

Announcement

News on ICT in Education

Highlight

UN Launches E-Learning Initiative in over 160 developing countries

A new UN e-Learning initiative, launched in Berlin in early December 2008, will offer developing countries opportunities to draw upon a rich array of training and capacity-building resources.

News & Events

Training Workshop on “An Introductory Course on ICeXCELS for School Principals and Administrators”

Twenty-five participants appreciated the training workshop on “An Introductory Course on the Instructional and Curricular Excellence in School Leadership for Southeast Asia (ICeXCELS)” on 20-21 November 2008 in Bangkok

UN appeals for funds to bridge ‘digital divide’ in the Asia-Pacific region

The United Nations calls for support in bridging the persistent “digital divide” in the Asia-Pacific region, where access to the Internet varies widely between rich and poor countries.

Linking technology innovations and international development

USAID launched a new website that brings international development and technology innovations together. GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net seeks to foster ideas that add value by demonstrating how technology innovations can be applied to international development efforts.

Living and learning with new media: Summary of findings from the Digital Youth Project

Results from a study on teens and their use of digital media show that America’s youth are developing important social and technical skills online – often in ways adults do not understand or value.

Internet education in New Zealand

A major international survey of Internet behaviour ranks New Zealand as a leader in its educational use of the Internet, but low in its broadband penetration.

Content in local languages is as essential as connectivity

The power of the Internet is multiplied when people are able to access and use content in their local languages, agreed a group of experts who opened the 2008 Internet Governance Forum in a session on “Reaching the Next Billion: Multilingualism”.

Programmes & Projects

Learning by blogging

Many students learn best working together on structured, self-directed projects. European researchers have created software that links student blogs and other social software tools into a virtual collaborative learning environment.

Resources

Publication of practical guide to computer recycling

UNESCO released a free practical guide to computer recycling. The publication of this guide comes amidst growing concern over the impact computer equipment waste on health and environment.

Next generation textbooks

Flexbook is a free and open source textbook platform where one can build and edit collaborative textbooks.

Serious virtual worlds

The Serious Virtual Worlds report focuses on virtual worlds for educational uses, and explores the 'serious' – as opposed to leisure-based – uses of virtual worlds.

HIV and AIDS online data hub launched

The first-ever one-stop online resource hub providing comprehensive and easy-to-access HIV and AIDS data in Asia and the Pacific was launched recently.

Explaining connectivist learning opportunities via video

This 5 minute video explains in a descriptive picture of how students can learn in a connectivist style, and the role of the teacher in this new learning landscape.

Highlight

UN Launches E-Learning Initiative in over 160 developing countries

A new UN e-Learning initiative, launched in Berlin in early December 2008, will offer developing countries opportunities to draw upon a rich array of training and capacity-building resources.

Sixteen UN agencies, meeting at a forum organized by UN Environment Programme (UNEP) during the 14th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning and Training in Berlin, agreed to establish UNeLearn - a UN-wide network on technology supported learning to share information and expertise, and to collaborate on the sustained deployment of e-Learning.

The UNeLearn network will provide targeted training and outreach to help UN country teams implement common programmes of work in over 160 developing countries.

The initiative, inspired by the UN "Delivering as One" concept, aims to maximize coherence and effectiveness among UN projects at the country-level as part of efforts to implement the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

UN Environment Programme Executive Director, Achim Steiner, welcomed the initiative by saying, "Technology supported learning offers tremendous potential to address the capacity development needs of a wide range of beneficiaries in developing countries." He added, "The work of the UN country teams will ultimately be strengthened through this collaboration and member states will be better served."

As a first step towards the implementation of the project, a comprehensive stock-taking exercise is planned to commence, early in 2009, to identify and integrate quality-assured training resources from across the UN system. The UN Staff College will host a number of online communities of practice that will bring together capacity development and training expertise in areas, such as agriculture, development, education, environment, food security, health and human rights.

By agreeing to pool and share their collective training resources and shift towards technology supported learning, the initiative will help UN agencies eliminate duplicative activities, reduce costs, and reach a wider client base.

Further information:

- [UN Launches E-Learning Initiative in Over 160 Developing Countries](#)

Related links:

- [Create your own E-Learning](#)
- [Theory and Practice of Online Learning - Second edition released](#)
- [ICT integration in pre-service teacher training through action research, e-learning and electronic portfolio](#)
- [Why do students like online learning?](#)
- [Developing e-learning materials in China](#)

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- [UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter](#)

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News and Events

Training Workshop on “An Introductory Course on ICeXCELS for School Principals and Administrators”

The participants who attended the training workshop on “An Introductory Course on the Instructional and Curricular Excellence in School Leadership for Southeast Asia (ICeXCELS)” on 20-21 November 2008 were thankful for two main reasons: (i) they left before the closure of the Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok which disrupted the flights of thousands of travellers; and (ii) more importantly, they were energized by the discussions and hands-on activities on the instructional leadership during the two-day workshop.

UNESCO organized the special training workshop for school principals and administrators in collaboration with the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Educational Innovation and Technology (SEAMEO INNOTECH) to address the competency requirements of school principals and administrators and to enhance their capacity in carrying out their responsibilities more effectively.

The 2-day workshop was an abridged version of the full length 4-week course developed by SEAMEO INNOTECH based on the Competency Framework for Southeast Asian School Heads and validated by the Ministries of Education for ten SEAMEO Member States. Under the guidance of the two trainers, Pierangelo Alejo and Joan Atienza from SEAMEO INNOTECH, 25 participants from Brunei, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Palestine, Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam were actively engaged in face-to-face dialogue and online forum and chats with each other and resource persons.

Understandably, the participants thought two days were too short for them to explore all the elements of ICeXCELS thoroughly. The brief introduction to ICeXCELS convinced them that more in-depth instruction and practice would be very necessary to allow them to master the interactive tools and enable them to continue their self-learning process when they are back in their home country.

This activity is part of UNESCO’s *Innovative Practices in ICT in Education Project*, with the support of the Japanese Funds-in-Trust (JFIT). The project aims to identify, document, share and multiply innovative ICT in education practices. ICeXCELS was awarded a Certificate of Commendation in 2008 by the project.

Further information:

- [ICT in Education Innovative Practices project](#)

Related links:

- [Invitation to a special training workshop for Heads and Administrators of Schools](#)
- [Celebrating Innovative ICT in Education Practices: From Idea to Impact](#)
- [In Search of Innovative Practices - UNESCO ICT in Education Innovation Awards, 2007-2008](#)

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UN appeals for funds to bridge ‘digital divide’ in the Asia-Pacific region

The United Nations calls for support in bridging the persistent “digital divide” in the Asia-Pacific region, where access to the Internet varies widely between rich and poor countries.

A three-day meeting held by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) wrapped up in Bangkok, with more than 100 participants concluding that the disparity in Internet access is driven by the narrow coverage of telecommunication networks as well as limited access to computers and knowledge on how to use information and communication technology (ICT).

There are fewer than 10 Internet users per 100 people in more than 25 countries in the region, mainly the least developed and small island developing States, while wealthier nations such as Australia and New Zealand have an 80 per cent penetration rate, said Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Ms. Heyzer was addressing the First Session of the Committee on Information and Communication Technology (CICT), a gathering of all 62 Member States of ESCAP. This was the first session of CICT, which was set up in April to serve as a forum for discussions on using ICT as a means to propel development.

Although the number of mobile phone subscribers in the poorest countries in the region has increased by some 800 per cent this decade, there remains a gap between rich and poor countries in the ability to gain Internet access, Ms. Heyzer said.

The five most web-connected countries in the region – New Zealand, Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK), Singapore and Malaysia – have between 55 percent and 80 percent of their populations connected to the web.

By contrast, in the bottom five countries on the scale – Myanmar, Timor-Leste, Tajikistan, Bangladesh and Cambodia – less than 1 percent of the population has access to the Internet, and the average for the Asia-Pacific region as a whole is 20 percent.

The delegates attending the meeting recognized the need for expanded campaigns to raise awareness and build ICT capacity among a wider segment of society.

They also called for further support from ESCAP in building ICT capacity among government officials in non-ICT ministries and training institutes, through the use of programmes set up by the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development – a subsidiary body of ESCAP.

“We have paid close attention to the views exchanged over the past three days and I wish to assure you that we will endeavour to turn them into concrete actions in our future activities,” said ESCAP Director of ICT and Disaster Risk Reduction, Zengpei Xuan.

“In this regard, I call on all entities that are in a position to provide development funding and technical assistance to contribute the much-needed financial and technical support to reach the development goals expressed at this Committee.”

Further information:

- [UN appeals for funds to bridge ‘digital divide’ in the Asia-Pacific region](#)

Related links:

- [UN helps strengthen Mongolia and Pacific Island nations' information and communication technology capabilities](#)
- [Reducing the digital divide through innovative after-school programmes](#)
- [UN Launches e-Collaborative Hub for ICT for Development and Capacity Building](#)
- [E-skills and information literacy central to development](#)

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Linking technology innovations and international development

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) announced the launch of www.GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net, a new website that brings international development and technology innovations together.

GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net seeks to foster ideas that add value by demonstrating how technology innovations can be applied to international development efforts.

The Global Development Commons initiative seeks innovations that make knowledge more accessible and affordable to help people in developing countries solve social and economic problems. The Commons seeks to catalyze the international development community to become more open and collaborative through information and communication technologies.

The site profiles successful applications of technology that improve access to information in developing countries. For example, it features EpiSurveyor, a free, open-source software suite that enables people to easily and quickly gather health data through cell phones and other handheld devices. It empowers health practitioners and citizens with the tools they need to collect and analyze the data themselves. The featured projects take a Commons-like approach to making information more accessible and international development more efficient, inclusive, and sustainable.

GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net includes a basic toolkit to help development practitioners and other interested users understand how to maximize social networking tools to connect communities of practice and enable efficient communication. The site aggregates blog feeds and identifies interesting articles through 'Delicious', a social book-marking tool. GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net encourages its online community to participate and provides a way for development practitioners to share their ideas. It features an interactive rating system and a space for users to comment on highlighted projects and suggest other innovative applications of technology to development.

The site enables users to follow the Global Development Commons on Twitter, Facebook, and Delicious. To meet its mission of energizing and connecting communities of practice, GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net features a "Commons" button that offers a coded link between other sites and GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net. The site encourages users to feature the Commons button on their own websites to help in the creation of a universe of Commons sites that generate easy mobility among innovative international development communities.

Further information:

- [USAID Announces the Launch of GlobalDevelopmentCommons.net](#)
- [Global Development Commons](#)

Related links:

- [Technology-enhanced learning in developing nations: A review](#)
- [Call for Nominations: Development Gateway Awards](#)

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Content in local languages is as essential as connectivity

The power of the Internet is multiplied when people are able to access and use content in their local languages, agreed a group of experts who opened the 2008 Internet Governance Forum in a session on “Reaching the Next Billion: Multilingualism”.

The complex topic of achieving multilingualism on the Internet has political and social dimensions beyond the technological challenges of ensuring tools for access and translation.

Key points of the discussion were:

- Content in local languages is as essential as connectivity. People must be able to create and receive information in their local language and to be able to express themselves in ways their peers can understand.
- Internet tools and applications – software, hardware, search engines, browsers and translation tools – must be localized and also support the accessibility needs of people with special needs.
- A fundamental access point is how one accesses Internet sites. Internationalised Domain Names (IDNs) and internationalised email addresses, to accommodate non-Latin scripts, are being developed through technology, standards and policies.

- Increasingly, online communication is occurring in mediums other than in written form: multilingualism for multiple media, of which mobile devices are a significant point of access.
- A common framework and language will help the Internet Governance Forum to address these issues.
- There remains a great need for capacity building in digital literacy as well as basic, traditional literacy.

The panellists were: Alex Corenthin, President of the Internet Society; Manal Ismail, Director of International Technical Coordination, Government of Egypt; Hiroshi Kawamura, President of DAISY consortium (Digital Accessible Information System); Viola Krebs, Executive Director, ICVolunteers; Tulika Pandey, Department of Information Technology, Government of India; S. (Ramki) Ramakrishnan - CEO of C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing), India. The moderator and rapporteur for the session was Miriam Nisbet, Director of UNESCO's Information Society Division.

An Open Dialogue plenary session on Reaching the Next Billion: Access and Multilingualism gave panellists and participants from both opening day main sessions an opportunity to discuss in more depth the relationship between access and multilingualism. Proceedings of all IGF sessions and workshops are available on the IGF website.

Further information:

- [Content in local languages is as essential as connectivity](#)
- [Internet Governance Forum \(IGF\)](#)

Related links:

- [Khmer language ICT textbook released](#)
- [Samvidha: Making Internet content available to rural schools in India](#)
- [Accessibility to Internet 'essential' for education: UN forum says](#)
- [My Guide: Internet-skills for beginners](#)

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Living and learning with new media: Summary of findings from the Digital Youth Project

Results from the most extensive U.S. study on teens and their use of digital media show that America's youth are developing important social and technical skills online – often in ways adults do not understand or value.

“It might surprise parents to learn that it is not a waste of time for their teens to hang out online,” said Mizuko Ito, University of California, Irvine researcher and the report's lead author. “There are myths about kids spending time online – that it is dangerous or making them lazy. But we found that spending time online is essential for young people to pick up the social and technical skills they need to be competent citizens in the digital age.”

Released here today at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting, the study was supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's \$50-million digital media and learning initiative, which is exploring how digital media are changing how young people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life.

Together with the late Peter Lyman of the University of California, Berkeley, and Michael Carter of the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education, Ito led a team of 28 researchers and collaborators at the University of Southern California and the University of California, Berkeley. Over three years, they interviewed over 800 young people and their parents, both one-on-one and in focus groups; spent over 5,000 hours observing teens on sites such as MySpace, Facebook, YouTube, and other networked communities; and conducted diary studies to document how, and to what end, young people engage with digital media.

The researchers identified two distinctive categories of teen engagement with digital media: friendship-driven and interest-driven. While friendship-driven participation centred on “hanging out” with existing friends, interest-driven participation involved accessing online information and communities that may not be present in the local peer group. Significant findings include –

- There is a generation gap in how youth and adults view the value of online activity.
 - Adults tend to be in the dark about what youth are doing online, and often view online activity as risky or an unproductive distraction.
 - Youth understand the social value of online activity and are generally highly motivated to participate.
- Youth are navigating complex social and technical worlds by participating online.
 - Young people are learning basic social and technical skills that they need to fully participate in contemporary society.

- The social worlds that youth are negotiating have new kinds of dynamics, as online socializing is permanent, public, involves managing elaborate networks of friends and acquaintances, and is always on.
- Young people are motivated to learn from their peers online.
 - The Internet provides new kinds of public spaces for youth to interact and receive feedback from one another.
 - Young people respect each other's authority online and are more motivated to learn from each other than from adults.
- Most youth are not taking full advantage of the learning opportunities of the Internet.
 - Most youth use the Internet socially, but other learning opportunities exist.
 - Youth can connect with people in different locations and of different ages who share their interests, making it possible to pursue interests that might not be popular or valued with their local peer groups.
 - "Geeked-out" learning opportunities are abundant – subjects like astronomy, creative writing, and foreign languages.

"This study creates a baseline for our understanding of how young people are participating with digital media and what that means for their learning," said Connie Yowell, Ph.D., Director of Education at the MacArthur Foundation. "It concludes that learning today is becoming increasingly peer-based and networked, and this is important to consider as we begin to re-imagine education in the 21st century."

Ito and her team of researchers found that participation in the digital age means more than being able to access serious online information and culture. Youth using new media often learn from their peers, and notions of expertise and authority are being redefined.

"Online spaces provide unprecedented opportunities for kids to expand their social worlds and engage in public life, whether that is connecting with peers over MySpace or Facebook, or publishing videos on YouTube," said Ito. "Kids learn on the Internet in a self-directed way, by looking around for information they are interested in, or connecting with others who can help them. This is a big departure from how they are asked to learn in most schools, where the teacher is the expert and there is a fixed set of content to master."

The research demonstrates that, although many young people are developing a broad range of sophisticated new literacy and technical skills, they are also facing new challenges in how to manage their visibility and social relationships online. Online media, messages, and profiles that young people post can travel beyond expected audiences and are often difficult to eradicate after the fact. The research suggests that this rapid pace of change presents challenges for both adults and kids as they struggle to keep up with technology and related social changes.

"Most parents knew very little about what their kids did online, and struggled to give real guidance and help," said Ito. In some cases, however, the researchers found that parents and their children came together around gaming or shared digital media projects, where both kids and adults brought expertise to the table.

More information about the study and the MacArthur Foundation's digital media and learning initiative can be found online at digitalllearning.macfound.org. Ito's

research findings, among the first from the initiative, are part of an effort to inject grounded research into the conversation about the future of learning in a digital world.

Further information:

- [New Study Shows Time Spent Online Important for Teen Development](#)

Related links:

- [Living and Learning With New Media](#)
- [New MacArthur Study: Must Read for Educators](#)
- [The Digital Youth Project - Kids Need Time to “Hang Out,” “Mess Around” and “Geek Out”](#)
- [ICT offers new opportunities for girls](#)
- [Computer clubhouses for kids](#)
- [Pacific youth use ICT to educate peers about HIV & AIDS](#)
- [Providing training in computer skills to rural youth in Sri Lanka](#)
- [UN Secretary General calls for more access to ICT for youth](#)

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Internet education in New Zealand

A major international survey of Internet behaviour ranks New Zealand as a leader in its educational use of the Internet, but low in its broadband penetration.

World Internet Project findings from 13 countries and regions world-wide released this week highlight remarkable similarities alongside significant differences in the way users utilise and rely on the Internet.

New Zealand has the highest proportion of people using the Internet for distance education at 21 percent, and the second highest Internet use at school with an average of 5.2 hours per week, second behind Australia.

But New Zealand ranked second lowest on broadband penetration with 65 percent, ahead of only Colombia and equal to urban China, and is second highest in its reliance on dialup access.

Project Director Professor Allan Bell says the New Zealand World Internet Project (WIP) survey was conducted a year ago by AUT University's Institute of Culture, Discourse and Communication (ICDC) and is compared with 12 other countries.

While most people aged 18 and over in all of the WIP countries and regions except Hungary are current Internet users, New Zealand and Canada have the highest overall proportions of Internet users at 77 percent. The disparity between proportions of men and women using the Internet was smallest in New Zealand, with only 1 percent difference.

Other major points for New Zealand include:

- New Zealand has the highest proportion of people using online banking (56 percent at least weekly)
- New Zealand ranks alongside Canada and the USA in having the highest frequency of email checking (over 80 percent report daily or more frequent email checking)
- The majority of users in most countries feel the Internet does not impact on their face-to-face time with other people. However, more people perceive that the internet has decreased the amount of face-to-face time they spend with others, than perceive an increase in such contact. In New Zealand this concern is less extreme than in many countries, including Australia, Canada and the USA.
- New Zealand has very similar profiles to other countries on downloading music and video, playing games online, attitudes towards the Internet and government, attitudes towards television and radio, and reasons for not using the Internet.

Professor Bell says this pioneering report presents a great opportunity to understand where New Zealand stands on the world stage in terms of Internet use.

"Such information is invaluable not only in assessing the social impact of the Internet on the lives of New Zealanders, but also in identifying areas where we both excel and fall short. This may affect policies concerning the development of the Internet whether related to business, education, culturally, socially or politically," he says.

The World Internet Project findings cover Australia, Canada, China, Colombia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Macao, New Zealand, Singapore, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States.

The World Internet Project, a longitudinal study which aims to track the trends of the Internet and its impact around the world by surveying both users and non-users, originated from the USC Annenberg Center for the Digital Future, a policy and research centre in the United States. Such a survey enables cross-country

comparisons of Internet use, which is invaluable for establishing how New Zealand is positioned globally with new media technology.

The WIP is funded through the National Library of New Zealand under the New Zealand Government's Digital Strategy, and by InternetNZ.

Further information:

- [Internet Education In New Zealand](#)

Related links:

- [Learning by blogging](#)
- [Public schools in the Philippines get free ICT learning tool](#)
- [Toolkit: Disseminating research online](#)
- [UNESCO's Abdul Waheed Khan: ICT to shape the future of education and learning](#)

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Programmes & Projects

Learning by blogging

Many students learn best working together on structured, self-directed projects. European researchers have created software that links student blogs and other social software tools into a virtual collaborative learning environment.

The researchers of iCAMP (Intercultural learning campus), a three-year project funded by the European Union, wanted to create software tools that would let university students and teachers work together on structured, self-directed learning projects no matter where they were or what kind of social networking systems they were using.

They believe that the tools and learning approaches iCAMP has pioneered have the potential to transform how institutions of higher education work.

“It could change higher education completely,” says Barbara Kieslinger of the Centre for Social Innovation, Vienna, Austria, and iCAMP project coordinator. “If it would really take off, it would lead to a democratisation of these institutions.”

Kieslinger and her colleagues at more than a dozen universities across Europe set out to close the gap between existing educational software tools – usually rigidly structured and teacher-controlled – and the free-wheeling, self-directed social software students use in their spare time, such as blogs, messaging, feeds and other social networking services.

“We found a mismatch between what younger people were using in their leisure time, software that is easy to use and control by themselves, compared to centralised systems that are controlled by the organisation,” Kieslinger says.

The iCAMP researchers were guided by an educational theory called constructivism. They believe that students gain new knowledge and skills most readily by working together with others on projects that they themselves define and manage, facilitated rather than controlled by teachers.

In addition to the specifics of what students learn, Kieslinger points out that iCAMP’s approach prepares them to be more self directed, teamwork oriented, and technologically adept later in life.

“It’s part of our responsibility to invite students to take control,” says Kieslinger. “In the workplace, people need to be competent in self direction, social networking and collaboration in technologically mediated environments.”

From early on, the researchers knew that weblogs would be one of their basic building blocks.

“Blogs are the most important single tool,” says Kieslinger. “They are really easy to use, people like them, and they can be used in lots of different activities and learning environments.”

The problem blogs presented was interoperability. Blogs generated on different systems were often not compatible, so students could not conveniently manage joint blogs or track and contribute to each other’s blogs.

The iCAMP software developers found that support for interactions between blogs was essentially unavailable, creating a major roadblock to the kind of active networking students needed.

To solve this problem they developed FeedBack, a system that essentially lets blogs and bloggers communicate with each other easily and manage automatic feeds and updates smoothly.

Once they had resolved the interoperability problem, the researchers went on to create additional communication and collaboration tools. One of these tools is an open-source software package called iLOGUE.

The iLOGUE tool “scaffolds” self-directed learning by guiding learners through the steps of specifying a learning contract, setting goals and sub-goals, identifying resources, and maintaining a learning diary.

People start by entering their objectives and resources, Kieslinger says. They then maintain a conversational, reflective diary, and discuss their learning progress and problems with the facilitator and their peers.

“It’s also a good instrument for self-assessment of what they’ve accomplished,” she adds.

The iCAMP researchers were eager to test their system in the real world. So far, they have carried out three trials with a total of 136 students and 19 facilitators in 10 countries, including many of Europe’s new Member States. They are still analysing the results of their third and largest trial.

As one example, social science and computer science students studying quantitative research methods took on the task of designing an online questionnaire. The social science students shaped the content while the IT students developed the software.

“We got some really positive feedback from the students,” says Kieslinger. “Even though it was more work for them, they liked the new techniques and getting to work with students from other countries.”

The researchers now know that the tools they have developed work well, but also that the software alone does not guarantee success. Project facilitators need to be highly motivated and experienced in this novel approach to learning. In addition, resolving national and institutional differences in requirements, curricula, and even course scheduling turned out to be prerequisites for success.

Still, the iCAMP team are excited about the potential of their approach and software tools to create a rich, empowering and easy-to-use environment for interactive, student-driven learning.

Several universities in the east of Europe are already offering iCAMP-based courses.

“It’s a more democratic way of using technology for teaching, where each learner can build his or her own learning environment and pick the tools needed for a specific learning task,” says Kieslinger.

To promote further take-up, iCamp will publish a handbook this December presenting what the team has developed and discovered in the course of the project.

The iCAMP project received funding from the ICT strand of the Sixth Framework Programme for research.

Source: [ICT Results](#)

Further information:

- [Learning by blogging](#)

Related links:

- [iCAMP](#) (Intercultural learning campus)
- [Who re-uses learning objects?](#)
- [\(Critical\) history of ICT in education - and where we are heading?](#)
- [Moving away from "one for all" learning to "one for me" Personalised Learning Environments](#)
- [How useful is online social networking in Education?](#)
- [Twitter - A Teaching and Learning Tool](#)
- [Recommendations for blogging in higher education](#)

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Resources

Publication of practical guide to computer recycling

UNESCO released a free practical guide to computer recycling for entrepreneurs and project sponsors, on the occasion of a conference on Digital Solidarity being held in Lyon (France). UNESCO's partners in this project are the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), French consultants Tic Ethic, non-governmental organizations, Emmaüs Solidarité Ouagadougou and Ateliers du Bocage, along with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO).

The publication of this guide comes amidst growing concern over the impact computer equipment waste on health and environment. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the Gartner consultancy, there will be almost 4 billion mobile telephones in use by the end of this year, while the number of personal computers has already passed the billion mark. The good news behind these figures is that the digital divide is shrinking – 58 percent of computers are in developed countries but, this share is expected to drop to 30 percent by 2014 when the total number of personal computers should reach two

billion. But there is another side to the coin: this year, almost 180 million computers have been replaced by new machines, and an estimated 35 million computers dumped, despite the toxic substances they contain.

The Entrepreneur's Guide to Computer Recycling is published in English, and will soon also be available in French. The purpose of the guide is to help develop the skills required to handle the growing flux of waste generated by the market for new and used computers so as to protect the environment and public health. This global problem particularly affects developing countries.

The project also aims to support the emergence of new business opportunities. It should prove useful for NGOs and local development stakeholders in fostering small and micro entrepreneurship. In addition, the open license of the guidebook will allow interested parties to create versions adapted to local conditions and particular contexts.

The guidebook, which can be downloaded free of charge (www.ticethic.com/guide), will be supplemented by an operational module containing an inventory of waste recycling processes, practical advice and case studies from recycling plants in Burkina Faso, France and India.

Reuse of obsolete or unwanted IT and computer equipment is the preferred option, rather than destruction. It allows other users to benefit from the equipment at low cost, extends the return on energy and resources used in manufacturing the products and reduces the quantity of devices entering the waste stream. Reuse may require repair, refurbishment or upgrade.

Equipment and components not fit for reuse should be disassembled and processed to recover raw materials in an environmentally sound manner. PCs contain valuable ferrous (e.g. iron), non-ferrous (e.g. aluminium and copper) and precious metals, such as gold, palladium, silver, indium and gallium that can be retrieved. The rising value of raw materials makes recycling more economically viable and attractive.

Internet support will soon be available with a forum on which entrepreneurs will be able to discuss their experiences. Considering that the number of PCs used in China, for example, is expected to rise from 55 million in 2007 to half a billion in 2015, there should be much to discuss.

Further information:

- [Publication of practical guide to computer recycling](#)
- [Download the guidebook](#)

Related links:

- [Meeting discusses the potential of refurbished PCs in narrowing the digital divide](#)

Previous issues of the e-newsletter:

- [UNESCO "ICT in Education" Announcement e-newsletter](#)

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Next generation textbooks

The Flexbook provided by the CK-12 Foundation is a free and open source textbook platform where one can build and edit collaborative textbooks. This is the textbook of the next generation: “CK-12 allows one to customize and produce content by re-purposing to suit what needs to be taught, using different modules that may suit a learner's learning style, region, language, or level of skill, while adhering to the local education standards”.

Using a collaborative and web-based compilation model that can manifest open resource content as an adaptive textbook, CK-12 intends to pioneer the generation and distribution of high quality, locally and temporally relevant, educational web texts. The content generated by the CK-12 Foundation community serves both as source material for a student's learning and to provide an adaptive environment that scaffolds the learner's journey as he or she masters a standards-based body of knowledge.

Key benefits:

- Access to free textbooks
- High quality educational content created by educators
- Content customized to reflect "today" and the different needs of students
- Quality ensured by CK-12's Community of Educational Practitioners
- Increased pedagogic choice for all teachers, aligned to state standards as well as developmentally correct content
- Supported by publishing tools that facilitate quick and easy content creation and distribution
- Collaborative learning via a community where authors, teachers, and students create, access, share, rate, recommend, and publish

CK-12 Foundation is a non-profit organization founded in January 2007. Its mission is “to reduce the cost of textbook materials for the K-12 market both in the US and worldwide, but also to empower teacher practitioners by generating or adapting content relevant to their local context”.

Further information:

- [CK-12 Flexbook](#)

Related links:

- [The “Flexbook”](#)
- [Research Channel offers new ways to watch, share cutting-edge research](#)
- [Future of online ‘textbooks’ and modules](#)
- [Overcoming Barriers to the Use of Digital Resources in Education](#)

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Serious virtual worlds

This report provides a scoping study of the use of serious virtual worlds to support learning and training, including a review of the field and case study examples. The report also provides valuable resources such as a typology and a list of virtual worlds.

Download the full report:

- [Serious Virtual Worlds: a scoping study](#)

Related links:

- [Visit the Virtual Forbidden City](#)
- [Virtual Classrooms among several Universities](#)

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HIV and AIDS online data hub launched

The first-ever one-stop online resource hub providing comprehensive and easy-to-access HIV and AIDS data in Asia and the Pacific was launched recently.

The Evidence to Action Initiative – a partnership between the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the UN Joint Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS), the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) – provides user-friendly data on most-at-risk population groups, women, children, and young people, disaggregated by age and sex. It also probes provincial and district-level situation where data are available, and provides updates on the prevalence, behaviours and national responses.

The data hub is guided by a Science and Technical Advisory Group which met early December in Manila to discuss ways to use evidence and analyses for policy makers, researchers, and frontline workers to improve the prevention, care, and treatment of HIV and AIDS.

“This data hub initiative is important to help us understand the AIDS epidemics in Asia-Pacific, which can greatly facilitate decision making by national leaders,” said Ursula Schaefer-Preuss, ADB’s Vice President for Knowledge Management and Sustainable Development. “A data hub can easily monitor interventions for the right groups at the right places, given the concentrated nature of HIV and AIDS in Asia-Pacific.”

The AIDS epidemic in Asia-Pacific is attributed to unprotected paid sex and sexual contact between men with other men, and injecting drug use with shared needles. Many of those who buy sex and inject drugs infect their wives or girl friends, who then transmit the virus to their babies. Among the most-at-risk populations in Asia, men who buy sex are becoming a key driver of Asia’s HIV epidemics (although HIV is largely concentrated in injecting drug users and sex workers and their clients). The recent Asia AIDS Commission Report estimated at least 75 million Asian men buy sex regularly from about 10 million Asian women who sell sex. Male-male sex and drug injectors add another 20 million or more to the men at high risk of HIV infection.

“The hub and all of the data, help substantiate a major call by the Asian AIDS Commission to prioritize interventions on those most-at-risk, and achieve a high level of service coverage and behavioural change to halt the spread of HIV in the most cost-effective way,” said Prasada Rao, Director of UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Asia-Pacific. He also notes that HIV data collection has improved over the

past decade. “But the system and capacity to analyse the information still pose a challenge to many countries in the region,” he added.

UNICEF is managing the searchable online resource hub:

<http://www.aidsdatahub.org/> and an on-line database: <http://www.devinfo.info/Evidencetoaction/>. The website carries multiple sources of data and reports, PowerPoint presentations and reviews on HIV and AIDS situation in 24 countries and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

“The data hub ensures wide and equal access to evidence by stakeholders involved in national and localized responses to HIV and AIDS. The access is critical, especially in monitoring how the epidemic is spreading from the most-at-risk populations to women and children,” said Anupama Rao Singh, UNICEF’s Regional Director, at the launch in Manila. “The data hub provides a nexus of data and information that can help us know our epidemics better. They will be useful not only in tracking HIV but also other MDGs, including primary health care and social determinants of HIV and the integrated response needed to multiply survival and development outcomes.”

Equipped with the latest HIV statistics, the hub’s information comprises all of the internationally-accepted standardized indicators ranging from HIV prevalence and condom use rate to knowledge and country specific indicators. Trend analysis and quality of data are assessed and monitored by the advisory group of 15 multi-disciplinary HIV and AIDS epidemiologists and public health experts, who also guide the hub’s effort to harmonize data reporting, and support timely data update to track the epidemic and service coverage.

“The scale-up towards universal access, especially for the most vulnerable groups in Asia-Pacific, require rapid data collection and strong analysis in the countries,” said Omi Shigeru, WHO’s Regional Director. “WHO is committed to strengthening national capacity for data analysis, and this public resource ensures, at the regional level, services coverage is tracked, the epidemic’s trajectory better understood, and new knowledge is captured, all of which contribute to our efforts for an HIV-free future.”

With the data hub, users can access:

- graphs and tables showing country analyses of HIV trend, vulnerability, knowledge risk behaviour, national responses and socio-economic impact;
- review of the HIV situation and response in each country;
- most recent HIV and AIDS data covering all aspects of the epidemic and response on Excel spreadsheets;
- key data issues and suggestions for improvement based on a review of all data collated;
- links to published resources, such as national strategic plans, surveillance reports, population-based surveys and specific studies

In addition, users can search the database using keywords, send queries on HIV and AIDS data, and provide new data sources.

Further information:

- [HIV and AIDS online data hub launched](#)

Related links:

- UNICEF is managing the searchable online resource hub: www.aidsdatahub.org and an on-line database: www.devinfo.info/Evidencetoaction/.
- [Building knowledge about HIV and AIDS: An interactive course for educators](#)
- [Pacific youth use ICT to educate peers about HIV & AIDS](#)
- [Mobile phone games teach about HIV/AIDS](#)

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Explaining connectivist learning opportunities via video

This 5 minute video by Wendy Drexler explains in a descriptive picture how students can learn in a connectivist style, and the role of the teacher in this new learning landscape.

View the video:

- [Networked Student](#)

Related links:

- [The Networked Student with Transcript](#)
- [Explaining Connectivist Learning Opportunities via video](#)
- [Connectivism: A Learning Theory for the Digital Age](#)
- [Connectivism: A Learning Theory for Today's Learner](#)

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