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A Quarterly of the Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia

From the Director's Desk...

Is Open and Distance Learning a science? Is it evolving into a science? These were questions that were raised at a one-day workshop on open and distance learning in late August this year in Kolkata. Similar questions, except that they focused on the quality of open and distance learning were raised at another national workshop a few days earlier in Hyderabad.

These, of course, are questions that are raised about any young discipline – and ODL (if we exclude correspondence education) is less than fifty years old. To address these questions, we have to evaluate our experience with reference to our learners, for whom education is a fundamental right, not a luxury that only the rich can afford. This was the overriding concern of the more than 600 participants to the 2nd Pan Commonwealth Forum held in Durban at the end of July 2002.

Among the many tangible and intangible resources that established open and distance learning institutions have is the role of leadership, management, and administration. In our guest column, Prof B.M. Gourley, Vice-Chancellor, U.K. Open University argues that “‘reputation’ is not the same as ‘quality’” and that we need to think in different ways to address key questions about the quality of what we provide as education for our learners.

We present a case study on the women’s empowerment programme developed at the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi as an example of the use of ODL for developmental and educational needs of the silent majority. Our spotlight is on the Educational

Media Research Centre in Kolkata where quality is a passion and excellence a credo.

We explore the new COL Knowledge Finder in our software review; and examine direct to home (DTH) technology and its potential use in education in our Technology Tracking section. Recognizing that the first step in developing high quality materials is to know our learners, we provide a checklist of steps to understand learners in our section on Smart Tips. For those still unfamiliar with the Internet and its capabilities, we review an illustrated book on the topic while also drawing your attention to the concepts of knowledge management.

And there is much more in this issue that we hope will serve as useful information, suggestions, and insights.

And I close by saluting Prof. Ram G. Takwale, Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning for his contribution to open and distance learning; and congratulate Yashwantrao Chavan Open University for their award for Institutional Excellence. We are proud of their achievements.

Please do respond to the EduComm Asia reader survey questionnaire enclosed with this issue to enable us serve you better.

Dr. Usha Vyasulu Reddi

Guest Column...

Leadership, Management and Administration in Open Distance Learning



B. M. Gourley

This is an edited version of the keynote address by Prof. B.M. Gourley at the 2nd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held at Durban from 29th July to 2nd August, 2002.

We have failed the greatest moral challenge of our time if we cannot make Open Distance Learning (ODL) happen, for all the peoples of the world wherever they may be; at scale, over large territories, across boundaries, through mountainous bureaucracies of governments and civil servants, World Trade Organization agreements and a host of understandable and often totally incomprehensible obstacles. Rich in knowledge as a world we may well be - but judged on present performance we are exceptionally poor in wisdom.

I do not find it especially useful to separate out the particularities of leadership as opposed to management or administration. We need them all to make things happen. Drucker calls this a "careful blending" of the leadership/management equation (Hickman, 1990: p.17). This is by no means a clichéd statement. Brilliant visions without good solid management on the ground to

translate those visions into reality have no substance. Similarly, wonderful managers carrying out pointless tasks

do not bring us closer to our vision of a better world.

The rubric says that managers ask 'how' and leaders wonder 'why'. I am going to challenge the leaders and the managers in ODL here on some of the why's and how's. My hope is that we should start to think in different ways so that our grand dream of making the world a better place may be achievable - though it will always be difficult.

I pose my concerns in the form of questions:

1. Are we all going to "go it alone"? Are we going to persist in perpetuating the boundaries that universities, colleges, schools, businesses, corporates, countries, and so on, bring to the whole educational endeavour wherever it may be carried out? The fact is that a huge amount of education and training is taking place in a whole variety of places. Yet, it is one of the big failures of the education system that we have not found a way of accrediting, validating and

We have forgotten, if we ever knew, that 'reputation' is not the same as 'quality' - and we don't know how to tell the difference, especially across national and continental divides.

generally making portable many of those experiences. Similarly, we have failed to find a way of recognizing work and life experience in any important way thereby managing to undermine the confidence and value that people attach to their own experience - a confidence invaluable to the learning endeavour.

The evaluation of quality (and thereby the enhancement of mobility or portability of qualifications) has become one of the big issues of this century. If we can do an even halfway decent job

of quality assurance, we can harness huge resources currently expanded right across the world, and maximize the impact of such efforts on the world of learning. At some of the truly open universities we have demonstrated that the only true standard is the exit standard but this on its own, in one place, in one part of the world, is insufficient to the main point I am making here.

We have forgotten, if we ever knew, that 'reputation' is not the same as 'quality' - and we don't know how to tell the difference, especially across national and continental divides.

'Going it alone' was not, in the past, the mindset of educationalists, in particular universities. By their very nature they should and are disposed to international perspectives and the sharing of scholarship, building on the works of others. Sadly that is no longer universally so. Competition rather than collaboration is the order of the day. Our task this day, this decade, this century, demands that we bring what is moral and ethical from our institutions into the compass of the global village. We are challenged to combine the safety of belief and of comfortable linguistic, ethnic or even class identification with the knowledge that technology and science have held up to us. From the pictures of earth taken from space to the disease of rivers, forests and people we must recognize and bring understanding that each city however big and each hamlet however remote, however poor, will suffer the fate of the whole, of the globe. We must surely share the vision that derives from the idea that the world will be better off, at best healed, by educational intervention that engages rich and poor, capitalists and subalterns, metropolises and hamlets, nations and united nations; by educational intervention that shares quite literally our common wealth. The task is a massive one and a noble one if (and I emphasize the proviso), it can overcome the acquisitiveness that characterizes so many initiatives that ride the spirit of globalization.

Some may imagine that the task at hand belongs to the nation state. Yet we have seen globalization demonstrate just how helpless the nation state can be. Some may imagine that it is the task of UNESCO yet we are witnessing the constraints upon what it is that such a body can achieve. The reality is

that none of us, on our own, can undertake all that is necessary to the task. Governments, corporations, educational institutions, international development agencies, institutions such as the United Nations, the fast growing organs of civil society - all these must be involved. Of course we have economic agendas, national and international agendas - and we need to be honest about these and apprised of them, but if we are committed to the objective of development, that must remain our guiding principle -- and it must be taken with the knowledge that going it alone is no longer an option.

2. My second question follows from the first:

As we lose ourselves in the forest of trees that represent the content of the knowledge gained in the learning enterprise, are we not forgetting that the learning process is at least as important as the content? We talk much about 'life long learning' and the fact that we should be concerned about ensuring that we produce, through our various endeavours, life long learners. Yet, if the content of what is flooding the Internet posturing, as education is anything to go by, the learning process is much undervalued by the very purveyors of education themselves. This is, of course, a quality issue, yet it underpins much of what takes place in educational establishments - and we run the risk of labeling a vast number of people as failures when the failure is by no means theirs. Research into what constitutes good learning practice is not what the vast majority of academics concern themselves - quite understandably if they are to keep up in their respective disciplines and that is something that we require of them. Today, the wholesale use of technology, and indeed the potential of technology, makes 'good learning practice' ever more crucial.

Diana Laurillard emphasizes this when she asserts, "we need a collective research and development programme to build the generic forms that will support student learning and foster high-level cognitive skills of scholarship - and practitioner skills as well. ... If we do not pursue them, the potential of new technologies to provide mass higher education and lifelong learning opportunities will

not be realized ..." (Futures Forum, 2002, p. 31).

The best learning is always fun - and yet fun is a word that few students would associate with their learning experiences - in school and out. People more qualified have written much in this field, but what they say has a ring of common sense. In a world flooded by information and even knowledge, the average person has a hard time finding out what it is they should study, where their aptitudes lie and where they will find most joy. The use of both the right and left-brain kind of thinking is acknowledged as important but rarely finds its way into debates about curriculum or even about quality. We are doing the potential learners of the world a serious disservice as we pay scant attention to this.

Raj Dhanarajan in his article entitled Partnerships for Change

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does not mince words when he says that we have to find new ways of assessing learning outcomes. To quote him "The way these are mostly measured today is dull, irrelevant, rigid, continues to test memory rather than application, and non-challenging of the intellect." We cannot dismiss this because we know it to be true in too many places. We do no service to students to get them into education and then deliver a less than good service.

One non-negotiable outcome of all our deliberations must be the education and training of excellent and enthusiastic teachers at every level of the educational enterprise; teachers who are attracted into a venerable profession that itself has become devalued in the pursuit of more and more material and tangible short term goals.

3. My third question is inter-related to the other two: it

follows the leaders' questioning role which is to ask 'why?' except this time content is in question. While education is concerned with building intellectual and social capital, it must also concern itself with building global citizenship, with building bridges across cultures so that we all learn more about each other and come to accept that we occupy the same planet where our destiny is a common one.

The United Nations Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, in a very prescient action launched 'Dialogue among Civilizations' in 1998. The work that followed has been encapsulated in a book called *Crossing the Divide*. Annan writes in the foreword -- "*the need for dialogue among civilizations is as old as civilization itself. But today the need is more acute than ever. Individuals who live in fear and lack of comprehension of other cultures are more likely to resort to acts of hatred, violence and destruction against a perceived "enemy". Those who are exposed to the cultures of others and learn about them through communication across cultural divides are more likely to see diversity as a strength and celebrate it as a gift.*

Today, globalization, migration, integration, communication and travel are bringing different races, cultures and ethnicities into ever-closer contact with each other. More than ever before, people understand that they are being shaped by many cultures and influences, and that combining the familiar with the foreign can be a source of powerful knowledge and insight. People can and should take pride in their particular faith or heritage. But we can cherish what we are, without hating what we are not" (p. 11).

I am deeply committed to joining Annan in his call for Dialogue. It is a source of perplexity and grief to me that educational institutions do not recognize their explicit social responsibility in this regard. Distance learning institutions are particularly well placed to pursue this noble aim. They have students all over the world and yet in their teaching materials they often seem culturally myopic. Recently a student told me that in signing up at her local university she was committing "cultural suicide". Many open universities have so-called 'partnerships' and yet fail to

appreciate the marvelous opportunities for the joint preparation of material that students in many cultures could appreciate and learn from without feeling themselves distanced from the material. I have always been struck by an injunction in the Qur'an which tells us that *"we created you from a single pair of male and female and made you into tribes and nations, that you may know each other"* (Annan, *ibid*: p. 27).

The theme for this conference is 'transforming education for development'. It has long been my contention that democracy is hostage to peace and peace in turn is hostage to development. If we are to take steps along the road to achieving these aims, then we who seek to exercise leadership in education must ask ourselves what we are doing, and where we are with what we have. In particular I would ask for some humility from the richer nations for it may turn out that they count their riches in strange ways. Daisaku Ikeda, in a speech entitled *A New Road to East/West Cultural Exchange*, points out that *"economically developing countries all have cultures as rich and complex as nations who outstrip them in wealth and power. It is desirable to use standards other than economics (alone) in evaluating the achievements of a people. ... In terms of non-economic aspects of human culture, "developed" nations might appear much less advanced than others that are now regarded as "developing". We would possess a more varied and accurate picture of our green planet and its (six billion) people if it were examined in the light of the art, religion, traditions, lifestyles, and psychology of its inhabitants"* (Ikeda, 1996: p. 70). He envisions *"an enchanting, peaceful future when many peoples ... will be able to travel a new Silk Road of cultural and mutual understanding"*, (*ibid*: p. 20) and reminds us of the lines written by the poet Yunus Emre: *"The world to me is sustenance; its peoples and my own are one"* (*ibid*: p. 21).

I have asked for some humility on the part of the richer nations - and I would hope that this humility would extend to the examination of their curricula even for their home students. Culturally myopic curricula do no service to students

who we wish to cultivate as global citizens conscious of the obligations that being educated brings with it the need to understand more of the world we occupy as well.

I am astonished, for example, to find how few people in the UK and Europe comprehend that they are living through a time when the greatest human catastrophe in human history is taking place - that is HIV/AIDS - and what it means for the future. If we want 'education for development' maybe we should also pause to consider what that means for all of our educational perspectives.

We need to give some attention to what it is that we seek from education and what we regard as an educated person. If we divorce these considerations from our concern we are ourselves failing to acknowledge that education is never value-free and we cannot

We need to give some attention to what it is that we seek from education and what we regard as an educated person.

harness the resources of the world to a common effort while the differences in what we perceive these values to go unexamined and create ever larger gulfs between us. As we attempt to seek the values that we share (and there are many) we might also find our common humanity (and respond to the HIV/AIDS challenge, for example) and rise above the differences to promote that to which we all subscribe - and that is ever greater access for those that want and need it.

But the access we seek cannot be at the expense of local values and cultures, which we know to be important - indeed, so important that people are ready to die in order to have them upheld. The idea of 'open' learning at a distance (at its best, with local support) was founded on the principles of social justice. It seems to me that we do the people to whom we seek to bring such social justice a profound injustice if it is only a particular kind of education that we make available.

4. My fourth question has to do with learners. Are we sure that we have adapted our teaching and learning styles and process for different kinds of learners? The young woman of eighteen who has finished school is a very different kind of learner to the mother of four children who is looking at the second or third stage of her life and seeking to equip herself appropriately. A Muslim woman seeking to live out the tenets of her religion cannot be required to conform to the same processes of learning than the average woman living in a deeply secular environment. People who are working, people, who by virtue of their work travel a good deal, people who simply have different learning styles - all these need to be recognized and at least accommodated.

More and more institutions of education, at whatever level, are beginning to acknowledge these realities and become infinitely more flexible in their offerings than before. The days when one could point to one group of institutions and label them as 'distance' or 'open' and another group as 'residential' are long since gone. Even in one institution one can find a continuum along a line that once represented a distinction and find multiple modes of delivery - and that is as it should be if we are to accommodate the differences in learners and their needs. Having recognized this we should understand that funding models and accreditations and frameworks and the endless regulations that seem to bestride our world, change accordingly.

5. My fifth question has to do with one of the central figures in the education endeavour and that is the academic herself. Are we sure we are doing all we can to sustain the academic endeavour and make it an attractive and feasible career choice? The commercialization of knowledge and the sale to the highest bidder has put at risk the very heart of the enterprise and it is not possible to take for granted the steady supply in academics in the way it once was.

Many open distance education institutions rely on the moonlighting of academics from other residential universities. The growth of the corporate university and private sector providers has put further

strain on the supply. The commodification of knowledge has not helped in this matter (unavoidable as it might be - and I am not persuaded that it is unavoidable). If we see it as a real threat then it should hasten our attempts to partner and consolidate and not endlessly reinvent the wheel on a whole range of courses where partnering could facilitate the pooling of expertise and the release of time of literally thousands of academics all over the world.

6. My sixth question has to do with basic management issues: Does delivery on the ground match up to the promise of real education?

I always remember Gottfried Liebrandt, the first rector of the Open University in the Netherlands, telling me that in distance education, it didn't really matter how good your material was if you could not deliver it to the right person, at the right time, in the right place. It also didn't matter how good the academic content was if it was totally inaccessible in terms of language and style to the people for whom it was intended. It underscores the point of leadership and management being two sides of the same coin in many ways. If one is not there, the other is rendered almost obsolete.

Management is no trivial matter as we contemplate in many, many parts of the world the simple delivery of material even using the most basic of services like postal delivery. Many people at this very conference hear of the marvelous leaps in technology and yet they have to think of places where there is no electricity. Solar panels that power batteries to drive technology enterprises are all very well if the local community thinks that what solar energy is available should be prioritized for this use rather than another. Not at all far from this very sophisticated conference centre are desperate people, poverty stricken and very ill besides who would not agree with you on that and would act to reprioritize accordingly. We have to think of those things because they are real - and constitute real concerns. Leadership in these communities has to be engaged and the process of building consensus around what needs to be done and

how it should be done is entirely non-trivial.

As managers and leaders we also have to understand that often the way things are done is as important as what is done - and indeed who it is done by. We cannot imagine that we can set up local management systems to administer the delivery of material which comes from some centralized or other system and not have local skills, language, customs and other important matters in place. Call centres staffed by indifferent staff, counseling services that don't understand or recognize local custom and behaviours can alienate as much as the academic material itself. It must be local people who have been appropriately trained who act as the natural links between what has to be delivered and the people who we most seek to deliver to. The sophisticated learner who is familiar with the Web, comfortable with the technology and ready to get into a healthy

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debate with anyone who she perceives as giving a bad service will look after herself. But the poor and the illiterate, those who are the focus of our debate about development, they are the ones whom we are really concerned about and they are the ones whom we must be careful about in our debates about what mode of delivery, what technology, if any, and what is appropriate and what is not.

We need to build partnerships with them and their local representatives and we need to be careful that we listen to what they say about every aspect of what we are delivering to them - and we need to be sure we are learning in the process, for we too have lessons to learn. This is not to suggest that there are some people who will never succeed in overcoming the so-called digital divide. We are doing them a great disservice in this world if we do not make this one of our goals. Starting with the premise that computers are


available and accessible is almost ridiculous in the light of the statistics about connectivity in many if not most parts of the world.

Lastly, we need to understand that the very best in management practice finds models of good practice, benchmarks against the best practices elsewhere in the world and don't seek to constantly reinvent. If the examples we have heard about this week are no more than good examples but don't influence practice elsewhere, then what are we doing here? If we have not formed some tentative relationships that have a chance of developing into solid partnerships with parity of membership then what else have we gained?

I ask these questions to reassure myself that we are not locked in some tragic struggle where the race between education and disaster has a predetermined outcome. If we look at the state of the world we can only conclude that we dare not fail in our task - and I hope coming together here as we have, means that we have accepted that we do have a common responsibility.

My hope is a hope that I share with Martin Luther King when he declared that it is possible "to hew out of a mountain of despair a stone of hope" and I have his faith that in working together towards a common goal, it is possible, as the Irish poet Seamus Heaney suggests, to make hope and history rhyme.

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Spotlight on...

A Standard Bearer for Quality -- the Educational Media Research Centre, Kolkata



An old small red brick building on a busy street near the heart of Kolkata, is home to the Educational Media Research Centre, St. Xavier's College. Inside this unpretentious building you will find a team of fifteen young people who are passionate about using audio and video materials in education and training and have set such a standard for quality in educational television that others can only envy and strive to achieve. For sixteen years, the EMRC has been producing high quality learner centred educational programmes, and has been consistently winning awards year after year.

Set up as Audio Visual Research Centre at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta, in July 1986, this unique educational media centre started production in 1987 and was upgraded to an Educational Media Research Centre (EMRC) in April 199. Instead of building a high complex of its own, the EMRC opted to renovate an old building, using creativity and innovative



thinking and focusing its energies on the heart of educational television-content and production quality. And every year, this team of talented people produce more than 100 educational television programmes in English and Bengali.

Role of EMRC

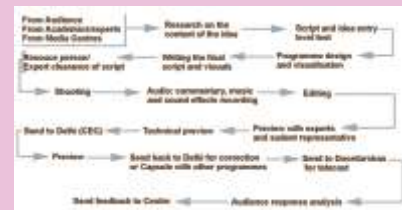
With exciting development in the field of space and communication technology, the possibilities of education and its reach has revolutionized the Indian educational scenario. The University Grants Commission's "Countrywide Classroom or CWCR" spearheaded India's use of television to address the educational and knowledge needs of rural learners, deprived of access to quality laboratories and teachers.

The Educational Media Research Centre, Kolkata is one of the seventeen centers established by the University Grants Commission in the 1980s and 1990s to address the educational and knowledge needs of rural and urban students at the undergraduate level. A secondary audience consists of the general public, including housewives, retired people, and school children.

Production

Production started at EMRC, Kolkata in 1987. Already in 1988, the Centre received two awards for its programmes including the Best Programme Award. Since then almost every year, whenever there was a festival, Kolkata has received one or more awards for its programmes. So far the centre has won 16 awards. This is just an indication of the quality of the programmes produced.

Audience Interactive: The centre believes that it is not enough to make good programmes and win awards but it is equally essential to keep a very sensitive antenna to receive the reactions of our viewers. In order to do this a programme entitled *Yours Sincerely* has been developed. It introduced a culture of audience interaction with UGC programmes. The programme



attempted to answer the letters from the audience. This elicited more letters, and hence more programmes.

Diversity of the Programmes

Produced: Exploring new avenues, throwing light on unexplored subjects and introducing novel methods and formats of presentation were the other concerns of the Kolkotta Centre. As a result of this a series of video programmes came in to light to explore the various aspects of knowledge itself. Popularly known as SEP (Special Efforts Programme) the series deals with everyday concepts such as TIME, SPACE, SOUND, MIND, EGO, WAVES, LIGHT and MAPS. The world of Physics was another area that this centre explored extensively. It has produced a very popular series known as THE CLASSICAL MECHANICS and QUANTUM THEORY. If these



programmes are on the one end of the spectrum, the other end deals with a series known as

TRIBALS OF CHHOTANAGPUR where the life and culture and of these tribal people are explored from their point of view, in their environment.

TRUSEM: Television is largely an urban culture, dealing by and large with urban matters. The result: city life is glamourized and village life is neglected. But the majority of the people in India do not live in the cities. They are in the villages. Today's youth in the villages are lured to the cities by its glamour. In order to encourage the youth to continue to work in the villages for its development, the centre has made a series of programmes known as TRUSEM (Tips for Rural Self Employment). They dealt with jobs that the youth can undertake: **POULTRY FARMING, DAIRY FARMING, FISHERIES, COCONUT CULTIVATION, ARECA NUT CULTIVATION** and so on. These programmes tried to provide the youth sufficient knowledge to start a project and develop it scientifically.

Modern Science: The audience should not be deprived of the modern development in the world. They should be kept abreast of the latest in science and technology. With this in mind the centre has developed a series known as **SEARCHING THE FRONTIERS**. The series dealt with **OPTICAL FIBRES, BIOCERAMICS, SOLGEL, ELECTROCERAMICS** and **ALTERNATE BUILDING MATERIAL**.



Question Time: There is also a programme called "Question Time" to answer different queries of the student population. This series has been running for nearly four years now.



What makes the EMRC, Kolkata different? The secret lies in the process of total quality management. Producers at the EMRC participate in the decision-making; plan their annual activities in detail from concept, timelines, budgets, resources, and technologies meticulously. A rigorous process of monitoring, preview and peer review of programmes balances autonomy in production at all stages of the production process. Close attention to learners needs, styles, and respect to subject expert understanding of concepts and content is also part of the quality control process. One way this is done is by setting aside one day each month to review all activities of the centre including a peer review of all programmes telecast, produced, and planned.

The team at the EMRC is also multi-skilled and multitasked. Thus, while all may not be responsible for all work, they are very familiar with all aspects of the work and can, if required, step into each other's shoes.

The synergy, common vision, and understanding of the team is more important than the individual; and this stands out as vibrations of quality emanate from every corner of the EMRC. One can physically feel the vibrations and even the worst cynic will become part of this enthusiasm and passion. Indeed a standard bearer of excellence in educational television. **ECA**

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Research Proposals Invited

In order to promote research in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) application in education and especially in distance learning, CEMCA invites research proposals from teachers and scholars for appropriate funding. Proposals should focus on action research for institutional building. Appropriate duration of the research should be between 6-9 months. Funding will not be given for purchase of capital equipments, and salary of research staff. Research proposals can be submitted anytime during the year. The present thrust areas include, but are not limited to:

- Digital divide
- Multimedia applications
- Online learning
- Teleconferencing
- Appropriate media use
- Gender issues in technology
- Technology for people with disabilities

For application format and guidelines contact: Director, CEMCA.

Educational Media Consultants

CEMCA is in the process of developing a database of Educational Media Consultants in the region to promote the exchange of professionals and utilise the expertise available within the region. For inclusion in the database send your resume to Director, CEMCA or register online at <http://www.cemca.org>.

Case Study...

Women's Empowerment through Self-Help Groups

Prabha Chawla

Educational Context of the Programme

Inclusiveness is of primary value for any effective development process. Given a largely rural-based population, *inclusiveness*



becomes real only when rural initiatives determine the priorities and the direction of development. Supplementing such initiatives with responsible, up-to-date information, resources and communication materials becomes critical. Several policy initiatives have emerged at the state, national and international level. These have served to operationalise the value of *inclusiveness* by ensuring effective accessibility through large-scale participation at the grassroot level.

At the same time, all development is gendered. Within India this inequality has an impact on the lives of most Indian women, often segregated from the mainstream of empowerment, education, employment and rights. Such fragmentation denies women access to a holistic understanding of their needs and their expectations from the mainstream. At present, most development departments function according to individualistic agenda and are oblivious to the all-round needs of women in all spheres of life. Many schemes function through Self-Help Groups (SHGs),

which have proved to be an effective strategy, catering to the needs and gender realities of women. At present the interlinkages between such groups is weak or non-existent.

Many of the women's groups are neither homogenous nor sustainable. India's vast geographical canvas also impedes transmission of messages in time and without distortion. The WEP, a joint venture of IGNOU and Department of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India aims to address some of these critical areas of concern through distance mode.

"Empowering Women through Self-Help Groups" is a certificate programme offered by Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) under the Women Empowerment Project (WEP), dedicated to provide a systematic communication to women and innovative technology support to deliver information and education and build a perspective relevant to women in their socio-economic context.



Need and Purpose

In India, a number of research/studies and projects have highlighted the need for the formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) as an effective strategy for the empowerment of women.



Different SHGs have mushroomed all over the country focusing on skill development, awareness generation, income generating activities, micro-credit among others. At present, there are about 700,000 government supported women groups with about 230,000 facilitators and 11,600 supervisory level functionaries requiring training. However, because of ineffective training the full potential of the SHGs is not being realized and the sustainability of these groups is at stake. The aim of this programme, therefore, is to speed up the entire training process by imparting structured training through distance mode to:

- Strengthen ongoing efforts to train facilitators/master trainers of SHGs at the grassroot level
- Evolve/activate an effective and sustainable in-country training network and resource pool of such trainers
- Empower the change agents to function more effectively as trainers and community organizers in setting up SHGs and to address gender issues
- Provide guidelines for the establishment of micro-enterprises
- Provide basic legal literacy

Target Groups

The programme is available in seven Indian languages. Anyone, who is above 18 years of age and is

fluent in reading and writing the language opted for the course of study, is eligible for the programme. The target group comprises students, supervisory level practitioners/trainers/ implementers of SHGs/NGOs and anyone else who is interested in working for a NGO or want to establish his/her own micro-enterprise.

The content is gender sensitive and has been designed keeping in mind women's inequality at various levels so as to enable them to determine and exercise life options, influence decision-making, etc. Such access to learning will help women counter their unequal context and improve the quality of their lives on several fronts. A unique feature of this programme is the technology support established all over the country, to facilitate interaction between the learners and the experts at IGNOU during the learning process. Considering the low literacy levels of the learners, the material has been presented in a language/format/context that is easily understood and accepted by the target group.

Delivery Methods

While the print material is the main component, the programme follows a multimedia approach to learning with the use of latest technologies. Other technology support services used for instruction/interaction are:

- Video/Audio Programmes
- Counselling sessions
- Teleconferencing/interactive radio counseling



For the purpose of interaction through teleconferencing/ interactive radio counseling, 150 centres have been established with

The time-wise weightage given to different media within the 16 credits (480 hours) programme is given in table-1.

Table-1: Medium-wise workload

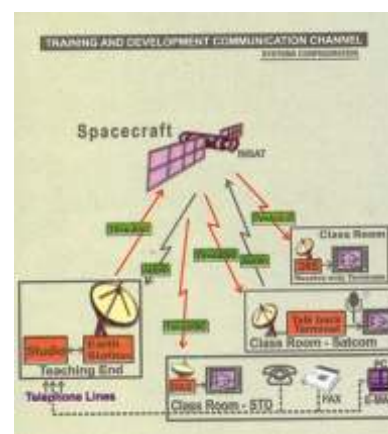
Total Learning Hours	480	100 %
Self Instructional Material (print)	216	45%
Teleconferencing/TV	36	3%
Interactive Radio Counseling /Audio/Radio	62	13%
Assignments/Practical work	90	18%
Face-to-face Counseling	48	10%
Supplementary Reading	28	6%

the Direct Satellite Receiving System all over the country, especially in the low literacy level areas identified by the Government. At these programme centers, the learners can also benefit from the other educational programmes telecast/broadcast over the 24 hours TV/Radio channel: *Gyan Darshan* and *Gyan Vani* respectively and interact with other learners.

All support services are made available to the learners at the programme centers. Information regarding all the sessions is sent to each learner individually every month. The schedule of the telecast/broadcast is developed on the needs of the target groups. Relevant audio/video programmes are obtained from other sources or developed specifically for the course's requirements on themes such as the situation of women in India, micro-credit, legal literacy, etc.

Carefully identified counselors, through a prior orientation programme, and having extensive field experience, provide the necessary practical face-to-face guidance to the learners. Assessment of the learning outcomes is done on the basis of evaluation of assignments, which contain theoretical / practical type question, and term-end examinations.

The learners may take from six months to two years to complete the course.



Nature of impact on student learning

Learners who have cleared the certificate programme have emerged equipped as resource persons to train other change agents similarly situated in their regions/work spheres. The learning process has helped promote formation and sustainability of SHGs. At the same time, the programme has enhanced the confidence of women, improved their interpersonal relations, developed their qualities of leadership/general management abilities and made them fully aware of their constitutional rights under the Government of India. The programme has helped/guided them to gain access to credit and resources from various sources for economic independence. **ECA**

Prabha Chawla is Professor and Director of School of Continuing Education, Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, India. She is also the Project Director of the Women's Empowerment Project.

BiblioFile...

Moon, Jennifer (2002) *The Module and Programme Development Handbook*, Kogan Page: London ISBN: 0-7494-3745-6 (Pb)

The handbook provides clear, step-by-step guidance on the process involved in the proper design and development of educational modules and programmes. It shows how to develop courses that successfully meet quality and assessment criteria, and provides a route map through the various elements involved. It will be particularly useful for course developers and administrators, individual teachers as well as all those involved in staff or educational development.

Juma, M (2001) *African Virtual university: The case of Kenyatta University, Kenya*, Commonwealth Secretariat: London ISBN: 0-85092-665-3

One of the most impressive innovations to have emerged as a means of helping to deal with the crisis in higher education in Africa is the concept of virtual university. This case study relates to the pilot phase of the African Virtual University at Kenyatta University in Kenya. It provides one of the few available insights into the reality of how the AVU has progressed in terms of concept, strategy and practice.

Soh, C (2002) *The Use of Information Technology: for the management of education in Singapore, Kenya*, Commonwealth Secretariat: London ISBN: 0-85092-666-1


Rapid advances in Information Technology (IT) offer new opportunities as well as challenges for every society. In the education sector, IT has enormous

potential to help countries address issues of access to learning, quality of the teaching-learning process and management of education systems. Much can be learned from Singapore's experience, and the way it has made appropriate use of technology to improve the management of its own education system.

Chandhok, Seema (comp & ed) (2002) *Annotated Bibliography of Articles in Indian Journal of Open Learning (vol.1-10, 1992-2001)*, IGNOU: New Delhi

This is a very useful resource prepared by the Library and Documentation Division of IGNOU that puts together all the research papers published in the *Indian Journal of Open Learning*.

Mishra, Arun K. and Bartram, John (eds) (2002) *Skill Development through Distance Education*, COL: Vancouver; ISBN: 1-895369-81-9

This book examines the various aspects of delivering skills training by open and distance learning: the stakeholders; the learners; the curriculum; designing, developing and delivering the courses; supporting the students; training the staff; accrediting the results and assuring the quality of training. It also looks at ways of teaching practical skills. The final chapter brings everything together by showing how all of these various processes can be managed from an institutional context. The book is designed for managers, policy-makers and government officials. It applies to any organisation that needs to deliver training to its staff in any sector of employment. (Can be downloaded from <http://www.col.org/skills/index.htm>) 

Research shows...

Commonwealth Asian Nations:
Network Readiness Index

Countries	Bangladesh	India	Malaysia	Singapore	Sri Lanka
Rank in Network Readiness Index	73	54	36	08	62
Internet hosts per 10,000 inhabitants	0.25	0.35	29.33	437.56	1.14
Percent of PC connected to Internet	2.31	0.78	2.84	9.06	1.15
Internet Users per host	16.67	139.63	54.21	10.52	56.38
Internet users per 100 inhabitants	0.04	0.49	15.90	46.05	0.64
Average Monthly cost for 20 hours of Internet access in USD	25.46	6.66	16.00	18.75	8.15

Source: *Global Information Technology Report 2001-2002: Readiness for the Networked World*.
© 2002 The President and Fellows of the Harvard College

Encouraging Doctoral Research in Media

In order to promote doctoral research in educational media, CEMCA invites research scholars to undertake research on utilization of educational media, and in various other areas of media and learning. A modest funding will be given to cover survey and report writing work. Registered research scholars are requested to apply in the application format, which can be available from the **Director, CEMCA**

Regional Roundup...


National Centre for Differently Abled at IGNOU

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) proposes to establish a "National Centre for the Differently Abled (NACDA)", with national as well as international recognition and visibility, in order to reach the differently abled, announced Prof. H.P. Dikshit, Vice-Chancellor recently. Envisaged as a centre of excellence, the NACDA will address issues related to differently abled people as well as professionals working in this area.

The proposed National Centre for Differently Abled (NACDA) shall be an autonomous Centre under IGNOU and will be set up at IGNOU campus in the New Delhi. It will act as the Nodal Agency for distance and open learning institutions/organizations in the country as well as governmental and non-governmental organizations working in the field of education and training of these groups.


It will develop innovative academic activities as for implementing the provisions of PWDA: Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act of 1995. This nodal agency shall also design and develop cost-effective target group friendly systems of program delivery and generating human resource in the area of rehabilitation and special education. It will regularize and standardize rehabilitation services and special education in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Council of India (RCI). It will also develop a network of training and employment Information and Guidance Centres and collaborate and coordinate activities with national as well as international agencies/ organizations/ institutions

and the concerned departments of central as well as state governments for development and delivery of programmes.

Source: <http://www.ignou.ac.in> 

Di-Decennial Celebrations at BRAOU

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University (BRAOU), Hyderabad, India celebrated its 20 years of existence on 26th August 2002. Chancellor of the University and Governor of the State, Dr. C. Rangarajan was the Chief Guest on the occasion. As a yearlong programme to mark its 20th year, BRAOU organized a series of seminar on distance education (discipline specific) for interaction amongst the faculty, course - writers, counselors, and past and present students. These seminars culminated into a National Conference on "Best Practices in Open and Distance Education" from 24-25 August 2002, preceding the celebrations.

Prof. C. Subba Rao, Chairman, Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education, inaugurated the conference, while Dato Prof. Gajraj Dhanrajan, CEO and President of the Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver, Canada gave the valedictory address. During this period the University brought out a HIV/AIDS information guide for its learners. Prof. Dhanrajan also inaugurated a new Material House building of the university during this period. 

CEMBA/CEMPA Launched

The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) is pleased to announce a new initiative in executive education for citizens of Commonwealth, the *Commonwealth Executive MBA/MPA programme*. This

programme is the outcome of close collaboration between COL and the national open universities of Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. It aims to complement existing MBA/MPA programmes in meeting the growing demands for postgraduate-level education in business and public administration in Commonwealth countries. Designed for part-time study by busy working professionals, the programme can be completed by students at their own pace. The minimum completion time for the MBA or MPA is two years. The programme was recently launched in the 2nd Pan-Commonwealth Conference in Open Learning held at Durban. The programme is currently in offer at Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, Bangladesh Open University, Dhaka, and Open University of Sri Lanka, Colombo.

<http://www.col.org/cemba/> 

Appointment

Dr. B. P. Sabale has joined Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra



Open University (YCMOU), Nashik as its 4th Vice-Chancellor on 4th February 2002. Born in 1943, and with a humble agriculture background Dr. Sabale completed his PhD from Shivaji University, Kollahpur. Started his career as Lecturer in Physics in the same university and later elevated to Professor of Physics and Registrar. With 30 years of experience in teaching, research and educational

administration, he has written extensively on theoretical physics, educational administration, including examination reforms, quality and performance indicators. He plans to start "a virtual institute within YCMOU to cater to the Marathi speaking people residing outside India and provide courses on Marathi language and culture". He also would like to reach to the socially disadvantaged groups of the society and increase the university enrolment up to 200,000 per annum by the end of the 10th 5-year plan. CEMCA congratulates Dr. Sabale and wish him all the best in his efforts. **ECA**

Open Schooling Centre at NOS

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India and the National Open School (NOS), India, in collaboration with and



support from the Commonwealth of Learning, Canada, have established an International Center for Training in Open Schooling (ICTOS) at

Educational Media Database

As an ongoing project CEMCA has been developing and maintaining a database of educational audio and video programmes produced in the region. The database currently has more than 6000 records. The purpose of the database is to act as a reference point for

NOS to address to the training needs of the functionaries involved in Open Schooling and Open Basic Education. The centre intends to offer Certificate and Diploma programmes in Open Schooling. These programmes aim at capacity building and increasing staff competency in the areas of Open Schooling and Open Basic Education for a variety of functionaries engaged in planning and management, curriculum and instructional design, self-learning material development, learner support services, and assessment and evaluation. Also, it shall cover those personnel who assist open schools in a variety of other ways to carry out their tasks. While offering these programmes internationally, it is also intended to develop a potential reserve of scholars and practitioners for open schooling and open basic education, who conversely may wish to work for non-formal education and such endeavors of non-government organization. For further details see <http://www.nos.org/ictos.htm> **ECA**

Awards

Prof. Ram G. Takwale former Vice-Chancellor of Indira Gandhi National Open University, India and Regional Advisor (South East Asia) to the President of COL received the COL Honorary Fellow

award at the 2nd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held at Durban.

Dr. B. P. Sabale, Vice-Chancellor, Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, Nashik, India



Mr. S.P. Gour, Jr. Secretary, Ministry of HRD, Govt. Of India handing over the COL Excellence Award for Institutional Achievements to Dr. B.P. Sabale, Vice-Chancellor, YCMOU

received the Awards of Excellence for Institutional Achievements at the 2nd Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning held at Durban on behalf of YCMOU.

Mr. Gamini Sandalal Algama, Senior Educational Assistant in the Educational Technology Division of the Open University of Sri Lanka has received the coveted UNEP Global Video Award (South Asia) for the year 2001. This award was for a video on "Friendship with Ozone" scripted and directed by him. **ECA**

sharing of information and resources. Educational institutions in the region are requested to continuously send us list of audio and video programmes produced by them for updating the database. By submitting information for inclusion in the database you are actually making it available to a wider community of users through our online website and the offline CD ROM. Now, it has

also been decided to supply the database and its regular updates to participating institutions. Therefore please share information about your audio and video programmes and co-operate in updating this database. For further details contact: *Nimal T Fernando*, Programme Officer (Broadcast Media), CEMCA. **ECA**

Worth While Web...

*The Internet and its World Wide Web has become a great source of information. However, finding quality and reliable information is still a problem. In this issue we focus on **Learning Objects**. We hope these links would be useful to you in understanding the new developments. All the links were working fine at the time of going to the press.*

Advanced Distributed Learning Network:

In November 1997, the Department of Defense (DoD) and the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) launched the Advanced Distributed Learning (ADL) initiative. The purpose of this project is to develop an open architecture for online learning. <http://www.adlnet.org>

AICC: The Aviation Industry CBT Committee:

The Aviation Industry CBT Committee (AICC) is an international association of technology-based training professionals. The AICC develops guidelines for the aviation industry in the development, delivery, and evaluation of CBT and related training technologies. <http://www.aicc.org/>

Alliance of Remote Instructional Authoring and Distribution Networks for Europe (ARIADNE):

is a research and technology development (RTD) project pertaining to the "Telematics for Education and Training" sector of the 4th Framework Program for R&D of the European Union. The project focuses on the development of tools and methodologies for producing, managing and reusing computer-based pedagogical elements and telematics supported training curricula. <http://www.ariadne-eu.org/>

CanCore: is the official home for documents, presentations and other resources related to the the Canadian Core Learning Object Metadata Application Profile. CanCore application profile is intended to facilitate the interchange of records describing

educational resources and the discovery of these resources

both in Canada and beyond its borders. <http://www.cancore.ca/>

Centre for International Education, University of Wisconsin:

This site is designed to introduce the subject of learning objects. It offers several characterizations of "learning objects", links to "Global Studies" on learning objects, other learning objects, collections of learning objects, key organizations associated with learning objects and metadata a select bibliography. <http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/CIE/AOP/learningobjects.html>

Dublin Core Metadata Initiative:

is an open forum engaged in the development of interoperable online metadata standards that support a broad range of purposes and business models. DCMI's activities include consensus-driven working groups, global workshops, conferences, standards liaison, and educational efforts to promote widespread acceptance of metadata standards and practices. <http://www.dublincore.org/>

IEEE Learning Objects Metadata:

The Learning Technology Standard Committee of IEEE has set forth to develop standard that will specify the syntax and semantics of Learning Object Metadata, defined as the attributes required to fully/adequately describe a Learning Object. <http://ltsc.ieee.org/wg12/>

IMS Global Learning Consortium, Inc.:

IMS Global Learning Consortium, Inc. (IMS) is developing and promoting open specifications <http://www.imsproject.org/specifications.html> for facilitating online distributed learning activities such as locating and using educational content, tracking learner progress, reporting learner performance, and exchanging student records between administrative systems. <http://www.imsproject.org/>

Learning Objects Tutorial:

Learning objects are the core concept in an approach to learning

content in which content is broken down into "bite size" chunks. These chunks can be reused, independently created and maintained, and pulled apart and stuck together like so many legos. Learn more in this tutorial.

<http://www.eduworks.com/LOTT/tutorial/index.html>.

MERLOT is a free and open resource designed primarily for faculty and students of higher education. Links to online learning materials are collected here along with annotations such as peer reviews and assignments.

<http://www.merlot.org/Home.po>

PROMETEUS: PROMoting Multimedia Access to Education and Training in European Society

(PROMETEUS) was launched in March 1999 under the sponsorship of the European Commission with the aim of promoting multimedia access to education and training throughout European society, and has evolved since then to encompass the whole range of technology - assisted learning.

<http://www.prometeus.org/>

Stephen's Web - Learning Objects:

This essay discusses the topic of learning objects in three parts. First, it identifies a need for learning objects and describes their essential components based on this need. Second, drawing on concepts from recent developments in computer science, it describes learning objects from a theoretical perspective. Finally, it describes learning objects in practice, first as they are created or generated by content authors, and second, as they are displayed or used by students and other client groups.

http://www.atl.ualberta.ca/downes/naweb/Learning_Objects.htm

The Instructional Use of Learning Objects:

This is the online version of *The Instructional Use of Learning Objects*, a new book that tries to go beyond the technological hype and connect learning objects to instruction and learning. You can read the full text of the book here for free.

<http://www.reusability.org/read/>

Compiled from the World Wide Web by Sanjaya Mishra, PhD

Technology Tracking...

Direct to Home (DTH) Transmission Technology

Ramesh C. Sharma

What is DTH?

Direct to Home, or DTH as it is popularly known is a technology capable of bringing the television signal directly to our home from the transmission station through a satellite and bypassing the cable system. Today's DTH technology has its origins in the Direct Reception Satellite (DRS) dishes used during the SITE experiment of 1975. DTH technology is ideally suited to localities where cable TV cannot reach and technically superior to the transmission delivered through cable, and permits even the transmission or reception of stereo audio. By using DTH technology, viewers will be paying for what they want to see, instead of being forced to accept the channels provided by the local cable operator. For the broadcaster, DTH enables the timely recovery of subscriptions and holds the promise of large advertisement revenues.

System Constitution

for DTH

A high-powered satellite beams signals to a small 12 to 18 inch satellite dish, which the viewer can place even on a windowsill. A set-top box on top of the television set serves as a decoder/tuner for receiving selected channels. In this system there is no need of intermediary cable wires. Operating on the Ku band, the signal in a DTH system is digital compression, which allows for higher resolution picture quality and better audio as compared to traditional analog or normal cable television signals (operating on C-Band). As the local cable operator

is eliminated in DTH reception, the end user gets the signal to their TV directly from orbiting satellites in the space. The Ku-band frequency is a higher frequency (ranging between 11.7-14.55 gigahertz) as compared to the C-band (lower



frequency ranging between 3.4-6.65 Ghz), and can be taken for either Fixed Satellite Service or Broadcast Satellite Service. Both these kinds of services differ in the spacing of satellites, and the number of transponders they can carry.

The set-top box or digital satellite receiver box is a small box, which connects the TV set to a small dish. This box contains sophisticated software that decodes the digital TV signal and allows the viewer to watch the DTH service. This decoding is done through an 'authorization key' [a pre-paid channel SIM card]. Such cards also prevent unauthorized viewing of the DTH channels and act as a control.

Advantages of DTH

- The transmission of DTH signal through the Ku-Band makes it of a better quality transmission.
- As the viewer is directly connected to the broadcasters, the needs and problems would be addressed effectively and faster.
- DTH can break the monopoly of local cable companies and enables the viewers to choose out of a minimum of 200 to 300 channels of their choice.
- Most suited for rural and semi-urban areas where cable TV is difficult to operate and is not cost effective.
- The services are better in satellite broadcast as compared

DTH World View

- In Canada, cable presence has increased from 65.3 per cent in 1994 to 67.8 percent in 1996
- Germany leads the European region in both cable and DTH subscription with 28 million subscribers
- In the UK, the DTH households (15.9 per cent) outnumber those with cable (11.8 per cent)
- In Eastern Europe there is a high penetration of analog DTH compared to cable
- Africa's television market observed a significant growth after the liberalization

of broadcasting regulations and the increasing penetration of low cost DTH technology

- Satellite TV presence is as high as 27% in Saudi Arabia and as low as 6% in Lebanon.
- Asia and the Pacific observes continuous growth in broadcasting facilities like the DTH and cable presence currently reaching one in five TV households and estimated to reach one in three households by 2005.

Source:
<<http://www.indiantelevision.com/special/sper ep1.htm>>

to cable transmissions where there are repeated breakdowns of signals.



World Scenario of DTH

DTH has become popular worldwide and it is very successful already in Europe, United States and other countries. It is estimated that Europe has outpaced US with over 25 million DTH viewers. As cable TV was not that popular in UK, DTH was a hit. Main reason for the success of DTH in USA was extremely poor picture quality of cable TV and a demand for multi-channel TV. There are two major DTH providers in the US: DirecTV and EchoStar who provide a series of more than 225 basic channels to the viewers. In Europe, the Eutelsat 5 satellite Hotbird network beams up more than 530 Television channels and 400 digital radio channels to approximately 24 million homes in Europe, North Africa and the Middle East.

Potential for Education

Electronic media have a unique place for reconsidering the ways in which learning is enhanced and delivered, irrespective of distance and location in both traditional as well distance education settings. DTH can be a powerful resource to be used for delivering education directly to vast populations especially in rural and remote areas at a much lower cost per unit while at the same time breaking the

monopoly of the cable operator. Through DTH we can offer voice, data, and video service based content direct-to-home for the learners.

As DTH is an advanced form of the existing satellite TV system providing signals to viewers through cable, the advantage here is of coverage of a very large area, e.g., STAR TV network can extend over as much as 60 countries with its up-linking or originating facility stationed at one location. Such kind of a situation is most suitable to the distance mode of education.

Distance Education institutes/universities can reach beyond their national boundaries.



Another feature, which could be exploited in education, is the transmission of virtually any combination of video, audio and data packets through a 'packet data transport' structure. This enables the terrestrial TV broadcasters and cable TV operators to provide a wide variety of multimedia services. As DTH broadcasting provides unlimited channel access to the end user, they can program the signal keeping in tune with their requirements.

The high quality reception of DTH broadcasting, (through digital technology), offers more choice to users, and ideally suits for areas not serviced by cable TV. It can also play the role of a broadband backbone for convergence and IT-enabled services. Interactive TV

services like movie on demand and possibility of introducing value-added services like Internet access, E-mail, home-shopping, banking and tele-education are other powerful features of this technology.

One of the main prohibitive aspects of DTH is its high installation cost, and then subsequent monthly rentals. To provide add-on and quality services to the users, some of the providers have started providing a dial free high bandwidth access to the Internet and also customized broadband content using interactive multimedia at very little additional cost. This facility can enable the learners to have online news, access to other educational institutions and databases located on different servers at high speeds.

Overall, this state of the art has great potential as a high quality delivery mechanism for education and development.

Sources:
<<http://www.media-awareness.ca/eng/indus/tv/dth.htm>>
<<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/sf05562e.html>>
<<http://www.satelliteretailers.com>>
<http://www.instat.com/pr/2001/mb0015sa_pr.htm> **ECA**



*Dr. R.C.Sharma is Regional Director at IGNOU Regional Centre, Karnal. A specialist in Educational Technology, Dr. Sharma is Editorial Board member of a number of Internationally reputed journals in the field of Open and Distance Learning, such as **Distance Education and International Review of Research in Open and Distance Learning**. He can be reached at rc_sharma@yahoo.com.*

SMART Tips...

Understanding our Learners

Anita Dighe

The basic premise of learner centred education is an understanding of the learners. Keeping in mind its significance, in this section of Successful Media And Research Techniques (SMART) Tips, we present a brief note on how to understand your learner.

Introduction

Looking at a typical group of learners in distance education programmes, we are likely to find the following:

- A wide age range as opposed to regular conventional students who would have a small age range;
- A mix of male and female students;
- A mix of students of married and single status that would create differences in responsibility and time availability;
- Students with varied status in society with social commitment and responsibilities that could affect their learning environment and competing interests.

It is possible that the general distribution of the students could cover a region, a whole country and for some programmes, many countries. They may be away from the institution offering the programme, in urban or rural setting, with varying learning facilities. The educational background of the learners may also vary. An open learning institution would bring in students with a wide range of basic education and language competence. On the other hand, in a dual mode system, admissions might be standardised on specific examination grades, with a specific minimum cut off point.

In terms of professional/ occupational background, it is possible that in some programmes, the students may have undertaken

some professional training or could already be employed. They may have varied aspirations and motivation for joining the distance education programme.

Considering the varied background of the students of such programmes, it is important to understand our learners.

Why is it important to know our learners?

Given the wide range, background and interests of the learners, it is important to know our learners so that we understand:

- Their educational and social background;
- Their present knowledge level;
- Their learning needs and their learning styles;
- Their values, attitudes, and their cultural background;
- Their motivation and desire for learning

Information about our learners would be useful in defining our learning objectives and in determining our mode of communication as well as in designing the learner support system.

What do we need to know about our learners?

There are different aspects of our learners that we need to know about. But some of the most important ones are:

Demographic factors

- What age group?
- What sex, marital status?
- What occupations (if any)?
- What educational and income background?

Motivation factors

- Why do they want to learn?
- What are their aspirations?
- What are their hopes and expectations?
- How would the programme

relate to their lives and their work?

Learning factors

- What learning styles do they have?
- What learning skills do they have?

Subject background

- What knowledge and skills do they already have in the subject?
- How do they feel about the programme?
- What personal interests and experiences do they have that could be relevant?

Resource factors

- When, where and how will they be learning?
- Who will be paying their fees and expenses?
- How much time will they have for the programme?
- What access do they have to media/facilities?
- What access will they have to human support - counsellors, other learners?

How will we collect information?

There are different ways in which we can collect information about our learners. Some of these include the following:

- Meeting some of the prospective learners and discussing with them (individually and as a group) what they would like from the course or the programme and what they already know/feel about the subject;
- Sending a questionnaire to the prospective learners and trying to elicit the information we need. If this can be followed up by discussion with the learners, so much the better;
- Making a summary of the student enrolment and personal data to identify students' characteristics/profile;
- Making a summary of any surveys, which may have been done by institutions in relation to students' characteristics/profile;
- Keeping in touch with our learners- through meetings or by reading and commenting on

their assignments- once they start working on the materials.

How do adults learn?

An adult learns differently from a child for an adult is a developed individual. However, there are certain characteristics that are common to the learning of all of us. Thus it is important to understand the following:

Self-directed learning: Adults have a self-concept and unlike children, they are less dependent and more self-directed as learners. However, there are social, cultural and gender differences. Learners from certain cultural and social backgrounds exhibit lack of self-confidence and have low self-esteem. By and large, women prefer collaborative learning rather than individualised learning.

Prior experience: With the process of growing up, adults gather experiences which are his/her own. These experiences determine the way one learns and these also facilitate/hinder one's learning. It is important to recognise the varied experiences and perceptions of the adults as they largely affect their learning.

Problem-centred learning: On the whole, adults tend to be more task-centred or problem-centred. Problems and tasks that are more related to one's world of work and life generate interest in adult learners. As a result, learning situations that are based on these problems and tasks contribute to effective learning. Women are known to learn best when learning is based on their lived experience.

Learning by doing: Adults learn better by using their psychomotor skills and by doing rather than by rote learning. As a result, adults need to feel challenged by giving them opportunities for learning by doing.

Preference for democratic style of learning: Adults prefer a democratic, participatory style rather than an authoritarian style of learning. Rather than the popular perception that students are 'empty vessels' whose minds have to be filled with knowledge, a dialogical, interactive, cooperative style of

learning finds favour with adults. Women are known to learn best when they are called upon to talk about themselves, their experiences of being a woman in the family, in the community, and in the society at large.

Experiencing a sense of progression, a sense of achievement: Adults learn best when they feel they are making progress. Adults have varying learning needs. But in order to meet those needs, it is important for them to experience a sense of achievement, a feeling that their creative urge is challenged.

Picturing our learners

It would be useful to have a mental picture of our learners and start identifying their attributes and characteristics. Figure 1 depicts the profile of students who are enrolled



Fig. 1. Picturing our Learners

as first year students of a Bachelor's degree programme in a dual mode university.

Implications of understanding learners' characteristics

The information on the learners would be helpful in developing materials that are learner-sensitive and learner-friendly and in setting up a Learner Support System that is relevant to the needs of the learners. Specifically, it would enable us to:

- understand the language level that would be easily understood by the learners in

comprehending concepts, new information, theory, etc.;

- understand the entry level of the learners with regard to knowledge and skills so as to build on what the learners already know or possess;
- include examples that are based on learners' experiences;
- include references and further readings that the learners are able to access within their learning environment;
- present information in a manner that would minimise their learning difficulties;
- develop materials that would ensure interaction between the learner and the text;
- evolve a Learner Support System that is sensitive to the learners' needs;
- develop a system that ensures

regular feedback on the quality of materials that are issued as well as students' perceptions on the efficacy of the Learner Support System.

By applying the principles and steps outlined above, it is possible to effect dramatic improvements in quality and learner centredness of self learning materials prepared by many an open and distance learning system, whether single or dual mode. **ECA**

Dr. Anita Dighe, is presently the Director, Campus of Open Learning, University of Delhi, Delhi.

News in Brief..

Excellence in Distance Education Awards, 2002

The Commonwealth of Learning recognised excellence in distance education at an awards ceremony held in conjunction with its Second Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning on 1 August 2002 (Durban, South Africa). COL named 15 Honorary Fellows of the Commonwealth of Learning and also acknowledged excellence in materials development, institutional achievement and learner achievement (conferred on a student who studied through distance education). Details and citations are available at: www.col.org/ede

Awards of Excellence for Institutional Achievement

- Athabasca University, Canada
- BBC World Service, United Kingdom
- Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University, India

Awards of Excellence for Distance Education Materials

- ABET Practitioner Training Programme (Certificate and Diploma), a training programme for adult basic education tutors developed by the Institute for Adult Basic Education and Training, University of South Africa
- The Mekong e-Sim Programme -- An Internet-mediated role-play simulation jointly developed by the University of Technology, Sydney, University of Adelaide, University of Sydney and University of New England.


The Learning Experience Award

Ms. Frances J. Mensah, Director, Namibian College of Open Learning, Namibia

Honorary Fellows of COL

Dr. Dominique A.M.X. Abrioux

Professor Clifford D. Blake
Lord (Asa) Briggs of Lewes
Ms. Shona E. Butterfield
Sir John S. Daniel
Dr. Glen M. Farrell
Ms. Jennifer A. Glennie
Dr. Dennis H. Irvine
Dr. S. Langi Kavaliku
Professor Geoffrey R.V. Mmari
Dr. Roslyn L. Morpeth
Dr. Hilary D. Perraton
Lord (Walter L.M.) Perry of Walton
Professor Ram G. Takwale
Alhaji Hafiz S. Wali


By honouring excellence in distance education, COL gives due recognition to remarkable achievements and endeavours to benefit those who seek to emulate examples of good practice in the field. 

Observatory on Borderless Higher Education



The Observatory on Borderless Higher Education is a new initiative from the association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and Universities UK (UUK). Developed as a strategic information service, the Observatory tracks international developments in borderless higher education - namely online learning, transnational provision and new provider (e.g. for-profit universities). The observatory would allow continuous analysis of developments and provide universities with strategic information on a regular basis. The observatory's remit is to undertake environmental scanning:


- **description** - tracking the latest developments in borderless higher education around the world;
- **analysis** -- considering business models, decision-making processes and organisational change;
- **reflection** -- separating hype from reality, and standing back

to ponder the public role of higher education.
<http://www.obhe.ac.uk> 

Arab Open University

The Open University, United Kingdom is working with the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organisation (AGFUND) to set up an Arab Open University which aims to enroll 40,4000 students from Kuwait and a number of Arab states over the next five years. The aims of the university are to increase the provision of higher education in the region, to provide opportunities for in-service training for teachers, to help improve the supply of qualified staff and to increase educational opportunities for women. (Source: *Open News*, July 2002) 

World Alliance in Distance Education

The World Alliance in Distance Education (WADE) is an alliance of four universities, located on four continents and operating in four different regions, who are world leaders in the field of distance education. The alliance members are: Athabasca University (Canada), Deakin University (Australia), Open University (United Kingdom) and Open University of Hong Kong. The WADE member universities signed a Memorandum of Understanding in May 2001 to explore the potential advantages of establishing a multilateral alliance which would enable them to work together to share expertise and experience in distance education, and to further develop new and innovative approaches to distance education and the uses of technologies in learning. With the positive outcomes of this MoU, an agreement was signed on 30th July 2002 at Durban to formally establish the Alliance. <http://www.wade-universities.org> 

CEMCA News...

Multimedia Workshop at BOU

The CEMCA conducted a workshop on Multimedia Courseware Development for Distance Education at Bangladesh Open University, Gazipur, Dhaka from 19-27 June 2002. The workshop had a strategic mix of



instructor led sessions, practical exercises, both individual and group. The participants, in groups, produced four prototype multimedia lessons as the outcome of the workshop. During the workshop, participants worked on Director 8 and audio editing systems. Before working on the software the participants developed multimedia scripts, flowcharts and storyboard. There were in all 21 participants in the workshop. Prof. Usha V. Reddi, Director, CEMCA led the team of resource persons. Other resource persons for the workshop included Prof. A. Srinivasa Rao, Mr. Y.S.N. Murthy, and Dr. Sanjaya Mishra. Mr. Nimal T. Fernando coordinated the programme. Prof. M. Ershadul Bari, Vice-Chancellor graced the inaugural and valedictory sessions of the workshop. He also visited the workshop to monitor the progress and involvement of the faculty. **ECA**

Multimedia Workshop for COLLIT Project

The COL Literacy Project in India has three partners who are engaged

in developing adult education materials for the post literacy and continuing education programmes in their respective states. The three partners are the State Resource Centre at Jaipur, State Resource Centers at Indore and M.S. Swaminathan and Research Foundation at Pondichery. The project envisages capacity building at the SRCs as well as at the village levels to ensure that technology is used for enhancing learning. CEMCA conducted a capacity building workshop at Delhi for the project personnel of the two State Resource Centers in the area of Multimedia courseware development. The ten-day workshop dealt in the preparation of lessons using the Macromedia Director 8.5. There were 18 participants in the workshop, including four from the University of Delhi and one from the Centre for Environment Education, Ahmedabad. Participants prepared multimedia lessons as project during the workshop. **ECA**

Retirement

Mr. K. Narayanan retired as Head, Administration and Finance of CEMCA on 1st July 2002 after a dedicated service of about eight years. For his committed service



and systematic work ethics, the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) has conferred upon him the "Distinguished Service Award". Director, CEMCA handed over the award to him on behalf of COL in a simple ceremony held at CEMCA on 1st July 2002. **ECA**

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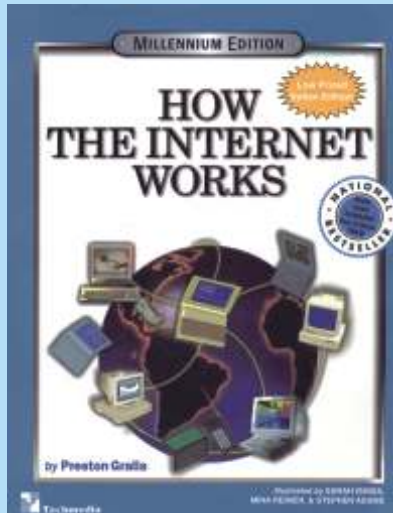
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Book Review...



Gralla, Preston (2000) *How Internet Works*, Techmedia: New Delhi, 324 pp. ISBN: 81-7635-437-6

Anurag Saxena

The word that goes with books is "read". But this book is different; one would be compelled to say, "view" in place of "read". Visualization is a process that increases one's ability to remember. Visualization helps one to create a strong, vivid memory. In fact while reading, a reader visualizes what he has read and has a picture in his mind to remember the concept. This is a book that does just that for you. It uses illustrations to explain the functioning of the Internet to the reader. The clearly exemplified illustrations are undoubtedly the best explanation of some very intricate concepts. This book enables one to visualize and understand all of the complexities behind the Internet. The style is not too much narrative and jargon-based. The result is a beautiful basic reference guide for the reader who is already using the Internet.

The book is divided into 9 parts and 50 chapters. The number of chapters may appear too big, but do not get afraid. There is a uniformity in the size of chapters viz. each

chapter consists of 4 pages, one for the title, one for the text and 2 pages for

illustration. Some chapters have more than 2 pages for illustrations (where more concepts are to be mentioned). Each part also contains 2 pages of text to explain what is in the chapters. So the book is presented in an extremely systematic manner.

First part of the book is dedicated to the definition of the Internet. It addresses questions like who runs the Internet and the standards followed for the network. It shows how information travels across the Internet with the help of hardware like hubs, bridges, routers, repeaters and gateways. It tells about how Transmission Control Protocol and Internet protocol (TCP/IP) breaks down, reassembles and sends information to the right destination. It explains the logic behind the naming of Internet domains and addresses. It depicts a web connection as a combination of desktop, Internet service provider, the host computer and a communication network, which connects the previous three. It explains the use of web browser to enable you to surf through the net. Details about all types of files that you come across while working on the Internet are given at the end of this part.

The chapters in the *second part* contain the fundamental design of the Internet. Even if you are an avid Internet user, you will find many things here that you might not have heard of e.g. Domain Name System (DNS). DNS is described as the heart of how the Internet works as it enables the computers to contact each other and exchange information. Routers are defined as the traffic cops of the Internet as they manage the flow of the data via the shortest and most accurate route. So while DNS translates your desire into computer's understanding, routers look at the addresses and send the data to the next closest router until

the data is delivered. Internet's client server architecture is also explained in this part as how the client requests the information and how the server processes and displays the information.

Part three of the book explains the ways in which one can connect to the Internet. It gives an overview of topics like cable modem, digital subscriber line (DSL) and Integrated services digital network (ISDN) etc. It is interesting to see that as the network technology is advancing, it is becoming easier to get connected and that too at higher speeds.

Part four tells you the way to communicate on the Internet. Many of us may be using Emails in our day to day work but very few among us would be knowing that what goes behind it i.e. how it is delivered, how its software works, how it is sent between networks. It explains email Spam and how it blocks it. Few chapters in this part are devoted to Internet chat and telephony.

Part five is dedicated to World Wide Web. It is far easier to use the worldwide web than to learn how web pages work, what is a web browser and how it works. One can find even more details like the organization of web pages on a website. This part also explains how markup languages, hypertext and uniform resource locator (URL) work. The web is useful because it contains a lot of information. The last chapter of this part explains how websites work with databases.

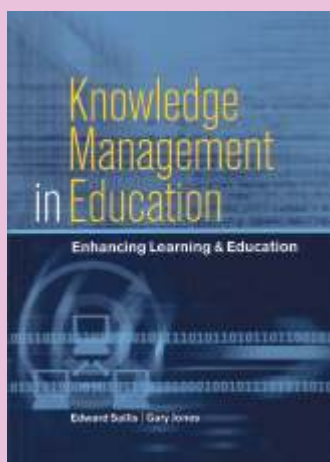
Part six is devoted to technologies, which have extended the scope of World Wide Web. Common Internet tools like Telnet; FTP (File Transfer Protocol) explained in this part. You can get answers to many "hows" in this part of the book e.g. How a FTP session works; how a file compression works how internet search engines work, how meta-search software works etc. The part also gives a detailed overview of three most important programming tools associated with web-technology i.e. Java, Active X, and JavaScript.

Part seven is devoted to multimedia on the Internet. One can now listen to music, sound clips and live radio from the web as well as watch video, view and have videoconferencing with people from all over the world. This part explains how streaming audio/video works, how mp3 music files work, how Internet radiobroadcasting works, how videoconferencing works and how animation works on the web.

Part eight is basically on intranets. It deals with online shopping and explains how companies build their own intranets to do business online. *Part nine* is devoted to the security aspects on the net. It explains safeguarding measures like firewalls etc. It explains how your computer is prone to viruses and hackers attacks. Finally it describes cookie technology, which enables the host computer to keep a track of the user.

This book can be described as a "good informative visual-treat" and is useful for those who want to know a little bit extra. It is useful for those users of the Internet who pose questions like "how" and "why" rather than using the Internet without knowing anything about it. The book will serve as a good quick reference book for the clientele described above. **ECA**

Dr. Anurag Saxena is Dy. Director, Centre for Development of Evaluation Technology, SRED, IGNOU, New Delhi



Sallis, Edward and Jones, Gary (2002) *Knowledge Management in Education: Enhancing Learning & Education*, Kogan Page: London, 140 pp. ISBN: 0-7494-3495-3

Sanjaya Mishra

Knowledge has become an important ingredient of success in the new world order. To leverage the power of knowledge, organizations and business have created systems and practices. As a result, the management practices have also been influenced to change from the traditional way of managing product manufacturing to the new way of managing knowledge workers. With this, a new discipline has emerged - Knowledge Management. The book under review applies knowledge management in the field of education and training.

Divided into eight chapters, the book presents to us the concepts, theories and practices of knowledge management in a simple, lucid and

illuminating style. An introduction before the chapters sets the tone of the book by emphasizing the importance of knowledge in ever changing knowledge-based society. *Chapter 1* explores the dimensions of knowledge management and the key concepts underpinning it. It discusses the nature of knowledge and explains the two important concepts: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge. *Chapter 2* critically examines the organizational and leadership issues effecting knowledge creation. The authors discuss creation of a new organizational environment through structures and practices that can foster and incubate knowledge. *Chapter 3* describes some of the key issues and models for making the best use of knowledge. The issues discussed in this chapter include knowledge classification, knowledge audit, accounting for knowledge, technology and knowledge management, knowing what we know, and implications for education. *Chapter 4* presents the use of 'scenario planning' as a strategy to devise knowledge management systems and practices in organizations. Scenario planning is a forecasting tool to look at the future and plan. The chapter describes various stages of scenario planning. *Chapter 5* is all about learning organizations. It elaborates on the links between learning, creativity, knowledge and organizations. *Chapter 6* critically examines the issues relating to digital divide and how to build bridges to create a digitally inclusive society. Examples of various efforts in this direction are

cited in this chapter. One such example is the Indian website - www.TARahaat.com <<http://www.TARahaat.com>>. *Chapter 7* identifies and describes the pioneers in the field of knowledge management. Some of the knowledge management gurus discussed in this chapter include Chris Argyris, Thomas H. Davenport, Laurence Prusak, Peter Drucker, Dorothy Leonard, Ikujiro Nonaka, and Peter Senge. The *last chapter* depicts a knowledge management checklist to be used by organizations interested in applying the principles and practices of knowledge management.

Though the book provides an excellent and simple exposition on the subject, some of the chapters look just disjointed to the main theme. The main theme of the book has been covered in chapter 1 to 4. However, chapter 5, 6 and 7 on 'learning organizations', 'bridging digital divide' and 'knowledge management gurus' respectively are essays related to the theme showing very little connection to the main theme. Similarly the last chapter has been presented in a very short and cryptic style. Nevertheless the book is a very good and concise guide for educational professionals to start thinking on the use of knowledge management principles in different educational set ups. It will work like an appetizer for the serious readers on the theme to look for additional resources and the publications of the knowledge management gurus. **ECA**

Sanjaya Mishra, PhD is Programme Officer at CEMCA.

Software Review..

Online research, simplified: COL's Knowledge Finder



Managing knowledge in the digital information age is neither convenient, nor simple. The deployment of information, especially through quick-as-thought Internet-based resource sites and databases, guarantees that the judicious mining of knowledge is a prerequisite to managing it - and that the success of any knowledge-finding effort relies on the efficiency of both.

Providing the Commonwealth and the world with an integrated approach to knowledge management is the Knowledge Finder (www.colfinder.org), a new Internet-based search, retrieval and cataloguing service initiated and managed by The Commonwealth of Learning (www.col.org). This service will make online research more convenient and efficient by distilling the massive body of information on open, distance and technology-mediated learning (ODL) into an edifying, digestible package for the end user.

Integrated knowledge management

With more than a decade's experience in the educational trenches, COL is very much aware of the tremendous demands and

responsibilities the rapidly changing knowledge economy places on any educational initiative. True to COL's mandate to facilitate and support the Commonwealth-wide development of ODL resources, tools and technologies, the Knowledge Finder harvests and filters the Internet's boggling array of ODL information - providing users with one-stop access to a database of the most salient, relevant, and quality resources available. Once the needed information is found, a user can apply the Finder's integrated tools to interpret, sort, store and pass along the knowledge gleaned.

Focus on ODL

Launched in July 2002, the Finder is designed to be most useful to anyone involved with or interested in ODL, including government policy makers, educators, developers, trainers, researchers and learners. All content comes from online sources in the public domain, filtered so that only the resources most relevant to educational development, curriculum content and learning are included in the Finder's current index of more than 250,000 web pages. The type of information available also includes timely and

critical development topics such as poverty alleviation, gender equity, food security and health. ODL sites are sorted by regional interest while other development topics are sorted globally. The COL Knowledge Finder has also been linked to other key ODL information sources such as the Global Distance Education Network (GDEnet, www.worldbank.org/disted), and national and regional "schoolnets."

Usability and efficiency

Designed to be user-friendly and efficient as well as comprehensive, the Finder's search capabilities - based on the proprietary RetrievalWare data-mining software developed by Convera Technologies Inc. (www.convera.com) - intuitively compensate for alternative spellings ("cheque" or "check"), meanings ("banking" or "finance"), and typos ("colur" or "colour"). The Finder will execute many different types and combinations of searches, using pattern, concept and Boolean, and it also works whether a user's language preference is English, or otherwise. In addition to English, the Finder also searches in French, Portuguese and Spanish.



More language capabilities are planned, as the Finder has the capacity to accommodate searches in 20 languages. The site will also provide links to online translating services, if needed. Programmed to recognise and index about 200 document types, including all widely used formats such as .doc, pdf and

html, the Finder will soon include audio and graphics file formats in its searches.

Advanced management ability

Users have access to advanced tools for storing, cataloguing and disseminating their research through collaboration with 3waynet Inc. (www.3waynet.com), which developed the Finder's online interface and remains an integral implementing stakeholder in its hosting and technological management. As a reseller partner for ThoughtShare Communications, 3waynet provides the Thoughtscape suite of PC-based knowledge management utilities developed by ThoughtShare Communications (www.thoughtshare.com). A freeware Thoughtscape reader downloadable from the Finder site works with the Finder's Thoughtscape Server file management system that users can interface with to download, edit and catalogue the results of any search.

Thoughtscape works in tandem with the Finder's search features, automatically sorting results into an at-a-glance filing system organised by customisable topic groups instead of the more general (and generally less helpful) simple list commonly used to display search results. Capable of more functions than what the freeware version allows the average user to access, Thoughtscape's full complement of tools is available by subscription, for a nominal annual fee. To help users with any queries about the software, a tutorial link is provided on the Finder. Thoughtscape's more advanced capabilities include saving downloaded files in a wide array of formats to the desktop, to disk, or online for access from any location, the ability to e-mail customised "information packs" directly from the programme, and to append detailed notes to files.

The Finder's gatekeepers COL works with regional ODL knowledge partners to keep the

Finder resource database up to date, and as relevant as possible to the needs of the site's target users. Throughout the project's initial implementation stage, COL collaborated with The South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE, www.saide.org.za) on Finder content and technical support. Co-ordinated by Paul West, COL education specialist in knowledge management, the COL team continues to regularly monitor the range of resources the Finder indexes for changes and updates, and to ensure only the most viable sites are searched. Other organisations and individuals are invited to submit resource suggestions, comments or questions by emailing the team through a



Feedback form on the site; ongoing stakeholder and user input is part of the Finder's system of checks and balances.

Nuts and bolts


COL maintains the Knowledge Finder, together with a 3waynet technical team, from a secure site. The service operates on two servers, one dedicated to conducting searches and the other exclusively for cataloguing search results and delivering these to users. High-speed data transfer cable links the two servers to each other, as well as to the Internet (100 megabit). Two physical, backup servers will be initialised if a significant problem was to occur with the primary hardware, and the entire system is regularly backed-up to tapes that are stored off-site. The cages housing the servers are individually padlocked and bolted to the floor in case of natural disasters such as earth tremors,

among other contingencies for electrical power failure and fire. The high security site is card-accessible only, and is monitored around the clock with ceiling cameras.

In perspective

The Knowledge Finder enhances COL's existing ODL resourcing services through its online Information Resource Centre (www.col.org/irc). It is also one of a suite of knowledge management initiatives specified in COL's current Three-year Plan (www.col.org/3yearplan00) that reflect a refined focus on knowledge and information management issues, resulting in part from the COL-sponsored Knowledge Management Roundtable in 1999

(www.col.org/kmr). The ramping up of COL's knowledge management efforts include the creation of a permanent knowledge management position on its in-house staff of education specialists, and the development of a Commonwealth Open Learning Interactive Network for Knowledge Sharing (COLINKS, www.col.org/kmr/#COLINKS).

Other recent stakeholder-level content and administrative contributions to knowledge management initiatives include a Gender Training Resources database (www.col.org/GenderResources) in collaboration with UNDP, UNIFEM, UNICEF and the Commonwealth Secretariat, as well as the World Bank-hosted GDENet and Development Gateway (www.developmentgateway.com). 

Further information on Col's Knowledge Management Initiatives can be accessed on the COL Website at www.col.org/resources/servicesdata www.col.org/programmes/infoknowledge. You are also welcome to contact Paul West, Education Specialist in Knowledge Management, at pwest@col.org

Forthcoming Events...



AAOU 2002
The 16th Annual
Conference of Asian
Association of Open
Universities (AAOU)

shall be held at Seoul, Korea from 4-7 November 2002. The theme of the conference shall be "Open & Distance Learning in the Digital Era: Towards a Lifelong Learning Society". *For further information, contact:* 16 AAOU Conference Head Office, Korea National Open University, 169 Dongsong-dong, Jongro-gu, Seoul 110-791, South Korea
Tel : 82 2 3668 4301
Fax : 82 2 747 7100
E-mail :
AAOU2002@mail.knou.ac.kr

AACE

The Asia-Pacific Chapter of Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education is holding a conference on "Learning communities on the Internet - Pedagogy in implementation". To be held in the North Harbour Stadium of Auckland, New Zealand, the conference runs Dec. 3-6, 2002.

For more information, contact: Julie Lyons, conference secretary, Department of Information Systems, Massey University, Private Bag 11 222, Palmerston North, New Zealand.
Fax: 64 6 350 5725
E-mail:
icce2002_admin@massey.ac.nz
<http://icce2002.massey.ac.nz>



EDUCAUSE
Educause, an American non-profit association of open learning, is holding its annual conference in Atlanta, Georgia, on Oct. 1-4, 2002. This year's theme is "Juggling opportunities in collaborative environments".

For more information, contact: EDUCAUSE, 1150 18th Street, NW, Suite 1010, Washington, DC 20036, USA
Fax: 202-872-4318
E-mail: info@educause.edu
Web site:
<http://www.educause.edu/conference/e2002>

E-Learn 2002

E-Learn 2002 is an international conference organized by the Association for the Advancement of Computing in Education



(AACE) and co-sponsored by the *International Journal on E-Learning*.

This annual conference to be held at Montreal, Canada from 15-19, October 2002 will serve as a multi-disciplinary forum for the exchange of information on research, development, and applications of all topics related to e-Learning in the Corporate, Government, Healthcare, and Higher Education sectors. *For more information visit* <http://www.aace.org/conf/elearn>

ICTE 2002



The International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies in Education (ICTE) to be held at Badajoz, Spain from 13-16 November 2002 will provide a presentation and discussion platform for new educational environments and their application. The focus of the conference will be on technological, pedagogical, networking, and community

building innovation. *For more information, contact:* Conference Secretariat, José Antonio Mesa González (INNOVATEX), C/ Encarnación, 3 1^ºE, E-06001 Badajoz, Spain, Tlf: +34 620 805 649, Fax: +34 924 258 615, Email: secretariat@formatex.org, <http://www.formatex.org/ict2002.html>



Vidyakash 2002

Vidyakash-2002, an international conference on online learning is being conceived of as a forum to bring together the various groups interested in online learning. It will be held from December 15-17, 2002 at Mumbai, India. *For more information, contact:* Vidyakash-2002 Secretariat, Gulmohar Cross Road 9, Juhu, Mumbai - 400 049, India
Email: vidyakash2002@ncst.ernet.in
Webpage:
www.ncst.ernet.in/vidyakash2002/
Phone: +91-22-6201606
Fax: +91-22-6210139

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-Editors