E-learning, ICT, and Learning
Portals for School Education

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ICT and the Teacher of the Future
The hype about e-learning

• “e-learning is the next major killer application”
• A world-wide business of many billions of US$
• Business in which many expectations are placed
e-learning in companies

- It is aimed at:
  - delivering just-in-time knowledge and training at the desktop
  - facilitating adaptation to changing environments while sharpening workforce skills
  - avoiding interferences with working time
  - reducing training costs
e-learning in universities

• Networks that provide content and communication are widespread
• Tendency to go digital
• Issues:
  – students and faculty participation
  – control of course content and faculty performance
  – intellectual rights of authors
Online learning portals

• Consolidated websites that offer and manage access to learning services
• Core assets: catalog and content
• Instruments for the delivery of (sophisticated) programmed instruction
• For-profit business
• Non-profit, funded institutionally
The broad aims of ICT in schools

• Integration of ICT in education since 80s
• Schools define, experiment and assess ways of accommodating ICT in different school situations and pedagogical perspectives (bottom-up approach):
  – to support skills’ development
  – to foster constructivist approaches to learning
• The business of e-learning is top-down
Young learners (vs adult learners)

- Have limited capabilities of independent study and of setting long-term goals
- Learn interacting with classmates, teachers and other people
- Don’t need to follow automated courses nor track them in online catalogs
- Are not in the business of just-in-time learning for retraining and re-skilling
The young e-learner...

is any student which uses ICT and the Internet at some extent:

- to work with any type of productivity tool or specialized environment
- to access, retrieve and use any type of digital content with learning purposes
- to communicate or to interact with teachers, other learners or experts

with the guidance, the support, and the assessment of the teacher
Need of a specific development

“The voice of education is not always heard. Education users do not articulate their needs: tools and services developed for consumers, business or universities need considerable modification before they are suitable for young learners”

Equipped, trained … and now what?
European Schoolnet, EUN Office, 3 Sep 2002
Teachers’ needs for e-learning

• Facilities to create and manage a private repository of teaching instruments
• Flexible activity assignment and agile grouping of students
• Easy management of students’ inputs
• Combine online, offline, synchronous, and asynchronous activities
• Not be imposed frequency or style of use
Roles of regional governments

- To continually foster and support innovation in education:
  - they are close to the needs of citizens
  - they can allocate resources effectively

- To articulate concerted actions on the many “digital divides” of education:
  students vs students; teachers vs students; students vs parents; affluent schools vs less affluent schools
Hints on ICT in Catalan education

- Investment in infrastructure since 1983
  - 2 Mbit/s ADSL in all schools by April 2003
  - 1 PC / 8 students in 2004 (1/11 in 2002)

- Sustained action in:
  - in-service teacher training
  - curriculum & content development
  - information and support services

- xtec.es Internet service for teachers & schools since 1995

- edu365.com portal for students (2001)
Basis of the **edu365.com** portal

- **eEurope** initiative of the Catalan Gov.:
  - Secretary for Telecoms. and Inform. Society
  - Department of Education
- **Aims:**
  - empower learners and foster their ICT skills
  - support the school curriculum
- **Public funding and management**
- **Private provision of specific contents, applications and services**
The *edu365.com* portal is ...

- for every student of every school
- for the whole school education
- for families and citizens as well
- free of charge
- developed specifically to cater for young e-learners and schooling needs
Features of edu365.com /1

• Curriculum content:
  – interactive didactic units
  – drill & practice, simulation, self-tests

• Personal digital desktop:
  – word-processor embedded in the browser
  – personal workspace and file manager
  – symbolical & graphical calculator
  – communication tools
  – information resources & agenda
Features of **edu365.com** /2

- “Ask a teacher” (365 days, 24 hours):
  - individualized help and support on curriculum, learning and guidance matters
  - team of consultant teachers & specialists
- Information for students & parents
- Tools for teachers:
  - personal repository of teaching instruments
  - flexible student grouping
  - activity assignments and learning agendas
A portal for quality of education

- **edu365.com** aims to increase the quality of education by:
  - being available to every student and family
  - paying attention to the specific characteristics of the young e-learner
  - meeting the needs of the teachers
  - generating confidence: ease of use, privacy, academic freedom, reliability
Challenges

• Ensure teacher involvement
• School directors, inspectors and administrators should play an active and informed role
• Intensify communication with families
• Get ample feed-back, espec. of students
• Long-term commitment of all partners: suppliers, users, and decision-makers