

The Future and trends in Mobile Learning

In the early phase of 21st century mobile phones were considered as a status symbol now it's a necessity. The present usages of mobile phones are not just limited to new modalities for communication; they are like a pocket computer with latest hi-tech technological mélange with amazing features. The growing demand for mobiles especially amongst the different groups has opened the thresholds for mobile development companies to develop dynamic and creative mobile applications on different themes and concepts.

Today's youth live in a world enveloped and surrounded by hi-tech gadgets. They get information from online publications, publish their content on blogs, and share up-to-the-minute updates using social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter etc. And for some years now they've been doing all this on their phones.

Mobile learning can be augmented by using the functionalities of both handheld computers and mobile phones. With the inception of the iPod, "Podcasting" created new ways to distribute content. Similarly, convergent devices like the iPhone and smart phones using the Android, Symbian and blackberry operating system are extending the boundaries of education.

In the 2009 Parent-Teen Cell Phone Survey, conducted by Princeton Survey Research Associates, 75% of 12 to17-year-olds own cell phones (up from 45% in 2004).

Duke University was the first to use mobile devices in the field of education. Mobiles are used to access symposia, class material, and school news through iTunes. The faculty and students carry the course material with them on their iPods with help of a specially build program called iTunesU.

In 2008, Abilene Christian University came up with the first-in-the-world mobile learning initiative. It was an innovative initiative for students and faculty to try something new and unique, which was never tried before an experiment with new forms and very advanced next-generation digital platforms including the iPhone and iPad.

Similar milestone was set by Hamilton County Virtual School working in partnership with Emantras. An application in the name of Mobl21, enables teachers to create and publish text, video, and audio content in the form of short quizzes, flash cards, and guides.

The scope of mobile learning includes:

- Enhance group collaboration among students and instructors using a Pocket PC.
- Job training, learning with handheld or wearable technologies solves a problem of classroom education
- Student can learn outdoors, for example on field trips.
- Support informal or lifelong learning, such as using handheld dictionaries and other devices for language learning.
- Provide audiovisual support in order to enhance training similar to a corporate business or other classroom environment.

Most personal technologies can support mobile learning, including:

- Tablet PC UMPC mobile phone, camera phone and SmartPhone
- Learning Mobile Author, e.g. for authoring and publishing WAP, J2ME and SmartPhone
- Utilize audio player, e.g. for listening to audio recordings of lectures
- Handheld audio and multimedia guides at outdoors
- Handheld game console, modern gaming consoles such as Sony PSP or Nintendo DS/Wii
- 3GP For compression and delivery method of audiovisual content associated with Mobile Learning
- Wi-Fi access to instructors and available of resources via internet

In the past few years, mobile learning has certainly moved beyond the hype. The ubiquitous availability of technology, the advancement of technologies in smart phones, and the development of learning applications have brought mobile learning into schools and universities. On the contrary it is also important to have a clear understanding of how and where tomorrow's mobile technology can be employed to support valuable learning, as looking at the current trend the educational developments continues to be more technology driven rather than user learner driven.

About emPower

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