

Editorial: Using ICT in education for development

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Welcome to Volume 4 Issue 1 of the International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT). This issue brings articles on the use of ICT in education from and/or about Australia, China, India, Malaysia, Sultanate of Oman and USA. It also brings a blog by one of the editors – “CEDICT: Communication, Education and Development using ICT” - <http://cedict.blogspot.com/>

The discourse attending the diffusion of network technologies into developing countries has often presented the new media as a utopian, egalitarian and empowering tool with the potential of ushering in a new era of development, democracy, and positive cultural change. In “The Internet in developing countries: A medium of economic, cultural and political domination”, Abdulkafi Albirini examines the economic, cultural, and political effects of the Internet within the historical context of developing countries. The article traces the politically-inspired evolution of the Internet, its transfer into developing countries, and the economic, cultural, and political consequences of this transfer. The article proposes alternative approaches to Internet adoption, where Internet initiatives are embedded and placed in the service of the general development goals of developing countries.

The Sultanate of Oman (Oman) is a Middle Eastern country that is eager to prepare its students to compete more effectively in global higher education and commerce markets. One such effort, the Oman Online Teacher Training (OOTT) project, involved a limited pilot test of the development and implementation of e-learning. The article “Prospects and challenges of an online teacher training project in Oman” by Gregory Sales, Thuwayba Al-Barwani and Shirley Miske, describes the project goals and deliverables, the actions partners took to achieve the desired outcomes, the challenges partners faced, and the project outcomes attained.

In their article “The use of Intranet by Omani organizations in knowledge management”, Khamis N. Al-Gharbi and Syed J. Naqvi study the use of Intranet and examine factors that influence its use in knowledge management in Omani organizations. The work reported is based on survey of thirty-one Omani organizations. A model is proposed that covers many critical issues that can lead to a comprehensive understanding in implementing and using the Intranet in knowledge management.

In the article “School-based technology coordinators and other human factors in the implementation of ICT in primary schools: A comparative study”, Kit-pui Wong describes a survey that shows that the contributions of ICT coordinators in Hong Kong are not as highly valued as those of their counterparts in England. This finding suggests that educators and policymakers in Hong Kong may need to review the role and status of their ICT coordinators. Both the pedagogical and technological functions of these staff members should be emphasised in order to bridge the needs of education and technology. With highly proficient ICT coordinators, peer teachers could benefit from working under their direction and learning from their expertise.

The study reported in the article “Teaching using information and communication technology: Do trainee teachers have the confidence?” by Ab. Rahim Bakar & Shamsiah Mohamed, sought to identify trainee teachers’ confidence in teaching using ICT. The respondents were final year students in the teacher education program at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM). The study showed that trainee teachers were quite confident integrating ICT with teaching. The study also showed a significant difference in the level of confidence between students with teaching experience and students without teaching experience. Older students were more confident integrating ICT in teaching than younger students.

In “A survey on the application of computer network technologies and services over heterogeneous environment in higher educational institutes”, Mohd Nazri Ismail and Abdullah Mohd Zin describe a study that investigated the pattern and significant level of various services implementation, convergence of communication technologies and bandwidth capacity for last mile users (students and lecturers). The most apparent finding was that various services implementation in higher educational institutes can affect convergence of communication technologies usage in accessing information over heterogeneous network environment between students and lecturers. The study or analysis confirms that Malaysia higher educational institutes have not achieved a maximum level of various services implementation via convergence of communication technologies between students and lecturers in heterogeneous network environment.

Ready access to multimedia provides the opportunity to develop engaging and interactive learning resources to enhance traditional learning environments. In their article “Drivers for and obstacles to the development of interactive multimodal technology-mediated distance higher education courses”, D Birch and M.D. Sankey provide a qualitative meta-analysis of the issues associated with academics’ adoption and integration of technology for developing distance education courses, emerging from a range of contemporary studies and presents a framework for the investigation of factors influencing academics’ adoption of technology.

In “The use of interactive wireless keypads for interprofessional learning experiences by undergraduate emergency health students”, Brett Williams and Malcolm Boyle examine the use of interactive wireless keypads for interprofessional learning experiences. The study showed that students felt educational technology was helpful and important in their learning, with wireless keypad use providing high satisfaction. Class interaction using wireless keypads has assisted students to better appreciate and understand other health care disciplines within an interprofessional education setting.

Buenafe Abdon and Robert Raab consider that eLearning is a potentially viable and cost-effective way to facilitate knowledge development among agricultural professionals and farmers but is still not widely employed. Many of the main challenges are known and a number of organizations have made significant progress in overcoming them. Their article - “eLearning for international agriculture development: Dealing with challenges” - focuses on how two non-profit organizations dealt with challenges associated with eLearning for agriculture and offers a number of recommendations for future efforts.

According to Priti Srinivas Sajja, IT is one of the leading technologies in effectively utilising the scarce resources to encounter the gap between solutions provided by existing methodologies and demands of society. In the article - “Enhancing quality in e-Learning by knowledge-based IT support” – the author identifies qualitative parameters and IT support for the parameters. Based on a result of a survey made for the selected parameters, a new knowledge-based e-Learning prototype is implemented. The article also presents the implementation framework, sample screen and results of quality surveys for existing and modified methodologies for e-Learning.

The emphasis in IJEDICT is on providing a space for researchers, practitioners and theoreticians to jointly explore ideas using an eclectic mix of research methods and disciplines, and we welcome feedback and suggestions as to how the journal can better serve this community.

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