

Chapter 8

Social Impacts of Cyber Culture and Predictions About the Future of Open and Distance Education

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ABSTRACT

Developments in information and communication technologies play a major role in shaping economic, political, and cultural fields. Together with its inherent features, the internet, in addition to offering opportunities such as a new cultural space, freedom, and reality, has led the change of learning habits, cultural forms, and identities. Open and distance learning starting from correspondence education to computer networks-based education is one of the most affected areas by internet technologies. Various applications have developed in the field of open and distance education over time with the reflections of cyber culture. The aim of this study is to define cyber culture with its components and examine which areas it affects in our daily lives then to investigate the future open and distance education applications shaped by cyber culture.

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INTRODUCTION

When individuals' habits are considered, it can be seen that internet and internet technologies are used for almost everything in daily life, from shopping to sports, entertainment and education. Internet provides fast access to information from different sources and thanks to that, financial transactions can be carried out without interrupting the busy daily life, news can be reached instantly, courses from an education institution on the other side of the world can be taken, and conversation with a famous author can be done with a simple click.

In the process of accelerating globalization, computer technologies play an important role in shaping economic, political and cultural fields. Together with its inherent features, the Internet has led the change of learning habits, cultural forms and identities, in addition to offering opportunities such as a new cultural space, freedom and reality. It has made the structuring of a global culture possible by causing the emergence of new social and individual relationship forms. In addition to social life, the reflections of cyber culture can be seen in open and distance education applications where information and communication technologies are used extensively. With the impact of cyber culture, traditional open and distance education practices have evolved and led to the emergence of different applications. The purpose of this manuscript is to discuss the examples of what cyber culture is, where and how it is formed and developed; and then to present open and distance learning practices of the future that are shaped by the development of the internet and internet culture.

CYBER CULTURE

The Internet as a word is a combination of "interconnected networks" meaning "connected networks" and is an international network system of interconnected computers (Öner, 2003, p. 13; Young, 2000, p. 20). In this network, information is transferred between computers. Under favour of this function of the Internet, a user can communicate with any computer on the network, can access the data on another computer within the network under user's authority, and transfer data from his own computer to the others. Therefore, it can be said that the Internet is the international electronic network formed by the connection of computers around the world to exchange information.

When compared to other scientific and social studies, the innovations, applications and research results based on computer technologies are seen to get into human life much faster. The reflections of this situation can be observed in every other field, from politics to education, individual habits to cultural characteristics. The term

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