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Online Business Education: Issues and Challenges

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Abstract The Internet has allowed for a surge in the growth of technology-mediated learning, including distance learning, in higher education; yet, much of the momentum for this growth has its roots in forces spawning the New Economy and the Next Society. In this paper, relationships among the New Economy, the Next Society, and teaching/learning practices in higher education will be explored, and recommendations for and practices concerning technology-mediated learning in higher education will be identified.

Key Words New Economy; New Society; New Education; Online Business Education
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1. Introduction

Technological innovation and globalization are "transforming America and much of the world at a pace that is scarcely imaginable" (Mandel, 1998, p.1). Indeed, in line with Drucker's (1969) prediction, many refer to our current period as the Knowledge Age where the economy is "no longer driven by manpower or machinery, but by minds and the knowledge, innovation, and creativity that those minds produce" (The New Democrat, 1999, p.1). This dramatic change in impetus is referred to by many as the New Economy.

Yet, Drucker (2001, p.3) indicates this may be premature sentiment because a true, "new economy may or may not materialize, but there is no doubt that the next society will be with us shortly." The next society or knowledge society, represents Drucker's version of the knowledge age, where knowledge will be "the key resource and knowledge workers will be the dominant group in its workforce," and where it will be highly competitive for organizations and individuals world-wide, because of the Internet (Drucker, 2001, p.4).

2. The New Economy

The New Economy is a knowledge and idea-based economy where increased job creation and higher standards of living are generated by innovative ideas and technology embedded in services and manufactured products (Wagner, 1999). The New Economy is a networked economy and encompasses a new set of commercial, financial and social transactions that exchange data, information, and knowledge through high-speed transmission. In the New Economy technology enhances productivity and growth as well as transforms traditional businesses and creates new businesses and partnerships. However, it also is an economy where risk, uncertainty, and constant change are the rule, rather than the exception. There are some indicators of the New Economy, shown as following:

·More People Work in Offices and Provide Services

NE is organized around flexible production of goods and services.

·High-Wage, High-Skill Jobs Have Grown, But So Have Low-Wage, Low-Skill Jobs. Trade Is an Increasing Share of the New Economy

Globalization has accelerated industrial and occupational restructuring, leading to the decline of some industries and jobs, and the growth of others.

·Foreign Direct Investment is on the Rise around the World

It is now a competitive requirement that those businesses invest all over the globe to access markets, technology, and talent. FDI data are a clear indicator of the trend toward globalization.

·The Economy is Spawning New, Fast-Growing Entrepreneurial Companies

In a quickly changing economy with a premium on innovation, the degree to which the economy is composed of rapidly growing firms is indicative of innovative capacity.

·Fierce Business Competition

Increased competition is being driven by many factors, including the emergence of a global marketplace, the increased number of firms, new technology that makes it easier to enter markets, and pressure from securities markets to raise shareholder value.

·"Coopetition" In The New Economy: Collaboration Among

Competitors

Innovation and value are more and more commonly generated in networks. Collaborative dynamic of networks, partnerships, and joint ventures are main organizing principle of the New Economy.

·The New Economy is Constantly Churning

Slow and steady growth in net total employment masks a constant churning of job creation and destruction. The faster pace of job churning has undermined the predictability and stability of old economic arrangements and has increased the insecurity faced by workers.

·Consumer Choices Are Exploding

The New Economy is no longer a mass production economy. The rise of production processes based on information technology has allowed companies to develop "flexible" factories and offices in which costs rise little when variety expands.

·The New Economic Order: Speed is Becoming the Standard

Fierce competition coupled with a new wave of innovation and technology-based products and services have shortened cycles between their market introduction and eventual replacement by superior products and services. The ability to innovate and get to market faster is becoming a more important determinant of competitive advantage.

·Microchips Are Everywhere

We have clearly passed from a mechanized, industrial era into a new, digital era- one characterized by the proliferation of semiconductor technology-the combination of integrated circuits (chips) and other discrete components found on circuit boards in everything from desktop computers to phones, cares, kitchen appliances, and medical devices.

·Computing Costs Are Plummeting

Information technology - everything from faxes and phones to computers and the Internet is transforming businesses and industries. IT is increasing efficiencies, cutting costs, driving customization of products and services, and increasing the speed of commerce.

·Data Transmission Costs Are Plummeting

One of the chief enablers of the New Economy is instantaneous global communications: the ability to easily send and receive data-everything from documents to video and multimedia- inexpensively.

·E-Commerce Takes Off

The Internet is a critical component of the New Economy. Internet commerce includes consumer retail and business-to-business transactions; online financial services; media; infrastructure; and consumer and business Internet access services.

3. The Next Society

The Next Society is Drucker's moniker for a New Society, the Knowledge Society, where knowledge workers will dominate the workforce and where knowledge will be the key resource.

Drucker (2001, p.4) contends that the three main characteristics of the next society will be:

·Borderlessness, because knowledge travels even more effortlessly than money.

·Upward mobility, available to everyone through easily acquired formal education.

·The potential for failure as well as success. Anyone can acquire the "means of production", i.e., the knowledge required for the job, but not everyone can win.

Drucker's comments on education are very compatible with those found in the New Economy literature in that he contends that knowledge is rapidly becoming obsolete and that knowledge workers will be involved in continuous schooling/learning. Davis and Botkin (1995) also contend that we're out of the information age and into the knowledge age. They see a four-step progression from data (ways of expressing things) to information (arrangement of data into meaningful patterns) to knowledge (application and productive use of information) to wisdom (the discerning use of knowledge).

4. New Education

As the New Economy continues to displace the industrial economy, institutions of higher education appear still rooted in the industrial age.

Barr and Tagg (1995) recommend moving from a teaching to a learning paradigm in the university. In the traditional teaching paradigm universities are perceived as institutions that exist to provide instruction and transmit information; in the learning paradigm universities are perceived as institutions that exist to produce learning. In the learning paradigm the role of the faculty changes from primarily expert lecturers to designers of learning methods and environments, collaborators in learning, and those who empower learning (Barr & Tagg, 1995). Hallinger (1998, p.1) says that "learning has become the keystone to bring about real change," and recommends that universities redesign to promote learning.

A cogent model for framing what should be learned by business professionals and organizations is the Professional Intellect Model developed by Quinn, Anderson, and Finkelstein (1996, p.72). This model displays four levels that are viewed as comprising professional intellect, and that are considered as necessary to be developed in individuals and enterprises for economic competitiveness in a global economy. They are also focused on problem identification and problem solving, focuses of androgogy and the knowledge worker. The levels are:

·Cognitive knowledge (know-what) is the basic mastery of a discipline that professionals achieve through extensive training and certification. It must be updated constantly. This knowledge is essential,

but usually far from sufficient, for commercial success.

·Advanced skills (know-how) translate "book learning" into effective execution. The ability to apply the rules of a discipline to complex real-world problems is the most widespread value-creating professional skill level. It appears as if information technology skills are also relevant for this category.

·Systems understanding (know-why) is deep knowledge of the web of cause-and-effect relationships underlying a discipline. It permits professionals to move beyond the execution of tasks to solve larger and more complex problems - and to create extraordinary value.

·Self-motivated creativity (care-why) consists of will, motivation, and adaptability for success in the business environment. This can be related to motivation for life-long learning. Santomier and Hogan (1999) recommended that this level include using one's area of special expertise to achieve human and ethical ends, and developing personal mastery to manage stress and perform at peak levels in work, civic, and personal arenas.

These same themes play out in Hallinger's (1998, p.2) analysis of what constitutes a quality education for world competitiveness. He contends that a quality education is one that prepares a student to be:

·A lifelong learner;

·An able communicator;

·Technologically skilled;

·Cognitively prepared for complex tasks, problem-solving, and the creation of knowledge.

5. Distance E-learning in Business Education

With the continued development of the new economy, the United States, and much of the world as well, is evolving into what Von Holzen (2000) referred to as an "e-learning society - with easy access to education by a large percentage of the population through a sophisticated telecommunications infrastructure serving as the foundation." E-learning, the offering of courses over the Internet or use of the Web to enhance the traditional campus class, is used by nearly half of the 4,000 higher education institutions in the U.S. to help serve their missions (Symonds, 2001).

Arthur Levine (2000), President of Columbia University, identified significant changes that he predicts for higher education. He stated that "the convergence of publishing, broadcasting, telecommunications, and education is blurring the distinction between education and entertainment" and that "a variety of knowledge producers will compete to create courses and other educational services, to develop new ways to distribute knowledge, and to engage in larger audiences" (Levine, 2000, p.1).

In an article entitled Expectations Evaporate for Online MBA Programs, Mangan (2001) reports that many may have misread the market. "Everyone thought the market [for online MBA programs] was going to take off and if they didn't get into it right away, they'd miss out. All of us misread the market. It's going to happen, but it's going to be slower to build a following" (Ziegler in Mangan, 2001, p.1). According to Mangan, internet based learning has yet to sweep America's business schools, and online programs are not stealing students from the more traditional programs, but they do appear to be tapping into a new student market.

A model is needed to accommodate learning the new things (e.g., the New Economy and the new society skill set) using the new ways (new educational technologies such as proximal and distant e-learning). According the Dean of the College of Business at the University of North Carolina, "too many competitors jumped into the market when the demand for online M.B.A. was hot. Many e-learning companies invested millions of dollars in technology and access to well-known professors, only to find investors' wallets clamping shut with the plummeting of the dot-com economy. E-learning companies are very much associated with the concept of a dot-com, and dot-coms are anathema today" (in Mangan, 2001, p.3). However, during the 2001 annual meeting of the AACSB, the International Association of Management Education, online learning was a major theme and the development of online education has turned former competitors into partners in online business education ventures. Members of AACSB see the Internet as an important tool for business education (Mangan, 2001).

Dunn (2000), referring to the "virtual university," foresees a web of educational providers supplying courses and other related services to clients at the time, place, pace, and style desired by the clients. Of Dunn's predictions, those most directly relevant for online distance learning include the following:

·Courseware producers will sell courses and award credits directly to the end users and, therefore, bypass the institutional middleman;

·Two principal types of degree granting institutions will exist: (1) value added and (2) certification institutions;

·The distinction between distance and local education will be blurred - practically all courses will be digitally enhanced;

·The United States government will continue to certify institutions for access to financial aid. By 2010, the number of eligible institutions will jump from about 7,000 to 10,000;

·Accreditation and program approval will be based more on educational outcomes. Testing programs will be put in place by discipline organizations, federal and state governments, corporations, and testing companies;

·The most significant growth in adult and postsecondary educa-

tion will be in degree and certificate programs for older adults. To be viable in the New Economy, the typical adult will need to take at least 30 semester credits every ten years; and

·Consortia of colleges, universities, and other kinds of institutions will increasingly band together to produce and deliver courses for students in their member institutions. Many of these consortia will seek their own accreditation and approval. (Dunn, 2000, p.37)

"A complex set of forces - new delivery technologies, changing demographics, the emergence of corporate universities, and a complex global economy - is creating a new competitive landscape, and institutions must think methodically about how they want to respond" (Blustain, Goldstein, & Lozier, 1998, p.1). With asynchronous delivery of a diversity of courses, interactions, and other educational materials and services on the Internet, what is clear is that online distance learning is rapidly and significantly transforming education. In an environment where fiscal pressures are mounting and enrollment increases continue, distance learning is one way for universities to meet these challenges and continue to maintain and improve quality in education (Norman, 2000). The National Center for Educational Statistics indicated that as of December 1999, 44% of tertiary institutions in the United States offered distance education courses. Included in this figure were 1190 degree programs and 330 certificate programs. Although these numbers include traditional methods of distance education, such as videotaped lectures, etc., there has been a 38% increase from 1995 to 1999 in the number of institutions using computer technology to deliver courses to students (Phillips, 1999).

6. Developing Online Courses

6.1 There are many key factors need our considerations, such as Intellectual Property, Basis of Ownership, Ownership Models, Faculty and Student Issues.

6.1.1 Intellectual Property

Prior to developing an online presence, universities should carefully review their existing distance learning-related policies and procedures. They particularly should consider a comprehensive review of intellectual property policies because online courses may have direct impact on university patent, copyright, and software policies.

6.1.2 Basis of Course Ownership

It is of critical importance that the legal basis for online course ownership is carefully considered. Interestingly, at least in the US, online course ownership may vary depending upon whether or not the university is a public or private institution.

6.1.3 Models of Course Ownership

Models of course ownership are based on current copyright policies for most United States universities.

6.1.4 Faculty Issues

As stated above, ownership and the right to use course materials are primary considerations for faculty in online distance learning. In addition, university administrators should address other factors such as workload credit, compensation, and support.

6.1.5 Student Issues

Generally universities have initiated online distance education programs in order to reach new student audiences.

6.2 Except above mentioned, the following factors also need our consideration.

6.2.1 Limiting liability

This section considers problems related to copyright infringement and fair use exemptions.

6.2.2 Commercialization

Commercial organizations may assist in training faculty to develop, design, implement, and facilitate online courses.

6.2.3 Consortia

various universities have established consortia in order to market their courses and programs.

6.2.4 Royalties/Licenses

To the extent that universities commercialize online courses to serve student populations other than their own, consistent with intellectual property policy, a royalty agreement or license fee split usually is structured with faculty.

7. Conclusion

Characteristics associated with the new economy and the new society place demands on higher education to change the way its business is done. There is a growing disconnect between our traditional higher education system and the world for which that system intends to prepare its graduates. More is needed than to use new educational technology, specifically distance e-learning, to achieve old, traditional, teaching paradigm ends.

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郝康理副市长在美国硅谷与电子科技大学校友聚会

6 月 14 日,成都市副市长郝康理利用在美国考察的时间,专程到硅谷与电子科大校友进行了一次很有意义的会面。

郝康理副市长是电子科技大学杰出校友之一,本次率领成都市‘城市信息化与科技新城建设’考察团访问美国,并在学校校友总会的倾力安排和帮助下与美国硅谷的电子科大校友取得了联系。电子科大硅谷的校友得知消息后,对郝康理副市长的硅谷之行表示热烈欢迎并积极地筹备此次校友聚会。

14 日,郝副市长一行七人如期抵达硅谷。下午 4 点 30,在硅谷校友分会副会长彭泽忠校友的安排下,代表团参观了凯路电子公司(Kilopass Technology Inc.)、AMD 公司和英特尔公司,并与公司人员进行了广泛的交流。晚上 6 点 30,郝副市长一行出席了电子科大硅谷校友分会在‘川府’饭店举行的聚会。在硅谷的成电校友以及四川同乡等各界人士共 50 多人参加了本次聚会,聚会以‘同学会对成都信息化建设的作用、如何利用硅谷优势发展成都高科技’为主要议题,郝副市长向大家介绍了成都高新区、成都留学生创业园,希望让更多的留学生了解成都,回国访问成都。校友们各抒己见,共同为成都的建设出谋划策。之后,硅谷校友分会举行了欢迎酒会,郝副市长兴致盎然地与校友、老乡们频频举杯、亲切交谈,祝愿在硅谷的朋友们学有所成、事业辉煌,为祖国争光、为母校添彩,并转达了成都及母校对海外学子的关心和挂念,整个场面热烈而融洽,洋溢着一股浓浓的乡情。

酒会结束后,彭泽忠副会长专程邀请郝副市长一行到他家里做客,再叙校友情谊,并表达了对成都、对母校的思念和美好祝愿。

·宣文·

在线商务教育:问题与挑战

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