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E-learning: IT Changes Modern Education

The rapid growth and expansion of IT in different areas of human life have led to changes in education too. E-learning is a broadly inclusive term that describes educational technology that electronically or technologically supports learning and teaching, which encompasses multimedia learning, internet-based training (IBT), web-based training (WBT), online education, learning platforms etc. E-learning was defined by Dereck Stockley in 2003 as the delivery of learning, training or education program by electronic means that involves the use of a computer or electronic device, including mobile phones, in some way to provide educational and learning or training materials. Here, ICT can be seen as a new medium, not an approach, to be integrated into the process of learning and teaching.

Nowadays various technologies and e-learning tools are used to facilitate e-learning: audio (podcasts and Voki), video (Youtube and Vimeo), slides (SlideShare), blogging, webcams (Skype), whiteboards, wikis (Wikispace), web-supported textbooks and e-books, screencasting, interactive environments (Chats and Forums) and social networking using web 2.0.

E-learning has many key advantages if compared with learning F2F. The major one is improved open access to education, including access to full degree programs, better integration for non-full-time students into the learning process and provision of tools which enable students to solve their study and professional problems independently, i.e. develop their autonomy.

Online education is rapidly increasing, and online bachelor and doctoral programs have been developed even at leading research universities. Although massively-open online courses (MOOCs) may have limitations that preclude them from fully replacing college education, such programs have significantly expanded by such leading universities as MIT, Stanford, Yale and Princeton Universities, which offer wide range of disciplines at no charge. Online learning allows us to study at a convenient place and at a convenient time, using smartphone, tablet, laptop etc. and flexibly adjust the learning process for our lifestyle and personal preferences.

The analysis of the famous online educational platforms for IT students such Coursera, Udacity, edX, MIT OpenCourseWare, Khan Academy, Codecademy etc. demonstrates that they provide many of the e-learning tools mentioned above: viewing video materials and slides, audio records, original textbooks and tests, tutorials and references, projects and assignments that can find their implication in online learning resources being developed in Ukraine.

Therefore, the rapid growth of e-learning and its role in education (primary, secondary and higher), corporate training, professional and personal development proves that this is an educational technology of the near future.