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Research Matters

TrinityHaus Newsletter

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Issue 2

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Teaching Universal Design: A Feasibility Study

Universal Design is the design and composition of the environment so it can be accessed understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of age, size, ability or disability. Universal Design is relevant to the design of environments, products, processes, services, organisations, business models and experiences. In Ireland, a feasibility study aimed to enhance third level teaching of Universal Design (UD) at Trinity College Dublin. The project – funded by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design (CEUD) – was conducted by TrinityHaus, Trinity College Dublin. The aim was to research existing practices in Uni-

versal Design teaching both in Ireland and internationally. The research – a combination of desk and primary research – reviewed national and international Universal Design curriculum content at third level. CEUD's Universal Design experts were consulted and topic guides (questionnaire used to guide the interview process and probe for information in an unbiased way) were developed. A series of face-to-face interviews with teachers in third level institutions in Ireland was conducted. As well as forming an overview of UD teaching in Ireland at undergraduate and postgraduate level, the interviews revealed the level of

understanding of UD amongst those currently teaching the subject in third level institutions in Ireland. Conclusions are made about the shortfalls of current UD teaching practices, as well as identifying successful approaches both nationally and internationally. An outline curriculum module will be developed as well as guidance notes for teachers to ensure that UD is taught in accurate and successful way.

For further information on this project please contact Marie Callanan, mcallana@tcd.ie

More information on CEUD can be found at www.universaldesign.ie

Building Energy Management Model

Energy management is rapidly becoming one of the core business issues for most organisations. According to the EU, buildings now account for over 40% of the Unions' total energy use. If this statistic is to be driven down effectively and real reduction in

energy use achieved, the problem of effectively modelling the complex mechanical and electrical systems in modern buildings must be tackled. The research project investigates pulling together the many model-

ling technology strands from business, software design and process control in creating a unified view of buildings and their energy use.

For further information please contact Mark Dyer, mark.dyer@tcd.ie

Construction Industry Market Research

A piece of exploratory qualitative research is currently being conducted by TrinityHaus concerning the challenges faced by companies in or close to the construction sector relating to innovation. We think it is important to understand the prevalent problems and preoccupations of the main sub-sectors of the industry in order to be relevant to their

needs. The research involves 30 depth interviews with directors of organisations involved with the construction sector: developers, general builders, civil engineers, product manufacturers, financiers, regulators and architects.

A combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews will be employed. The output will be re-

ported via a web-friendly Powerpoint presentation and perhaps also an academic paper. Tony Owens is leading this project with collaboration from the Construction Industry Federation.

For further information on the topics to be covered and how to attend the symposium, please contact Tony Owens, tony.owens@tcd.ie

ASTM 4ISCS—Conference July 2009

The 4th international symposium on Contaminated Sediments: Sustainable Management and Remediation will take place this coming July in Trinity College Dublin and will be co-chaired by

Mark Dyer, director of TrinityHaus. The themes for the symposium include papers on Sustainable Principles, Goals and Actions, Ecotoxicology and Sediment Quality Assessment Tools

and Engineered Remediation Technologies, to mention a few.

For further information on the topics to be covered and how to attend the symposium, please see www.trinityhaus.tcd.ie/astm4iscs or contact Marie Callanan, mcallana@tcd.ie



GREENprint Colloquia

A series of early evening talks and workshops are being planned under the theme of Dublin as a Living Laboratory for a Low Carbon Soci-

ety. The speakers—yet to be confirmed—include Owen Lewis CEO of SEI, Sean O Laoire President of RIAI, Dr Peter Bourne-Webb of Skanska Cementation

and Pat Shiel of Verteco. Full programme will be listed on www.trinityhaus.tcd.ie

For further information please contact Rory Greenan, greenar@tcd.ie

“The findings and policy recommendations will be used to inform the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities”

The Private Rented Sector and People with Disabilities

The social partnership agreement Towards 2016 and the Sectoral Plan on Disability of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government made a commitment to develop and progress a Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities by end 2009. A key objective of the Plan is to encourage and facilitate access to appropriate housing and accommodation for people with disabilities.

The Government’s Statement (2007) Delivering Homes, Sus-

taining Communities emphasises the importance of a flexible and responsive housing service. It states that while responding to the housing needs of people with disabilities falls primarily to social housing providers, the scope for encouraging provision within the private sector, should not be overlooked.

Accordingly, two statutory bodies—the Centre for Housing Research (CHR) and the Private Residential Tenancies Board (PRTB)—have co-funded a study

which is being conducted by TrinityHaus. The research will investigate the experiences of people with disabilities in the Private Rented Sector and the potential of the sector for alleviating the growing demand for social housing. The findings and policy recommendations will be used to inform the National Housing Strategy for People with Disabilities.

For further information contact Antoinette Fennell, antoinette.fennell@tcd.ie



A walkway in Japan providing tactile and visual guidance to members of the public

48 Hour Universal Design Challenge

A 48 Hour Universal Design Challenge is being organized by TrinityHaus, in collaboration with the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, Queens University Belfast and PLACE—Architecture and Built Environment Centre for Northern

Ireland. It is proposed that the challenge will be part of the Institute of Designers in Ireland—IDI Design Week in November 2009. The focus of the challenge will be on Universal Design at the Urban

Scale, with particular emphasis on meeting the needs of people of all ages.

For further information contact Antoinette Fennell, antoinette.fennell@tcd.ie

New TrinityHaus Staff

TrinityHaus recently welcomed two new members of staff.

Project Scientist, Dr Antoinette Fennell has a Ph.D. in Zoology, covering Animal Behaviour, Endocrinology and Immunology. She worked in the Royal National Institute of the Blind in the UK and the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design in Ireland. Her work at TrinityHaus will be in Universal Design, focusing on

how people interact with and “use” the built environment, in order to better inform design.

Project Engineer, Dr Ruth Collins will be carrying out research into modular construction, building energy systems and temporary and deployable structures.

Ruth has a Ph.D. in structural engineering. Her thesis investi-

gated passive, active and semi-active tuned mass dampers for the mitigation of vibration in both tall structures and wind turbine towers. She worked as a structural engineer in Wellington, New Zealand where she could employ her expertise of vibration control and more recently has been working in the area of light gauge steel panels and modular units and low energy design.

About TrinityHaus

TrinityHaus is Trinity College Dublin’s Centre for Construction Innovation and Sustainability. Funded by Bernard McNamara, TrinityHaus carries out high quality industrially relevant research to facilitate innovation in practice. There are three emerging research themes:

McNamara group acts as a catalyst to promote innovation by being involved with infrastructure projects and focusing on parts of the supply chain most receptive to innovation.

GREENprint explores the numerous technological, cultural and societal barriers and levers for the transformation of Dublin and environs towards a low carbon society.

I.School uses innovative methodologies and creative design to couple the potential of creative thinking and systematic innovation for problem solving within the traditional disciplines of engineering and sciences.

We are on the Web!
www.trinityhaus.tcd.ie

See www.trinityhaus.tcd.ie for further information