

MULTI MEDIA, ASSESSMENT AND CERTIFICATION OF ELEARNING MATERIAL

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NASSCOM
India

Invitees:

Kiran Karnik, VS Prasad, BS Bhatia, DR Ramai HP labs, Azim Prmeji
Foundation, NIIT

CEMCA has initiated a process in collaboration with NAAC, NASSCOM and other IT majors to explore the possibility of standardization, assessment and certification of educational multimedia materials.

CEMCA organized a round table at Bangalore on August 7, 2007 to discuss the need for and approach to certification and assessment of Multimedia learning materials. The list of participant is attached. I welcomed the participants and explained that as part of its Quality improvement programme. CEMCA would like to initiate a project on Certification and Assessment of Multimedia learning materials. I emphasized the need for such assessment and also showed a Multimedia presentation outlining a possible approach leading to development of standards and their international acceptance. Mr. Kiran Karnik , President NASSCOM, while agreeing with the desirability of developing Standards for Multimedia was of the opinion that it may be possible to certify the production process rather than the product itself. This was true for most of the IT related certification and a similar Process certification could be adopted. Prof. Prasad , Director, NAAC, brought to bear the experience of certification of educational institutes and in his several interventions made the following points: The effort of developing an assessment process is worth the investment. It is essential. There is need to be very focused and clear about objectives at each step. What is the perspective of assessment? Is it to assist self-assessment? Is it the users perspective? Is it the producers' perspective? What are the benefits to the agency undergoing / accepting certification. What is the legitimacy of the certifying agency? The certifying agency could be a consortium of the players in the field or it could set up by the government as a autonomous certifying agency. Dr. Ramani of HP labs

expressed concern that a great deal of material is generated but not many use it. The question was is it because of lack of access or because of lack of quality. The web.2.0 is creating new possibility of groups working together and generating material. The wikipedia, wikieducator and wikimedia are examples of it. It would be most appropriate, if students who are the users of the material, rate it. It may be desirable to create a portal and invite comments as feedback on material from students. Mr. Ron Mukherjee of NIIT agreed with this need for assessment, but thought it would be better to evolve guidelines of best practices in the production of educational material. Such guidelines of best practices would be dynamic, and evolve over a period of time. Mr. Anand pointed out that the student's objective of learning is no more "Knowledge gain". The student wants to learn for Problem Solving. The e-learning model is very different from the conventional learning modules. The conventional learning is a Push Model of Sequential learning where it is assumed that all students are similar at the entry level. The e-learning model is Pull driven or (demand driven by student) where learning is not sequential and the entry levels of different students are different. Mr. Anikar from Azim Premji Foundation pointed out are that the material should adopt the approach as outlined in the latest NCF and should be learner centric and follow the process as outlined is the National Curriculum Framework. The important comments and Recommendation made were as follows. Need: There was unanimous opinion that it is necessary to make an effort to define an Assessment and Certification process for Multimedia learning materials. Very large investments are being made by governments, educational institutes and private agencies. The availability of quality Multimedia materials is vital to the effective use of ICT in education. The effort to define a Certification Process is therefore essential. Perspective: The assessment process can be defined from the perspective of the user, or the producer. It could also be a self assessment tool. It is essential to have a defined perspective and clear focused objectives at each stage of the assessment and certification process. In the absence of clarity of objective the process is likely to take a wrong direction. The Certification Agency: The agency defining the Certification and Assessment process must have acceptability and legitimacy, amongst the stake holders, and the benefits of certification and assessment should be clear to the production agencies. The certifying agency could be a Consortium formed by the stake holders. The production agencies could come together to define a certification process which could then become a norm for the industry. Alternatively the certifying agency could be an autonomous agency set up by the government. Approach: The production of

Multimedia materials is a team effort of content experts, and content presenters, along with those who understand the needs, and entry levels of the audience. The production process goes through several stages of content authentication and creative presentation. The generation of quality learning material is both a skilled and creative process. Several steps, and crosschecks and tests can be defined to assist in ensuring a good quality product. However, these steps can assist in generating material of a minimum acceptable quality. The Certification and assessment can therefore be a “Process” oriented certification rather than a “Product” oriented certification. The process-oriented certification may only provide guidelines giving best practices in the production methods. These best practices could evolve into standards for Certification and Assessment. The Multimedia user e.g. the student needs to be involved in the assessment of materials. The web 2.0 is creating new possibilities of groups working together. Students and teachers could come together to rate learning materials on a portal. The e-learning model is a demand driven Pull model, where learning is not Sequential and the learner’s entry levels are not same. This is quite different from the conventional model where teaching is a Push, sequential process, assuming that all students are at the same entry level. The e-learning material has to meet the requirements of non sequential learning of students with different levels. The approach in generating material also has to be congruent with National Policy frameworks. The assessment process would have to provide for assent from students needs and policy framework point of view. Scope: Electronic learning materials include, Radio and TV programmes besides Multimedia materials. Should assessment and certification process include all the form of electronic learning materials or should it limit itself to Multimedia materials only? The Certification and Assessment standards for each of these forms would have to be different and distinct. While it would be desirable to define standards for all, it would be better to initially focus on Multimedia standards only. Recommendations: There was a general Consensus that the effort for evolving Certification and Assessment Standards is essential. It should involve the major players and production agencies both government as well as private. A core group representing the interested agencies and stake holders should meet to evolve the approach to assessment and certification. A portal should be created to get feed back from students and other users. It must be realized that the process of defining standards or assessment method will be a long drawn process and it should be viewed in a 3 to 5 year perspective.

CEMCA organised this preliminary meeting to explore the possibility of devising a system to standardise, assess and certify educational multimedia materials. There was a good response from NAAC and NASSCOM . Several IT majors also supported the idea