

Using mobile phones for m learning in Higher Education: A Comparative Study

Abstract

Smartphone and tablet computers, as well as other ultra-portable devices, have already gained enough critical mass to be considered mainstream devices, being present in the daily lives of millions of higher education students. Many universities throughout the world have already adopted or are planning to adopt mobile technologies in many of their courses as a better way to connect students with the subjects they are studying. These new mobile platforms allow students to access content anywhere/anytime to immerse himself/herself into that content (alone or interacting with teachers or colleagues via web communication forms) and to interact with that content in ways that were not previously possible. This paper plans to provide a thorough overview of the possibilities and consequences of m-learning in higher education environments as a gateway to ubiquitous learning – perhaps the ultimate form of learner engagement, since it allows the student to learn, access and interact with important content in any way or at any time or place he might want so the objective of the study is to examine how the usage of mobile phones for m-learning differs between heavy and light mobile phone users at TU Braunschweig, institute of business and management and at Fayoum University, faculty of tourism and Hotels through a sample was selected randomly about 500 mobile phones users students at two universities and the return rate was 350 questionnaire (70%) from German university and 312 (62.4%) from Egyptian university and we have depended on the analytical descriptive approach and the data was analyzed by statistical program for social science depend on percentages and frequencies and also variance analyze (ANova) to assess how usage mobile phone in learning process differ between heavy and light phone users. Findings indicated that heavy mobile phone users access/subscribe to more than one type of mobile content than light mobile phone users. Also, heavy mobile phone users accessed, subscribed to or purchased mobile content more frequently within the last year than light mobile phone users. Users' satisfaction with a mobile phone increases when the content and features of the mobile phone are easy to use. Ease of use increases when the content of the mobile phone provides a familiar look and feel to the user, enabling the user to relax, enjoy and explore the various features the mobile phone offers. Further, mobile phones allow playing of games to take place in different situations and when traveling, and lastly heavy mobile phone users are more receptive to new ideas, particularly to the new medium of retailing (i.e. online shopping) than light mobile phone users. They are willing to take risks when spending more money on mobile learning, its content and mobile games. Finally, this finding provides a new perspective on mobile phone usage for m-learning among mobile phone users. With the emergence of new tools and media, mobile content is suggested as a powerful means to increase tacit knowledge via the exploration of interactivity, multimedia and 3D animation for creative edutainment and communication in the future. Mobile content needs to be developed specifically for mobiles, with clear images and good quality sound, to enable users continue to come back and enjoy new segments and features.

Keywords: mobile phones – learning – Higher Education – tourism