



E.C.L.O.

European Consortium for the Learning Organisation

The E-Learner

The Editor for this Issue is Desmond Keegan (Ericsson Ireland)

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON DISTANCE LEARNING STUDENTS

The project 'The role of mobile learning in European education' has completed two major studies of mobile learning.

The first study is an international analysis of the achievements of mobile learning worldwide. It is 180 pages in length and deals with Australia, Canada, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Taiwan and the United States of America. Much of the data is unique, little known and not available elsewhere. Extensive bibliographies are included of mobile learning in Japan, Korea, Taiwan and China which will be of value to other researchers in the field.

The study shows that Japan, Taiwan and South Africa are world leaders in the field of mobile learning and that both Korea and China have great potential to also become major players.

The goals of the study are:

- To show that mobile learning is developing rapidly in many parts of the world
- To bring, to a wider audience, the little-known achievements in mobile learning of a range of countries
- To convince the European Commission and the 27 European Union Ministries of Education that mobile learning is a vibrant field which should be supported
- To emphasise that European leadership in wireless technologies needs to be extended to mobile learning as well.

The second study is an analysis of the achievements of mobile learning in 28 European countries today (the 27 members of the European Union and Norway). It is 300 pages in length. Again much of the data is unique, little known and not available elsewhere. The results of the data collected, allow one to rank the European countries in 4 levels with respect to their achievements in mobile learning.

Level 1

There can be no doubt that the United Kingdom is the leading provider. The United Kingdom has at least 4 areas of provision: primary and secondary schools, universities, government departments and corporate providers.

Provision at primary and secondary school level is vibrant. This work began with Professor Mike Sharples, then of the University of Birmingham, working with primary school children who recorded and analysed data on PDAs. Hundreds of UK primary and secondary schools attended the Handheld Learning Conference in London in October 2007, and this gave the conference a noticeable school-level focus.

Many UK universities are active in the field. Leaders are the University of Nottingham (Prof Sharples), the Open University which has a mobile learning research group that produced the major book in the field, London Metropolitan University, which has produced extensive mobile learning courseware and the University of Bristol (Dr Wishart) which has produced extensive mobile learning materials for teacher training.

The government agency LSDA led a major EU project to produce literacy and numeracy mobile learning materials for disaffected youths and its successor LSN is again involved in a major project, MoLeNET. BECTA has also worked extensively in mobile learning.

There are a wide range of British companies involved either in the production of mobile learning systems or of mobile learning courseware to run on these systems. These include Tribal CTAD, Handheld Learning, ConnectED, Learning in Hand.

1000 British delegates are expected at the Handheld Learning conference to be held in London in October 2008. If each of these delegates has been involved in the provision of mobile learning in some way, then mobile learning in the UK is thriving indeed.

Level 2

Consists of countries in which there has been mobile learning activity mainly in the form of participation in European Commission funded projects.

These countries are: Austria, Bulgaria (notably the University of Plovdiv), Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary (notably Corvinus University of Budapest), Ireland (notably Ericsson Education Ireland), Italy (many university and government research centre projects), Netherlands, Norway (notably NKI), Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden.

Level 3

At this level, countries are making their first fragile steps in the field of mobile learning. These countries are: Estonia, France, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta and Poland.

Level 4

At level 4, countries are those in which little or no activity in mobile learning has been documented. These countries are Belgium, Luxembourg and Romania.

To follow the research and for further information, please go to www.ericsson.com/impact