Technology Enabled Life Integrated Learning Environments (TELILE)

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Abstract

The author dreams of a future, one in which learning is integrated with a people’s lives. Technology of the future in the form of a “Technology Enabled Life Integrated Learning Environments” (TELILE) makes such integration possible. The TELILE is itself a sub-system of the “Worldwide Information, Transactions, and Communications System” (WITCS). In the paper the author provides some examples of how the TELILE tailors education and learning to fit the lives of people.

The WITCS

I had a dream.

In my dream, I was living the good life in the future, one in which practically every device invented by human beings was connected to the “Worldwide Information, Transactions, and Communications System” (WITCS, pronounced the “wits”).

The world of the future was divided into two groups, one that had access to the WITCS (the “wits”) and the other without (the “witless”) such access. I was fortunate to be among the group that had access to the WITCS.

I had just finished my high school requirements and was enrolled as an undergraduate student in a college in a university without any walls. Access to the WITCS made it possible for me to pursue higher education without having to disrupt the routines of my daily life. I did use the WITCS during my elementary, middle, and high school years as well, and my earlier experiences with WITCS will be discussed in another paper.

The WITCS made it possible for me to learn any time of the day or night, and from any place that I happened to be. It was possible for me to learn whenever and I felt the need to learn. It did not matter where I was at that point in time when the urge to learn manifested itself. I did not have to go to college. I did not have to spend many hours every week safely driving to college and spend many more anxious moments trying to find a parking space. There are still buildings that house schools, but students can earn their degrees without ever having to set foot into one. Only those without access to the WITCS go to schools that are geographically confined to one or more buildings.

The college came to me, and it followed me everywhere that I went. All I had to do was enroll in college and continue on with my everyday life. Since my car was WITCS enabled, during the drive to and from the beach, or wherever else I chose to go to telecommute to work, I could be immersed in learning experiences that my professors had prepared just for me. My whole degree program was specifically tailored to meet my needs, and I could complete the requirements for my degree at my own pace. Every other aspect of the world, such as economics, politics, religion, commerce, and leisure, were personalized to meet my needs and suit my interests. How can education be any different?

The TELILE

A sub-system of the WITCS was known as the “Technology Enabled Life Integrated Learning Environments” or TELILE. It was the TELILE that made my education a dream come true. While it was WITCS that made it possible for me to learn anytime from anywhere, and made it possible for school to come to me, instead of me having to go to school, it was TELILE that made it possible for education and learning to be tailored to fit my life.

Since I was fortunate enough to have access to the WITCS, I could use the capabilities of TELILE to learn and educate myself as I lived my everyday life. Unlike my ancestors, I did not have to make a big sacrifice and devote a few years of the prime of my life to higher education. Higher education was integrated into my daily life.

The other day I decided to go skiing. Since my helmet and ski poles were WITCS and TELILE enabled, I could learn a lot of things as I skied down the slopes at 80 miles an hour. By the time I reached the bottom of the
mountain, I was able to learn about gravity, friction, motion, force, and air pressure, to name a few topics. During the numerous times that I skied down the slope and the times when I went up the ski lift, I was also able to immerse myself in several virtual, but very realistic learning experiences. These learning experiences were tied to the leisure activity that I had chosen to undertake this particular weekend, namely skiing. My life experiences provided me with the context for the content that I was learning.

The following weekend I learned a lot about geology. I learned to identify different kinds of rocks, conducted incredibly realistic virtual experiments, and was involved in other powerful learning experiences. Guess where I spent that weekend? I was hiking and camping in the mountains. My hiking boots and my backpack were WITCS enabled, thus making it possible for me to access the TELILE.

On another occasion as I was getting a much deserved massage to relieve my stress and soothe my tired muscles, I was able to learn about the human body, and the various systems that comprise the human body. My anatomy and physiology lessons continued during my visits to the dentist, barber, masseuse, and while playing tennis, basketball, or whatever other sport that interested me on any given day and time.

The flexible nature of TELILE made it possible for me to start and stop my learning experiences at will. If necessary, I could also repeat my learning experiences any number of times until I was confident that I could demonstrate my learning on assessment tasks in order to earn and accumulate credit towards my degree requirements.

Human instructors or technological surrogates thereof, were also available 24/7/365 in case I had some questions or felt the need to interact with an instructor-figure. Since the degree program was geared towards my life, and since I was learning at my own pace, I really did not have many classmates. However, it was always possible for me to communicate with other students, who were also completing similar courses around the same time that I was also completing those courses. These classmates were spread all over the world and spoke different languages, but the translation capabilities of TELILE made it possible for classmates to see and speak to each other in their own native tongues. I spoke in my native tongue and TELILE translated my words into as many languages as necessary to make sure that people who were communicating with me understood what I was saying.

TELILE also made it possible for me to search for any information that I needed, just by moving my lips, eyelashes, or other parts of the body depending on the type of WITCS enabled device that I was using at any given point in time. Using speech, body movement or even just thought waves, I could also view, print, and save the information for future use.

Conclusion

As my interests and choice of daily activities changed, TELILE would recognize such changes and start gearing my learning experiences based on my newly developed tastes. TELILE evolved and grew with me, while giving me the opportunity to integrate my living and learning. I did not have to give up one for the sake of the other.

That, in short, was my dream. Or was that a nightmare?