

actors are - the student, the lecturer/facilitator and the service provider, and all are dependent on the availability of technology.

EQ: What are the local and international trends in e-learning and how 'borderless' or 'global' will education become?

Jes: Universities worldwide are embarking on e-learning approaches. I believe that many institutions will use e-learning for corporate training and Masters or PhD degrees. E-learning in tertiary education will be a supplementary instrument for traditional learning. There will be more consortiums, alliances and mergers of bigger learning institutions that could see the retirement of smaller institutions.

National and international accreditation standards will continue to grow to safeguard the quality of graduates. Soon we will differentiate degrees obtained from e-learning compared to traditional learning routes and there are many things that distinguish the various approaches.

It is a challenging task to have a successful global e-learning system. Many of today's portals started with localised content and support in one language - soon they will have a wider market. As a result, many have re-engineered their existing delivery systems and invested heavily in multiple language support, scalable and modular content, multiple and alternative technology support, deployment of multiple data centers in many regions, thus providing personalisation to various countries.

Other key challenges concern e-commerce enablement, ways to monitor the progress of each student that provides exception reporting and cost and connectivity. All these differ from one country to another. To attain globalisation, architects and developers of e-learning platform must consider three major issues: awareness of international developments such as differences in time and date, monetary and numeric formatting, program coding standards, multi-language and support conversion; localisation of content design; and bandwidth penetration. E-learning will certainly facilitate globalisation as it has no boundaries or clear jurisdictions in terms of laws, standards, nationality, language, population, size and coverage. •

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