

# Introduction to the Web-Based Education (WBE) Diffusion across Disciplines and Global Boundaries

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Over the last few years HICSS has presented several tracks related to WBE and asynchronous learning. This year we take the research a little further and provide papers that discuss author's experiences with WBE beyond local boundaries. In this regards we have several papers that discuss WBE and their diffusion across globe. The mini track is divided into two sections.

First section discusses WBE, both local and global, based on author's experiences. Jamieson, Clark and Jones discuss innovation aspects of diffusion theory and propose a model through which educators can evaluate potential WBE innovations. They argue that this model can aid educators increase their awareness of potential implementation issues, estimate the likelihood of reinvention, and predict the amount and type of effort required to achieve successful implementation of specific WBE innovations. Aggarwal and Legon discuss how web program can evolve from a small course offering into full-fledged program. They argue that WBE should be treated as a "product" that is evolving through its life cycle. They suggest that institutions can learn from early adopters of WBE and learn from their experiences both good and bad. They provide an example to provide guidelines to universities planning to venture into WBE. Colace, De Santo and Vento discuss features that must be considered when selecting a WBE platform. This propose a model for describing and characterizing on-line learning platform component. The model is then used to evaluate the most known existing commercial platforms. Pekka Makkonen analyzes the benefits of an internet-based seminar for a course in Finland. He found that the WWW-based

coursework and seminar help adult learners to improve their learning on productivity issues related to PC software and groupware.

Second section discusses WBE diffusion across globe. Ibrahim and Kamel demonstrate the outcome of a research aimed at investigating the effectiveness and applicability of Internet-based training in providing training for organizations in Egypt. They discuss opinions of three different groups of stakeholders; human resources or training managers responsible for setting training policies; instructors responsible for facilitating courses and preparing material; and trainees undertaking the training. Kersten, Haley and Kersten discuss the value of integrating Inspire, a Web-based negotiation support system, to augment conventional teaching of communication and academic skills in second language courses. They argue that systems oriented on solving problems in a group setting lend themselves to the communicative approach to language teaching embedded in the theory of second language acquisition.

Leo Tan, Subramaniam and Aggarwal discuss virtual science centers as teaching devices in Singapore. They also discuss some of the unique issues encountered in this new learning environment, including some suggestions on possible solutions in the light of their experiences. Behrens and Jones draw on their experience with OASM in a growing number of courses taught by a number of different staff from different disciplines in Australia. They demonstrate that the introduction and successful use of OASM requires changes in practice, the ability to cater for a wide range of requirements, and a continual questioning of the appropriateness of the resulting changes to practice.