

---

## **Chapter II**

# **Implementing Online Delivery and Learning Support Systems: Issues, Evaluation and Lessons**

J. Bernardes

University of Wolverhampton, UK

J. O'Donoghue

National ICT Research Centre for Education, Training and Employment, UK

### **ABSTRACT**

*IT is unlikely to create empty institutions delivering distance learning; it is more likely to create distanceless learning which is potentially more accessible to students. This implies the whole business of delivering teaching and learning will be transformed in a way that has not happened for generations. While it is possible to develop IT-based approaches that, to some extent, mirror traditional methods of remote learning by isolated individuals which has little or nothing to do with lifelong experiences or expertise, most academics will find themselves forced to confront very basic questions about what it is that they are trying to achieve and how they might best go about achieving those desired outcomes. This paper considers some of the practical aspects and ways in which, where possible, they have been addressed. The premise of this work is not about technology but the application of technology in a teaching and learning context.*

## INTRODUCTION

The UK is constantly developing highly funded acronyms which embrace technology within educational initiatives. Translating the acronyms is difficult enough, but trying to further interpret real sustainable outcomes is even more daunting.

Kearsley (1998, p. 44) writes that “technology is often seen as a quick fix, a siren song” and warns that “educational technology is a distraction ... from what matters most—effective learning and good teaching.” The approach taken often seems more in the vein of entertainment than education, with television-type material creating an expectation of how information will be presented; the linkup of the Internet and television through streamed video may just exacerbate this.

How does all this affect us as educators? Will we survive? Will we be at worst systematically “robotised,” replaced or dispensable? Will our institutions become empty, desolate buildings or computer server hubs?

It is our view that IT is unlikely to create empty institutions delivering distance learning but, to the contrary, is more likely to create distanceless learning which is actually more accessible to all potential students. What this clearly implies, and what few in the academic professions yet understand properly, is the whole business of delivering teaching is likely to be transformed in a way that has not happened for generations. While it is possible to develop IT-based approaches that, to some extent, mirror traditional methods of remote learning by isolated individuals which has little or nothing to do with lifelong experiences or expertise, most academics will find themselves forced to confront very basic questions about what it is that they are trying to achieve and how they might best go about achieving those desired outcomes.

Computing technology is often seen as a “big issue” which will generate change, and discussion is carried at a very abstract and “big issue” level. We need to develop a clearer sense of proportion; while IT has certainly changed our lives dramatically in the last few years, there are inevitable limits to the extent and speed of change in higher education. For example, most British higher education institutes simply do not have resources for the kind of investment needed to get broadcast quality materials for every module at every level; this was true in terms of competing with the Open University and it is true today in terms of a thoroughgoing shift to IT-based delivery. More than this, many commentators have now observed that relatively modest gains have been achieved for quite high levels of investment. While there is a place for “big issue” kinds of articles, what follows is very much a “little issues” study of how useful or usable elements of an online delivery platform have proved to be.

What seems certain is that delivery systems are likely to change the role of academics in higher education. Quite what those changes will be depends upon closely observing current developments and exploring what works and what does not work. What follows is an attempt to pick out some of the issues that arise from the attempt to use one particular IT delivery platform (WOLF—Wolverhampton Online Learning Framework) at one institution in one subject area over four semesters. WOLF exhibits the fundamental components of a virtual learning environment

19 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/implementing-online-delivery-learning-support/30602](http://www.igi-global.com/chapter/implementing-online-delivery-learning-support/30602)

## Related Content

---

### Diffusion of Educational Technology and Education Reform: Examining Perceptual Barriers to Technology Integration

LeAnne K. Robinson (2007). *Integrating Information & Communications Technologies Into the Classroom* (pp. 272-288).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/diffusion-educational-technology-education-reform/24044](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/diffusion-educational-technology-education-reform/24044)

### Japanese Students' Digitally Enabled Futures Images: A Synergistic Approach to Developing Academic Competencies

Michael Vallance and David L. Wright (2010). *Cases on Technological Adaptability and Transnational Learning: Issues and Challenges* (pp. 162-186).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/japanese-students-digitally-enabled-futures/42432](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/japanese-students-digitally-enabled-futures/42432)

### Value, Satisfaction, and Effectiveness

Yair Levy (2006). *Assessing the Value of E-Learning Systems* (pp. 18-89).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/value-satisfaction-effectiveness/5379](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/value-satisfaction-effectiveness/5379)

### The Cultural Adaptation of E-Learning: Using Appropriate Content, Instructional Design, and Media

Andrea L. Edmundson (2011). *Cases on Globalized and Culturally Appropriate E-Learning: Challenges and Solutions* (pp. 308-325).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/cultural-adaptation-learning/52471](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/cultural-adaptation-learning/52471)

### What is Problem-Based Learning?

Lorna Uden and Chris Beaumont (2006). *Technology and Problem-Based Learning* (pp. 25-43).

[www.irma-international.org/chapter/problem-based-learning/30153](http://www.irma-international.org/chapter/problem-based-learning/30153)