

Editorial: ICT for development in Asia and the Pacific

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Welcome to the fourth issue of the International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology (IJEDICT) - an e-journal that provides free and open access to all of its content.

IJEDICT emphasises collaboration across disciplines, across professions, across institutions, across sectors, and across continents in an attempt to freely share and promote best practice and best research. This fourth issue deals with information and communication technology (ICT) for development in Asia and the Pacific, and brings articles from and/or about India, Mongolia, South-East Asia, New Zealand and Australia.

In "Profiting from Empowerment? Investigating Dissemination Avenues for Educational Technology Content within an Emerging Market Solutions Project", Payal Arora explores the dissemination avenues of the Stills in Sync (SIS) folksongs product and its effects within the Inclusive Community (i-community) of HP in Kuppam, India. This community has functioned as a social and economic laboratory in which HP tested new technologies. Analyzing this test environment makes apparent the dichotomy between corporate responsibility and community development.

Sambuu Uyanga writes about "The usage of ICT for secondary education in Mongolia". The author presents the current situation of usage of ICT in secondary education in Mongolia, including national policies, strategies and programs, hardware and software, teaching staffs, informatics curriculum and related projects and initiatives. SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threat) analysis and conclusions are also presented.

Angelina Russo and Jerry Watkins, in their article "Digital Cultural Communication: Enabling new media and co-creation in South-East Asia" describe 'Digital Cultural Communication' as a new field of research and design which seeks to build a co-creative relationship between the cultural institution and the community by using new media to produce audience-focused cultural interactive experiences (Russo and Watkins 2005). The authors provide a number of examples from around Asia to demonstrate how individuals and communities can benefit from the economy and immediacy offered by new media to co-create and distribute distinctive cultural content to broader audiences.

Janet Toland and Pak Yoong, in their article "Learning Regions in New Zealand: The role of ICT", examine the potential for ICT to enhance the efforts of regions in New Zealand to achieve sustainable economic success, by improving the flows of knowledge, both within the region itself, and between the region and the outside world. Still in New Zealand, in "Business Undergraduates Learning Online: A One Semester Snapshot", Krassie Petrova and Rowena Sinclair report on research conducted at Auckland University of Technology in the second half of 2004 as part of a broad review of online learning in a business program. The study presented here was aimed at identifying key characteristics of student perceptions about the two online models implemented,

and the actual usage patterns of the online learning platform. It provided information about student perceptions of online learning and a picture of the online platform usage.

From Australia, the article "What role can educational multimedia play in narrowing the digital divide?" by Hilary Macleod explores the assertion that the development of educational multimedia has a key role to play in effectively reducing the impacts of the digital divide particularly in the context of developing nations. Facilitating the development of electronic literacy, culturally relevant online content and interfaces through the development of educational multimedia can assist the process of social inclusion within developing countries. Before examining the role of educational multimedia in this context, the article critically analyses the concept of the digital divide and why ICT has come to be seen as the panacea to the problems of global development. Also from Australia, Chris Murray, Jillian Condell and Peter Murray contend that Australian grain growers need to change their management approach to ensure their continued viability, but do not have the required knowledge and skills. They point out that professional development of farm partners has the potential to improve the viability of grain growers, and propose a model combining learning circles and action learning projects.

In "The Information Society and the Digital Divide: Some North-South comparisons", Bill Martin reviews the concepts of the Information Society and the Digital Divide in the context of national and international policies, many of which are techno-economic in nature and lacking a genuine social dimension. This social dimension must include attention to regulatory and access issues and critically, address core issues of poverty and living standards, including information poverty.

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IJEDICT seeks to support the community of researchers and practitioners involved in ICT for education and development, and we welcome feedback and suggestions as to how the journal can better serve this community.

Stewart Marshall and Wal Taylor

Chief Editors, IJEDICT

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