

## ABOUT E-LEARNING

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**Abstract** - In these paper I want to emphasize the fact that is true that e-Learning means any form of learning (formal, informal, face-to-face, blended, distance) supported and extended with the use of information and communication technology. More than these by e-Learning every teacher should see each opportunity to teach as an opportunity to learn! Also every student should see each opportunity to learn as an opportunity to teach!

**Keywords:** distance education, Internet, e-mail

### INTRODUCTION

We are all aware of the fact that we live in a society based on information, call it post industrial society or a type of society based on a technological civilization, it's a society that imposes e-communication, e-knowledge, e-information and e-education. Obviously “e” does not refer only to “electronic” but will be associated with notions such as evolution, extension, development and growth and not only the electronic dimension of these processes. The informational society became dependent on complex informational networks and most of its resources are allocated to the communication and information field. At an individual level assigning resources in such a way is translated into Life Long Learning, whereas at an organizational level it's defines as implementing tools such as web platforms, wiki, chat, e-mail; and all of these tools aim at improving teamwork, communication and information dissemination.

The rapid changes in education, the technologic progress, the way globalization impacted university studies, all these factors opened new perspectives for educational practices. Modern methods of teaching-learning-evaluating students are implemented, methods that are very specific to the informational society and that aim at equipping students with skills and competences adapted to the new economy. Transfer of knowledge and the channels through which it is performed carry great importance; active lifelong learning is one of the goals set by the GRUNDTVIG program, MOF action [1] and one of its main tools is the “e-learning” concept, learning not in a classroom, but via electronic platforms.

### e-Learning

e-Learning is a way to develop and support the education system, adapted and aligned to technologic discovery. The term is widely used for numerous teaching techniques involving the computer environment; the electronic education system uses internet technologies in order to provide a high number of responses for knowledge and performance improvement. Generally “e-Learning” is synonymous to *online learning* and *Web based learning*.

Here are a few possible definitions:

- Any virtual event or process utilized to obtain data, information, skills or knowledge. Therefore e-Learning is learning in a virtual world, where technology and human creativity work together to speed up and facilitate rapid development and application of deep knowledge [2].

- Learning opportunities or educational programs via electronic methods [3].

- Vast area of applications and processes, such as web based learning, computer based learning, virtual classrooms, online collaboration. The electronic content is provided via Internet, Intranet, satellite, CDs, interactive television [4].

- Method to improve the education system by using electronic devices (computers, PDAs, mobile phones, TV) and communication technology (Internet, e-mail, forums, wiki software, blogs) [5].

We can probably state that by e-Learning we understand all the educational activities that use modern informational media, computer based learning, online learning, multimedia learning.

Computers and electronic or multimedia documents are used as a teaching/ learning/ evaluation support or as communication media. E-Learning does not require a physical presence in a classroom; it is planned and organized by an educational institution via educational websites which provide educational materials in a specific logical order, so that each student is able to take in and fully understand the information transmitted.

A new theory emerged and developed, capable of supporting and guiding the educational practices; a theory focused on elaborating principles for efficient leaning, using electronic materials, mediated by interactions between the teacher and the student, in the context of promoting independent study and distance learning.

Distance learning or distance education can be defined as distributing educational materials to students who are not physically attending the courses. In this scenario the design of the material plays an essential part in amplifying the formational value of the educational message that needs to be transmitted. Teachers and students may communicate synchronously or asynchronously - depending on how much time they have – by exchanging messages and materials, audio, video, soft copies. Distance learning usually entails organizing students in virtual environments, highly interactive, such as forums through which they can exchange ideas and share knowledge.

In the past few years the development process of distance learning practices is associated with a great complexity increase. If we try to associate the concept of e-Learning with most situations and contexts of an educational nature where new technologies are utilized in the most efficient way, we will obtain an extended panel of activities and products that can be placed under the educational innovation category.

e-Learning is a concept used to describe education through media such as DVDs, CDs, Internet, Intranet, wireless etc: “e-Learning means utilizing multimedia technologies and Internet in order to improve the standard of education, by facilitating access to resources and services, as well as interchanges and collaboration”[6]; the Distance Education and Training Council focuses on e-Learning as well: distance education requires registering and studying in a training institution, which will offer training materials provided in a logical, sequential order, so that students can study on their own. At the end of every stage the student will fax or email his project work on to a professional; the latter will verify, catalogue and design some tutorial guidelines for the topic in question. This exchange will ensure a personalized relation between teacher and student [7].

### e-Learning benefits

e-Learning is considered a coherent educational system as it offers the basis for a personalized professional development, which is necessary for innovation and economical growth. Applying such methods of learning may lead to a better content understanding and assimilation by students, thus leading to better results. The new methods also allow educational institutions to be more effective from a

financial and pedagogical point of view, when they're faced with the growing number of students and constrained by the existing infrastructure.

Finland was one of the first countries which encouraged teachers to be actively involved in utilizing ITC in order to improve student performance in disciplines such as literature, mathematics, science. These changes have generated new types of students, new learning processes, new approaches in evaluation and therefore contributed to a change in methods of teaching and a shift in the teachers' role.

Professors and lecturers are not just offering knowledge, they become proactive facilitators who promote collaborative knowledge and orient students to learning in different environments, navigate in these environments, process the multitude of informational resources, use these resources to solve problems and make decisions. Other aspects need change as well, such as the architectural structure[8].

The new training teachers are required to have needs to be extended so that it includes management competences, leadership, management of change. The transformation of the traditional system from a teaching/learning standpoint - inside and outside the school environment – represents a global challenge and at the same time a way to support the development of the society of knowledge as a whole.

Social integration is considered proportional to the number of people participating in education and professional formation. At the same time it represents a means of surpassing social inequity and preventing social exclusion. It was proven that using ITC in education can overcome the obstacles encountered when helping integrate marginalized groups in the educational process. The online education communities as well as the tools specific to e-Learning have increased social cohesion and networking within the groups.

One of the benefits of educational technology is its capacity to allow teachers to personalize the content of their courses so that they meet their needs, as well as facilitate accessing, creating, using and adapting the resources they have. E-Learning implies a greater flexibility in all segments of education and a more realistic approach was necessary in

terms of flexibility. Most teachers have only limited resources to select or create educational materials. Interactive pedagogical tools must justify their cost, they need to offer more than simple flash animations or website lists (generated by search engines).

Mobile phones, wireless connections, high bandwidth connections, together with network and ambient technologies will most likely lead to a great jump in educational technologies and will change dramatically the way we perceive education and educational systems. These recent technologies are consistently developing and they indicate how the habits we learn in society might change, and here are just a few examples of the potential impacts in education: educational system based on mobile telephony, interactive TV programs, wireless infrastructures on campuses.

In such condition the most important advantage which we can emphases are:

- Free and direct access to information: this aspect refers to accessing information without the implication of a facilitator or by remotely consulting him. Any educational process is constituted by two fundamental elements: the educational content and the channels through which it is delivered. In the case of distance learning there are two types of communication used: asynchronous, such as e-mails, forums, electronic notebook, as well as synchronous: audio and video conferences.

Students nowadays use multiple methods of continuous communication, easily shifting from “face to face” communication to online communication, they're used to work in virtual teams and learn through simulation. Their style of communicating and the easiness in web surfing have opened new paths in formal and especially informal learning.

- Freedom to choose the source: Students can choose from infinite sources of information. The traditional guidance is no longer operational; students are being given more and more responsibility in regards to choosing, screening and evaluating information.

- Validation: this is the one aspect where traditional education and e-Learning are not so far apart; the same techniques are used, but this remains an open debate, it would be extremely useful to discover significant discrepancies or existing opportunities [9].

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