CUC 2001

Using the Internet in International Educational Activities: A Case Study

Dr. Sanda Erdelez

University of Missouri – Columbia, USA

Koraljka Golub

University of Zagreb, Croatia

Developments in Distance Education

Long tradition:

- 1800s, Europe and U.S. – correspondence courses for women and farmers.
- Many technologies facilitate DE:

  postal service, radio, TV, cable TV.
- In the shadow of mainstream, face-to-face education in physical classrooms.

E-learning and International Education

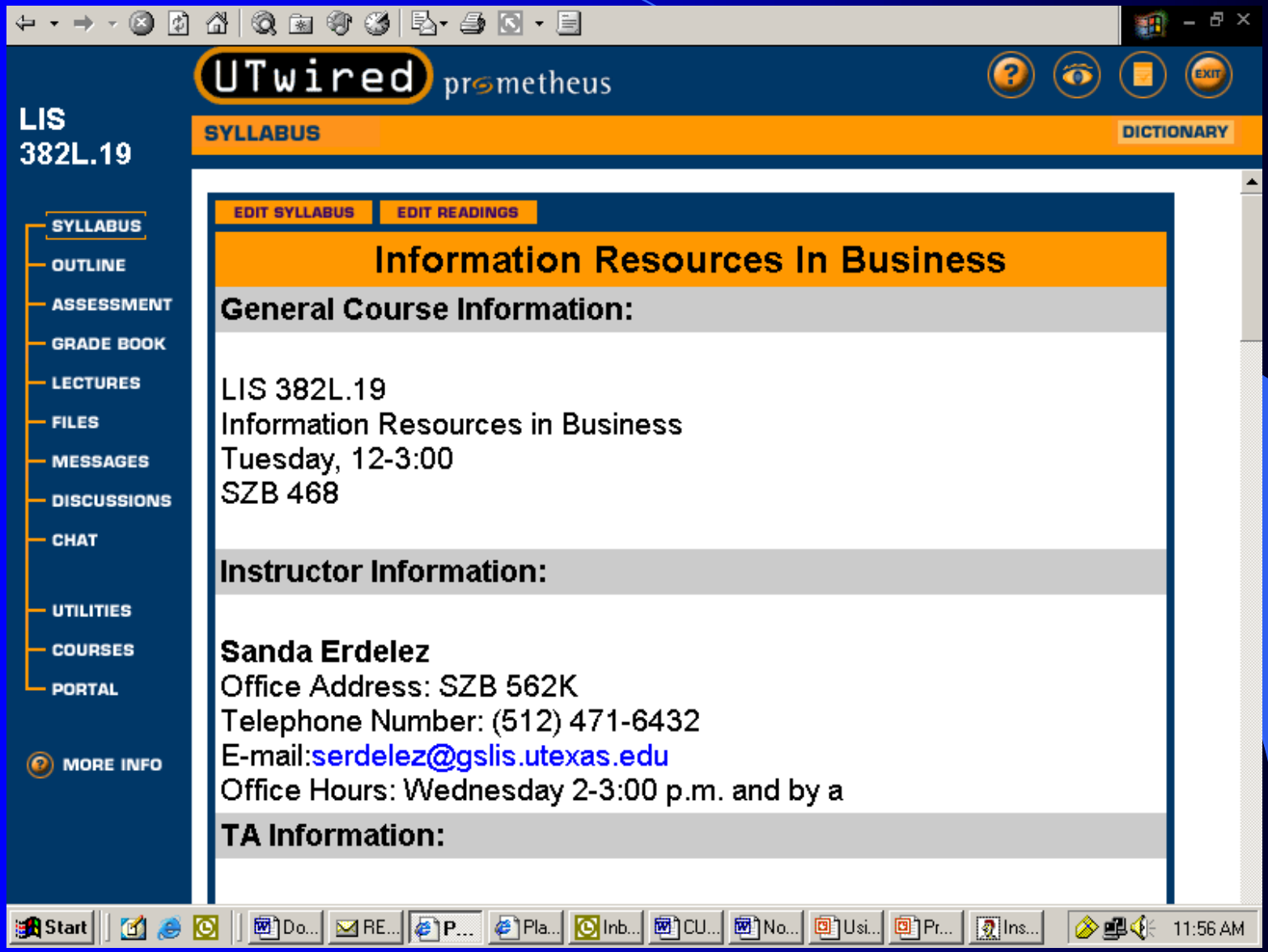
- 1990s – widespread use of Internet, creation of the Web.
- Emergence of e-learning.
- Challenges to traditional premises of institutional learning.
- Opportunities for wider incorporation of international dimensions in learning.

The Case Study

Context:

- A course in business information resources offered on-site at GSLIS, UT-Austin, U.S.
- Course website developed with Prometheus (www.peometheus.com) web courseware.
- 30 students from the U.S. were taking the class.

The Course Website



The Project Description

The students' task was to act as "consultants" to a fictional entrepreneur interested in starting a Web information service about foreign investment opportunities in Croatia.

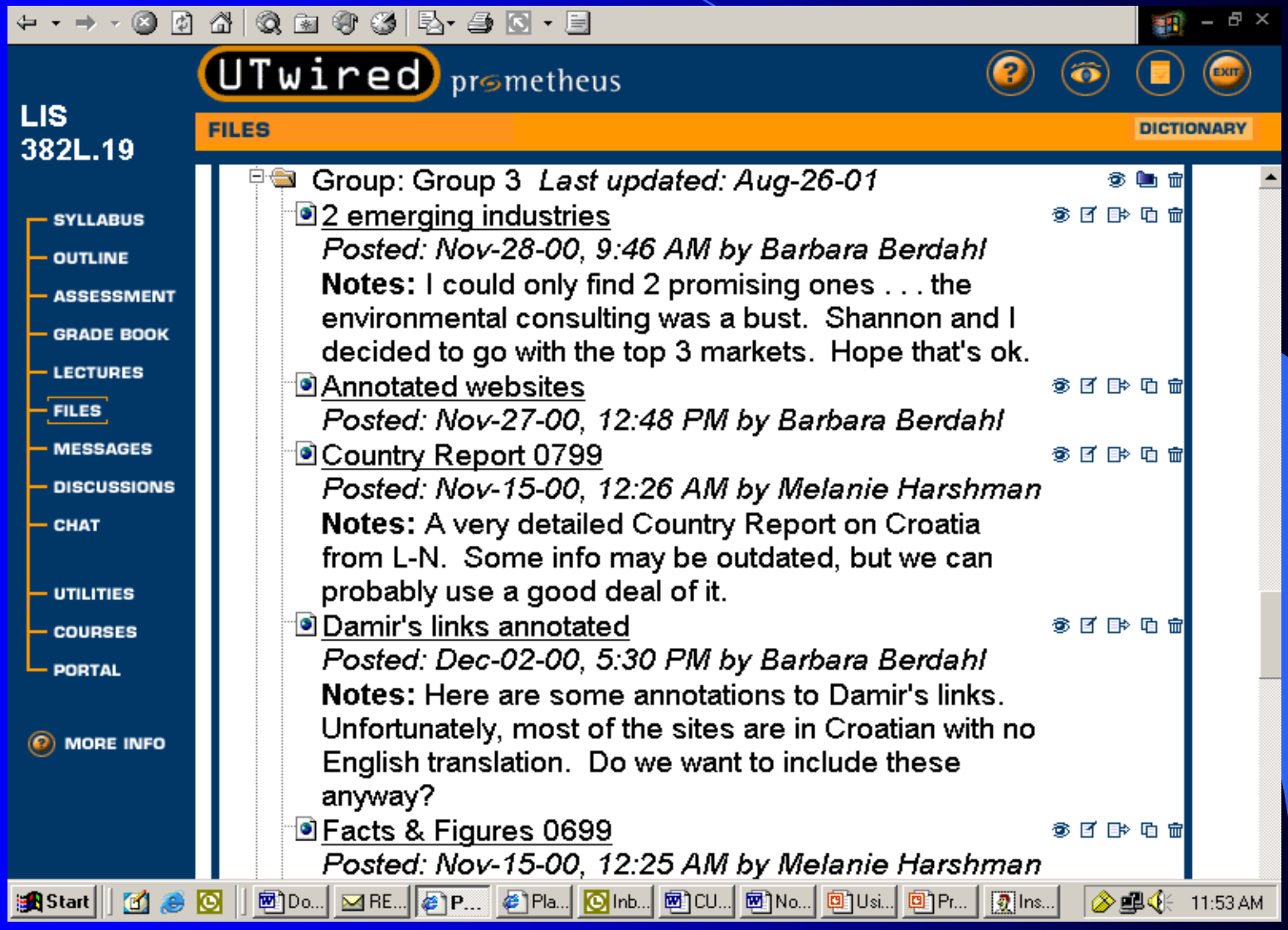
Logistics

- Six project groups were created.
- Each group was assigned a student from Croatia (From Zagreb and Osijek) to assist with translation, explanation of relevant terms, and the review of literature not available online.
- Groups were provided collaborative work area on the course website.

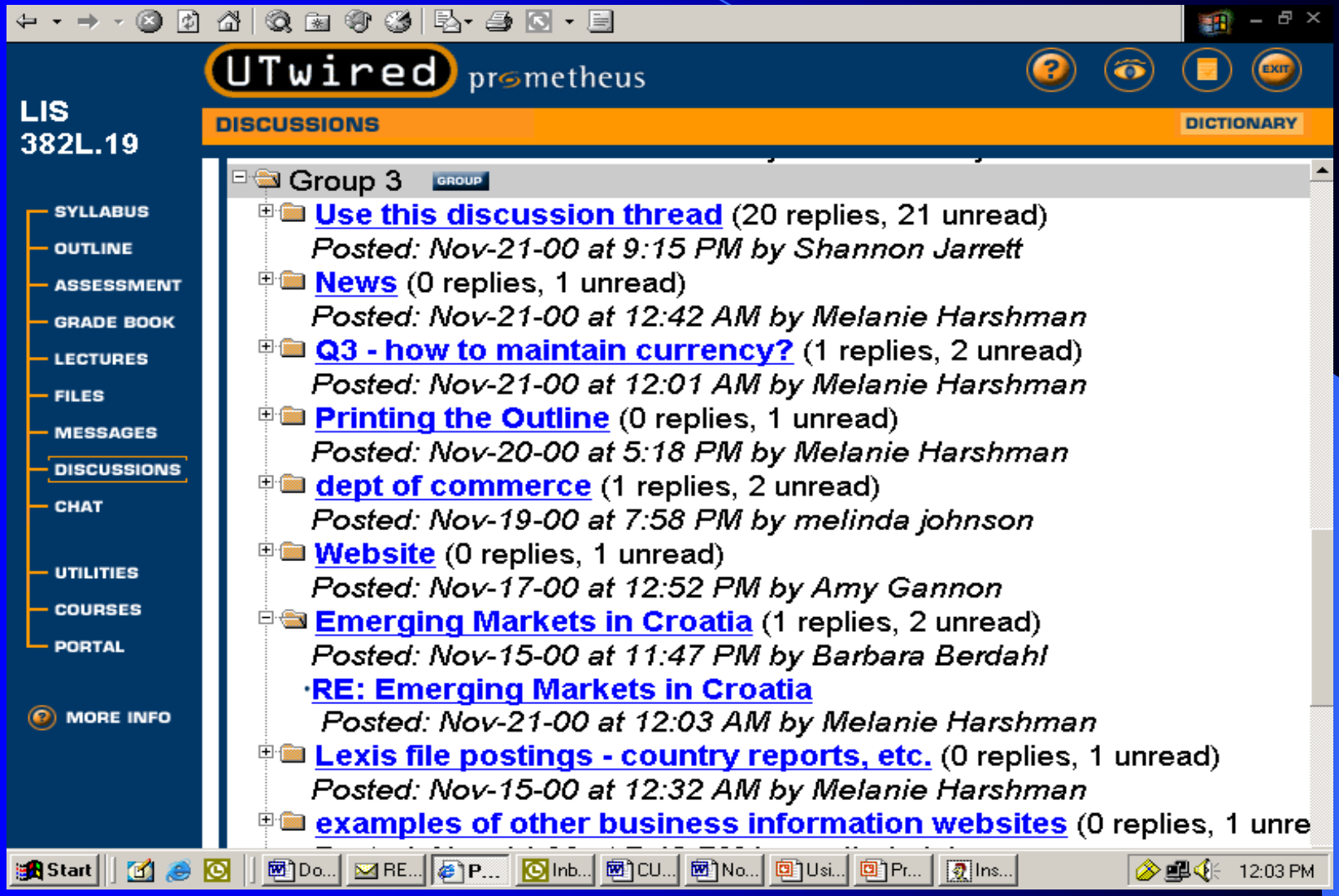
Student Collaboration

- All groups used direct e-mail communication.
- Three groups did not use el. discussion lists at all.
- All the groups used the file sharing tool.
- Opportunities and challenges of time zone differences.
- Group dynamics and cultural differences in educational experiences.

An Example of File Sharing



An Example of El. Discussion List



Final Project Presentations

- Part 1: 30 min. synchronous audio and video communication between group members in Austin, Tx and Croatia (Zagreb and Osijek).
- Part 2: 30 min. broadcast- type presentation of project objectives and outcomes by the course instructor.
- Part: Group presentations – video taped for video streaming from the class website.

Sample Report

Please note: this website has been created for class project

Welcome!

Doing Business in Croatia: Information for Potential Investors.

This website is intended to be a guide to general information about doing business in Croatia. Please also use your local public or university/college library to find more information about doing business in Croatia.

Jump to:	Description of Categories:
Associations Business sites Country reports Culture and Tourism Economic Policy Law and Government	**Associations** Business and industry associations in the United States and Croatia. **Business sites** For business and investment opportunities

IT Resources Used

- IT support: CARNET centers in Zagreb and Osijek; Information technology staff at UT-Austin.
- High-speed Internet connection.
- Prometheus courseware, served from UT-Austin.
- Microsoft NetMeeting and NetShow.

Technical Issues

- Successful use of all asynchronous tools, especially document sharing.
- Difficulties with system compatibility and synchronization among the three locations.
- Flexibility with last minute equipment changes.

Lessons Learned

- Adjust the learning tools to the scope of the educational task.
- Give the participants a choice of e-learning tools.
- Develop e-learning activities that support the international nature of participants.
- Pay attention to cultural difference in educational experiences.

Other Issues to Consider

- Selection of instructional activities that are by nature international.
- Selection of information technology tools appropriate for the overall model of international e-learning.
- Provision of localized logistical support (e.g., local assistant-instructors).

Final Remarks

- The project provided an insight into technological, pedagogical, and logistical issues involved in international e-learning via the Internet.
- Resource and time commitment to experimentation with new technologies is essential for development of successful international e-learning programs.