with the central hypothesis that "you learn better if you are interested in what you want to achieve", we apply Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which has been extensively researched in recent years as summarised by Raes et al. (2020) in their systematic literature review.

In short, PBL significantly enhances critical thinking and problem solving skills in higher education. It encourages self-directed learning, enabling students to take the initiative in their educational journey. It also develops teamwork and collaboration skills, which are essential in the workplace. The real-world applications of PBL provide contextual relevance to academic studies and link them to future careers. Despite its benefits, PBL in higher education faces significant challenges. It needs a lot of resources, including time, staff training and materials. Assessing student progress in PBL is complex due to its subjective and open-ended nature. The risk of insufficient coverage of essential theoretical knowledge as required on the Bachelor level and unequal participation with potential conflicts can affect learning outcomes. Effective PBL requires teachers with specific training and experience.

Traditional curriculum design and preparing learning materials is time consuming and mainly based on manpower. PBL in the DU, however, needs much more agility and thus much faster response cycles. Similar to the industry, our aim is to decrease time-to-market for teaching topics and learning materials. To keep up with that speed and agility, teachers need automated tools that can be integrated into delivery pipelines. We will describe a possible solution for that specific problem as follows.

Generative AI has become capable of delivering high-quality content to whatever is prompted. Not only students already use GPT⁴ to assist in homework and theses. Teachers also use GPT to summarise important passages of text books or create interesting figures and other content. Given a proposed and agreed problem in PBL, teachers can use generative AI to prepare whole classes and material for the aimed timeframe in an instance. What content the AI generates - it is much less time consuming for teachers to perform quality assurance instead of creating everything from scratch. AI generated content comes with more flexibility. Even exam questionnaires and exercises may be supported. Once the generative AI has been integrated in a delivery pipeline (similar to CI/CD), the new content can pass the quality assurance and directly be delivered into a learning platform as part of the DU's ecosystem. More best practices from agile software engineering are just waiting to be applied in this scenario.

⁴ E.g., [ChatGPT](#) as published by [OpenAI](#)

At DU, we propose to co-create digital education programs based on PBL ideas with faculty, students and external partners. As key stakeholders, students or faculty members propose exciting topics and projects. The immediate influence of all participants on the learning content of the units guarantees a high level of relevance as well as a high degree of topicality. In addition, this accelerated influence on the learning content could also have a self-reinforcing effect. A Dx-specific CATalogue of LEarning GOals and competencies (CaLeGo) has been created based on the known future skills discussed by Ehlers (2020). By expanding the scope of “object and individual related”, “individual development related”, and “individual and organisation related” with “specific Dx related” items, we add robustness, abstraction, self-similarity, credibility, connectedness and openness to the generic list of learning goals and competencies. Other disciplines would need to extend CaLeGo specifically for their core methodologies, if these are not covered by the generic futures skills defined by Ehlers.

Each project is proposed in relation to some of the elements of CaLeGo. In addition, students can suggest faculty or external experts as additional mentors. After the preparation of suitable content, matching available timeframes is being addressed. Both teachers and students indicate their availability as a preferred timeframe on the platform, as explained in the section on ‘time and speed’ below. A sufficient number of interested participants trigger the public offering of a topic. If no faculty member is available, external experts are engaged. The selection is based on their skills profile (e.g. from data in the DU’s membership database). Faculty, experts and students confirm time and content, and the unit is scheduled within the agreed timeframe. During and after the unit, continuous evaluations are conducted to ensure teaching quality, student engagement, and organisational alignment. These rating systems also play a specific role in the scaling of a digital platform. Upon successful participation, students receive a microdegree that confirms their level of competence in CaLeGo.

The PBL and CaLeGo based approach will replace traditional education programs. Common to both is a catalogue of learning objectives. At DU, the student's goal is to propose a coherent collection of self-directed learning units that cover almost the entire CaLeGo. In this way, the academic committee agrees on the CaLeGo rather than on the individual implementation of a learner's path. As a result, an appropriate collection of microdegrees that match the CaLeGo elements can qualify for a particular degree. In summary, DU supports students with the ambition to complete their individual education program with an appropriate choice of learning units - matching their required demands.

3.3 Match real-world problems and research

In a similar way to matchmaking in teaching and learning, the DU ecosystem enables matchmaking in research. The underlying hypothesis is that applied research and basic research have one thing in common: a passion for solving problems. Here too, faculty, students and external experts work together to generate valuable project proposals. This creates a pool of ideas, research questions and demands. Due to the in-depth, focussed examination of specific questions within the research units described later, more research questions are generated. External partners, which are business members of DU, can suggest research topics that they would like to support with funding or grants.

The research cycles can be linked to the traditional view, often discussed in the context of the DDC Curation Lifecycle Model or Research Data Management (see Figure 1). Here, the proposing community produces a project outline, so that original ideas initiate projects. The first step is to state the fundamental research question and proposed methodology of the project. The project is broken down into many three-week chunks to define a series of Minimum Viable Products (MVPs), which are presented in Figure 1 as smaller research units. The main challenge in these research units is used to specify an ideal team based on a selection of CaLeGo items (as a reference to necessary competencies). Students and faculty then commit to the topics of the research units and indicate their available time. As soon as the team positions are assigned for the required timeframe, the research project is ready to start. As each research unit links back to the overarching research question,

personal continuity, a clear MVP focus and knowledge management techniques are crucial in compensating for knowledge drain between the units. The results of, for example, an initial literature review, which in several units focuses on different disciplines or areas, must be compiled in annotated bibliographies that maintain the link to the original research question of the overall project.

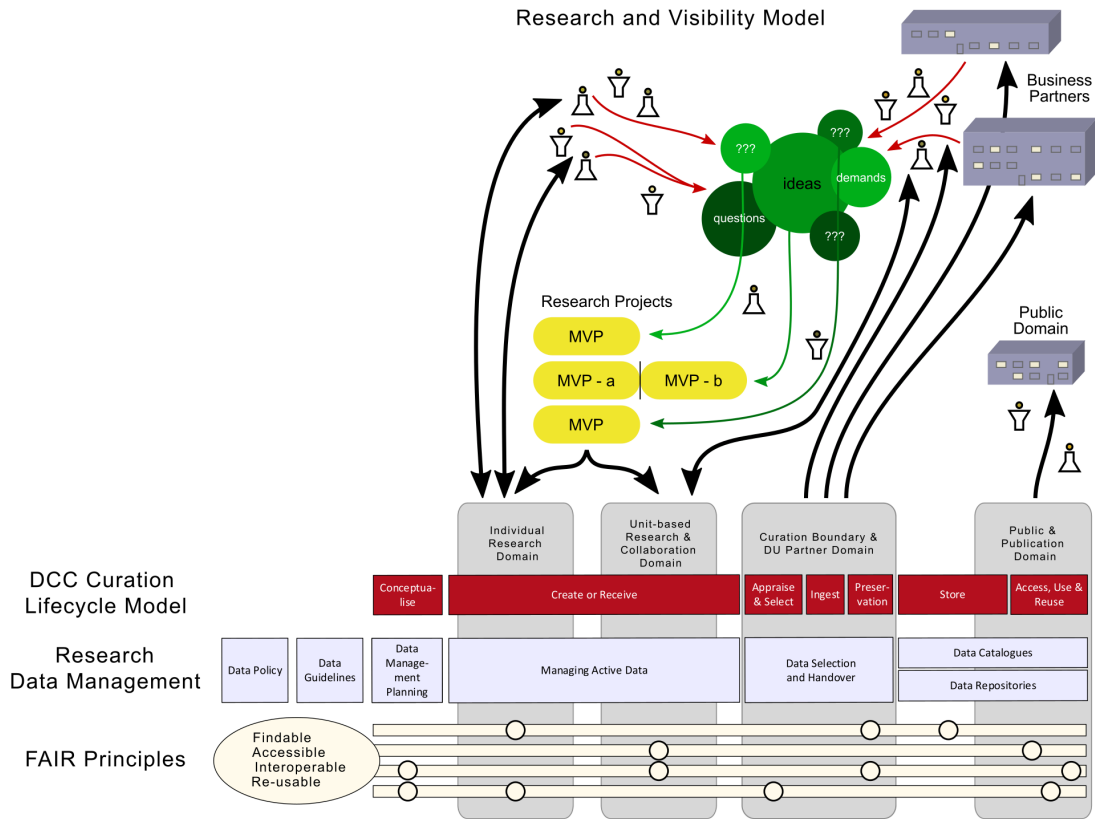


Figure 1: DU's research and visibility model is anchored in traditional research models. It extends the generation of ideas and dissemination of results in line with scaling principles.

As research is funded by business members of the DU, all involved members benefit from the existing resources. Faculty can additionally apply for public funds from the national government, EU and international higher education partners.

After the research has been carried out, all dissemination materials will be published as learning materials and are open to all members of DU. In this way, research has a crucial role in the teaching domain.

3.4 Match graduates to future job profiles based on their microdegrees

At DU, students are evaluated at every stage of their educational journey. By continuous feedback they are empowered to decide when and how to engage in professional job roles. The application of PBL enriches both student and faculty portfolios. This academic portfolio becomes also visible to business members of the DU ecosystem, allowing students to present their competencies when seeking employment opportunities. Business partners can review anonymised skills profiles and propose to potential candidates (see Figure 2). Matching candidates can confirm their interest in being contacted, facilitating a data-driven matching process on the ecosystem. Successful employment

enables students to lower their repayment obligations, as the hiring business partner contributes a fee based on the candidate's skills profile. If the match is not working out, DU professionals assist both parties to find a more appropriate placement. This matching mechanism not only helps students find sustainable and valuable employment, but also promotes long-term satisfaction for members and reliable financial returns for DU.

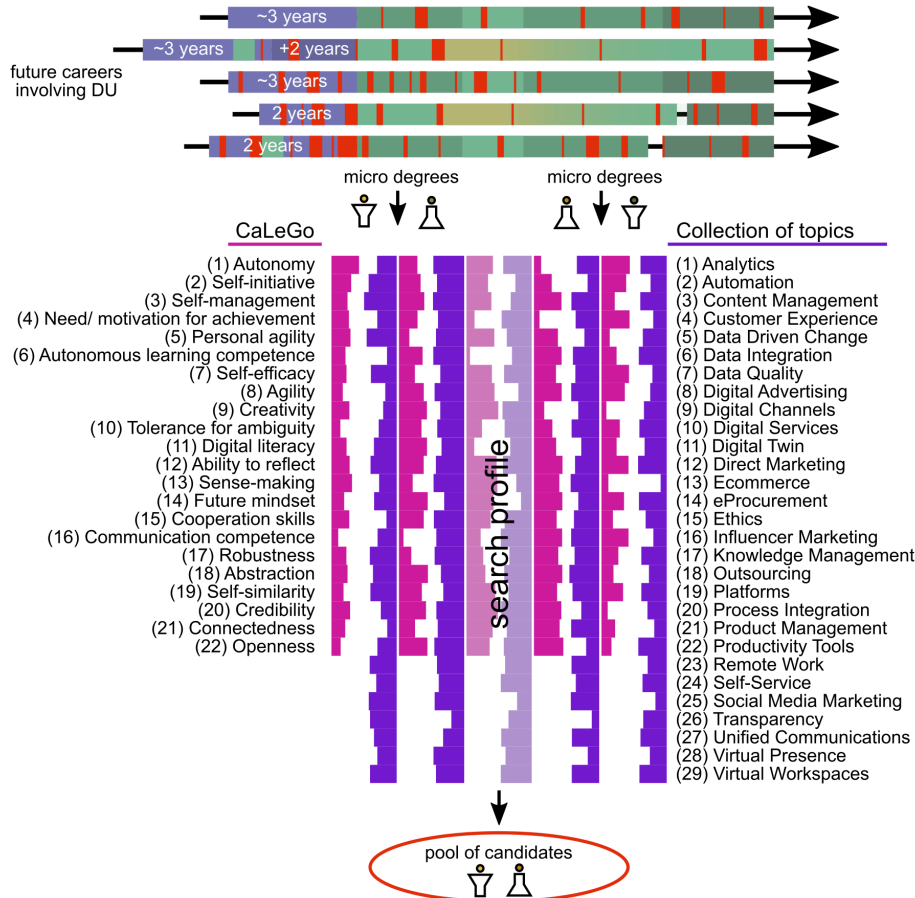


Figure 2: The matching of CaLeGo topics and items enables a selection process based on competences and interests.

In this section we introduced a new design for a digital university (DU), that can best be described as a digital ecosystem. The concept of the DU is based on three essential pillars:

- Match learning demands with teaching offerings
- Match real-world problems with agile research projects
- Match high-value job profiles to graduates based on their individual microdegrees

Being digital by design, all stakeholders are considered members of the DU ecosystem and they co-create from the very beginning.

4 Organising the ecosystem

4.1 Time, speed, and learning dynamics in the TEaching REsearch and LEarning (TeReLe) framework

The TeReLe framework recognises that educational needs are shaped not only by content but also by time and resources. The approach is characterised by an intensive focus on a single topic over a three-week unit, ensuring undivided attention. Each unit, which is equivalent to a project, is worth 4 ECTS and an appropriate microdegree. The units can be linked sequentially to provide a cumulative learning experience.

There are 16 different units scheduled each year, allowing students to fill these units with learning goals of their interest, based on the matching of demand and supply, as shown in the grey columns of Figure 3. The structure allows for three-week timeframes of participation that cater for learners of all ages and backgrounds, regardless of their organisational affiliation. The TeReLe framework emphasises inclusive participation in the review week at the end of each quarter, where all stakeholders are encouraged to provide constructive feedback on methods, content and organisation.

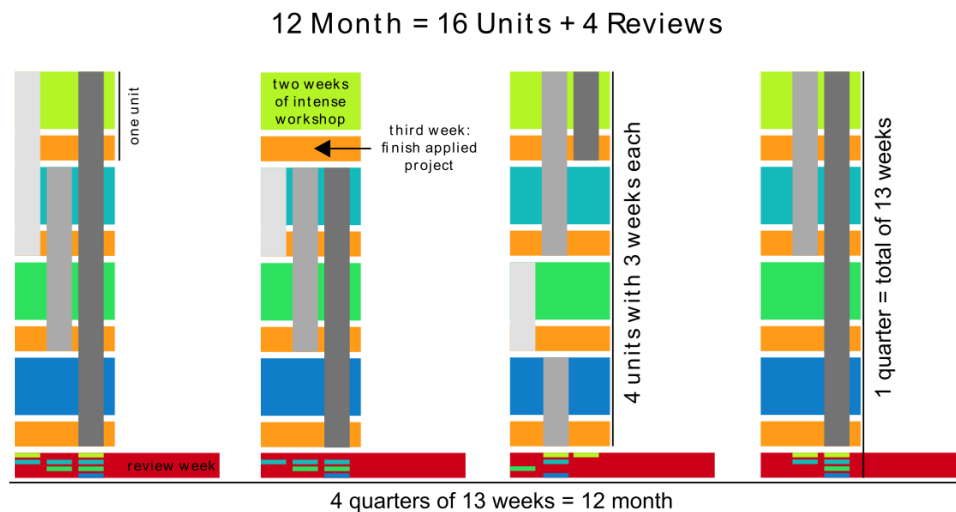


Figure 3: The proposed quarter based academic schedule in the TeReLe framework is based on three week timeframes, respective units. They are flexibly combined to form larger coherent periods if necessary. During a single unit DU members are committed to one type of work only and can therefore give full attention to it.

A typical workload is four days per week, with the fifth day reserved for individual innovation activities. Units are closely linked to either TeReLe activities or academic self-governance. By fostering a highly dynamic environment, TeReLe actively promotes innovation and adapts to the evolving needs. However, because of this volatile environment, knowledge management is a key asset in the DU digital ecosystem. As Dei & van der Walt (2020) point out, current HEIs often fail to establish the required tools and methods.

4.2 Hybrid by default: Balancing digital and on-site spaces

In the TeReLe framework, achieving optimal learning outcomes requires a careful balance between physical presence and digital engagement. Flipped classrooms and other digital teaching

methods have been embraced by those who recognise their benefits. These digital approaches increase flexibility, potentially reduce carbon emissions, and encourage participation from a wide range of audiences.

However, the role of physical laboratories and makerspaces cannot be fully replaced by virtual alternatives. These spaces are crucial in enabling students to fully engage with and understand the practical aspects of their studies. While digital tools can support creativity, for some people they cannot fully replace the tangible experience of interacting with physical objects and people.

To support this blended learning approach, DU is committed to employing educational experts. These experts will assist faculty members in effectively integrating hybrid teaching methods. This hybrid TeReLe model aims to maximise the benefits of both digital and face-to-face modes of education, creating a more robust and versatile learning environment.

4.3 Dynamic (academic) administration

The Digital University (DU) embraces a vision in which organisational learning is an integral part of its core ethos. The aim is to develop an organisational structure that is both highly flexible - in terms of content, space and time - and resilient to external disruption. This structure is inspired by the organisational model of consulting companies, starting with a lean approach without traditional departmental structures.

To maintain this dynamism, DU devotes a week after every four units to an organisational review (red bar in Figure 2). Substantial changes are proposed and form the basis of administrative project units that implement the core functionality of DU's digital ecosystem. Changes within the DU ecosystem and its organisational structure are therefore conceptualised as transformation projects within the TeReLe framework. The operational administrative tasks are performed by an external service unit (e.g., a German Law based gGmbH) we call Administrative Service (AS) GmbH. Collaboration with AS GmbH is based on the principles of involvement, co-creation and active participation.

A distinctive feature of DU's approach is its reluctance to expand its payroll. Instead, the university relies heavily on self-service, automation and partnerships with other educational institutions. Hiring is possible, but used only when collaboration or sourcing is insufficient.

Academic self-governance is reduced to its essentials and is part of the faculty's regular obligations, such as participation in a corresponding unit. In summary, most of DU's innovative organisational approaches are being applied to support services to create a dynamic self-governance.

4.4 Financial and funding strategies at DU

In conceptualising DU as a start-up, it is imperative to adopt a business-like approach to its operations. The institution identifies four interrelated value streams: learning, research, career and intellectual property:

- **Learning:** Students receive default support during their learning phases through a scholarship (e.g., of 1000 € per unit). In return, they provide a small proportion of their future income (e.g. 0.3% over ten years) to the DU. Teaching faculty and external experts receive an immediate income and a fraction of the students' down payment over the same period, thus benefiting from higher teaching success.
- **Research:** As external sources are the primary source of funding, all participating research faculty and students are paid according to their workload. However, if students register for the project as a learning unit, similar mechanisms as in the regular teaching and learning scenario will apply. Experts would also benefit if their share is reduced initially and extended based on the long-term revenue generated by advanced academic students.

- Career: Due to the CaLeGo topics and items, the DU can search for detailed matches between job postings and the students' capabilities. Each match benefits the student, the external company, and the DU itself through proportional payments based on the candidate's gross income.
- Intellectual Property: Specialised professionals facilitate the commercialization of patents, licences, and other valuable assets created through research. All members involved benefit from the long-term revenue, thus maintaining a positive attribution to the original source of additional income.

Each of these streams not only supports but also enhances the others, creating a symbiotic relationship. This can for example be seen by the overarching principles between career revenue of the students and DU for standard teaching units or even research units. Each of these streams also support the DU core platform including the AS. As far as possible positive self-reinforcing factors are carefully selected to support growth and sustainability at the same time.

DU's overarching goal is to become a financially self-sustaining organisation. To achieve this, revenue generation is strategically planned across all value streams, with continuous reinvestment to fuel growth and development. The potential for successful scaling of all streams lies in the use of self-perpetuating mechanisms. A detailed business plan underpins this strategy, providing a structured framework to guide DU towards its financial goals and ensure the realisation of its visionary model in the long term.

5 To build or transform?

DU's proposition is that healthy ecosystems have beneficial spillover effects on their immediate surroundings and on the international level. At the heart of this is openness, which in turn links back to the scaling platform factors. DU aims to lower barriers to entry by offering simple, concise and short agreements for cooperation and membership. This approach accommodates common criteria while recognising the unique needs of different entities such as individuals, NGOs, start-ups and established industries. This also creates a common legal framework that is typical for scaling platforms. Membership begins simply by creating an account, as with other social networks. Interaction begins immediately by browsing other people's learning suggestions or creating your own.

The ethos of DU is to co-create while remaining open to change. The value of providing knowledge through openness and transdisciplinary collaboration does not only enhance DU's own ecosystem, but also contributes positively to the broader community.

However, this article would not be complete without describing how to reach this state of a functioning digital ecosystem. The bootstrapping or transformation of existing institutions is described in the following sections.

5.1 Constructing DU as a transformative university model

The rationale for DU's new organisational structure is based on assembling a small team of highly competent and committed individuals united by a shared vision. This team includes faculty, students and external experts, all of whom are integral members of the DU community. The strategy is to create minimum viable products for all essential components of the DU platform, ensuring basic functionality and effectiveness.

Modifications and enhancements to the platform will be based on critical business requirements and ensure a sustainable return on investment. There is a strong focus on prioritising automation and self-service to streamline processes. DU applies agile principles to address regulatory, technological and societal challenges, emphasising flexibility and responsiveness.

Central to DU's ethos is the creation of a culture that emphasises problem solving while keeping risks within acceptable limits. This approach ensures that DU remains innovative and adaptive, yet firmly grounded in practical and risk-aware strategies.

5.2 Student attraction and selection at DU

DU believes that learning should fit seamlessly into any schedule, recognising that education is a continuous journey. The University caters primarily for part-time students, with the expectation that most students will be employed during their breaks from DU units. The target demographic includes students of all ages with a sound general background who resonate with DU's vision. This approach allows students with varying levels of experience to collaborate in the units, facilitating a two-way exchange of knowledge rather than a one-way transfer. The teacher's role shifts to that of a knowledge coach.

The selection process at DU is highly competitive and primarily AI-driven, leaning towards self-service mechanisms. Recognising that each student brings unique knowledge to the table, the learning model actively involves students in pedagogical roles, encouraging them to teach, advise and provide feedback to their peers and teachers.

Initially, DU is focusing on enrolling advanced students at the Master's and PhD levels, and will later open enrolment to undergraduates. Students will be provided with comprehensive support, including scholarships, to foster an environment of continuous engagement and minimise dropout rates. This approach underlines DU's commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive learning environment in line with its innovative education model.

5.3 Strategies for attracting staff, mentors, and experts

At DU, attracting highly qualified individuals is a significant challenge, especially when considering long-term commitments. The standard form of engagement for teaching, mentoring and professional staff is flexible and often part-time. This approach recognises that many professionals have commitments elsewhere.

The primary motivation for involvement at DU is not financial reward, but a genuine interest and concern for the educational mission. The goal is to attract the best talent, even for a short period of time, and allow them to experience DU's unique environment.

DU focuses on individual benefits and ease of engagement, striving to minimise any potential barriers, whether legal or financial. Long-term contracts are only considered after a thorough matching and evaluation process. Emphasis is placed on the prestige and status associated with being part of DU, highlighting the institution's distinguished image as a key attraction for potential staff, mentors and experts.

5.4 Transform existing universities into the DU model

Alternatively, DU can emerge through the gradual transformation of an existing organisation, with multiple shifts aligned to the principles envisaged. A first step could be the adoption of the new timeframe concept, gradually filling traditional lecture-free periods with three-week unit schemes. As project-based methods increasingly replace conventional teaching, traditional semesters could be systematically reduced until all teaching shifts to the unit-based approach.

Research planning and execution would adapt alongside teaching, and be integrated into teaching-free periods. At the same time, traditional funding models could evolve towards an income credit system to ensure stable and sustainable funding. Contract transformations would take a long-term view, respecting current commitments while offering attractive rewards to encourage staff to move to the new model.

These examples demonstrate the feasibility of a phased approach to introducing the DU model within existing universities. Overcoming the operational challenges requires a clear strategy and unifying vision to anchor the transformation and ensure a smooth transition to this innovative educational framework.

6 Core concepts overview

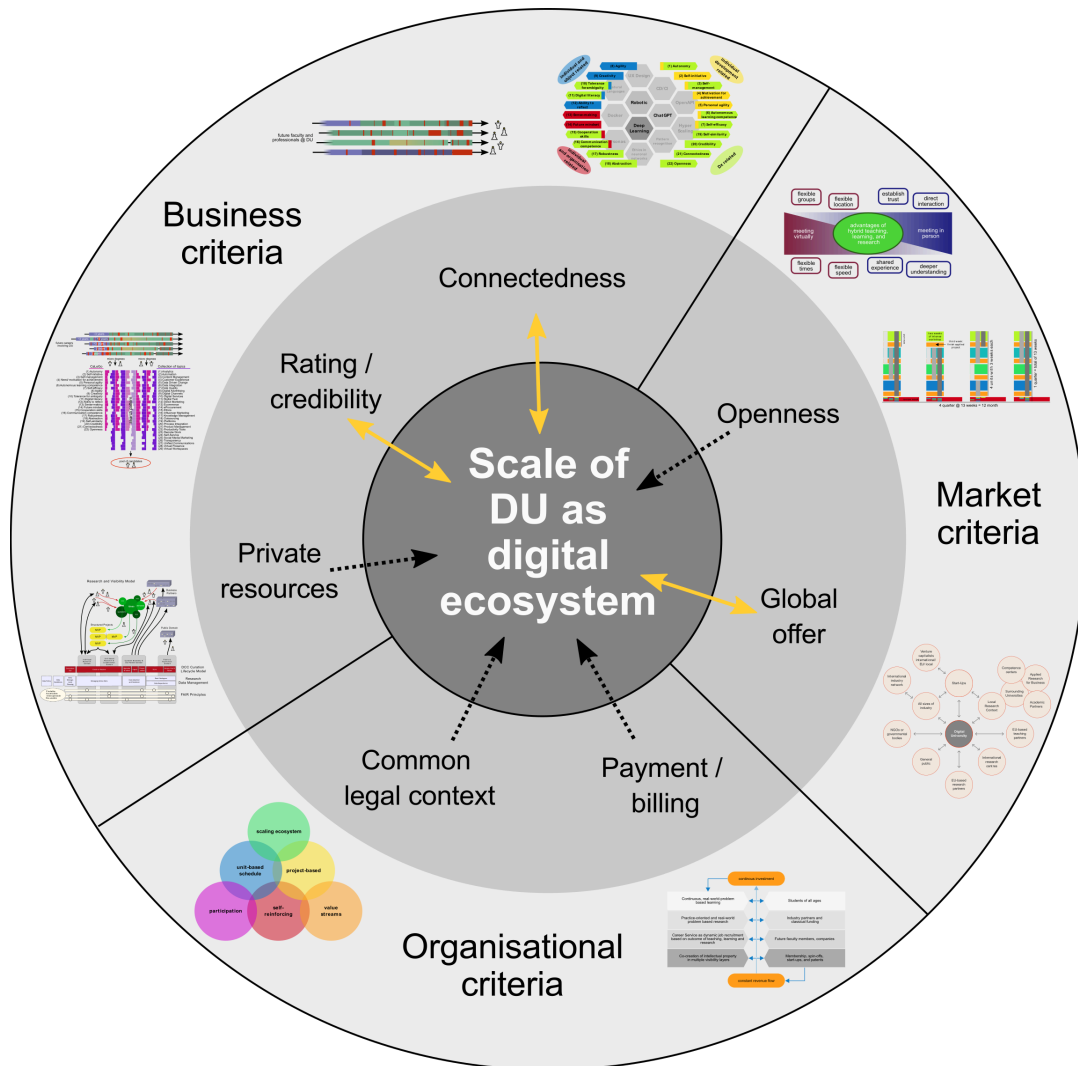


Figure 4: Overview of core concept of the Digital University (DU) in relation to the scaling factors of a transformational digital ecosystem in adoption to von der Heyde et al. (2019b).

6.1 Vision

The Digital University's vision focuses on organisational learning in all areas of the scaling digital ecosystem as shown in Figure 4. It emphasises co-creation and active participation within the academic community. A project-based approach structures the curriculum into distinct units, promoting openness and integration with industry and wider society.

6.2 Credibility

The Digital University is committed to using digital transformation (Dx) to innovate education and research. It aims to establish itself as a data and demand-driven digital platform, ensuring a deep understanding of subjects while discouraging multi-tasking. The curriculum design allows for individual learning pathways, with microdegrees assembled into coherent degree programmes.

6.3 Sustainability

Sustainability guides the Digital University's ambition to become financially self-sufficient, reducing its financial impact on the public. Initial government funding is seen as an investment in creating a start-up and Dx-based ecosystem. Decisions about physical locations are informed by sustainability, favouring digital or hybrid formats. Content generation follows a tiered visibility strategy, involving units, the university, partners and open access resources, ensuring broad and strategic dissemination of knowledge.

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