

# Megatrends in e-learning provision Project

Report on Cyprus, Austria

## REPORT ON CYPRUS AND AUSTRIA

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# **Megatrends in e-learning provision Project**

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The present report offers the results of research undertaken in order to identify the mega-providers of e-learning in Cyprus and Austria. The initial list of candidates comes from either careful web research using a number of different keywords and search engines or official sources like the ministries of science/education of the different countries, or list made by competent educational researchers of the respective countries. Further information was basically gathered using three different channels:

- a) E-mail contact (administration or competent contacts within the institution)
- b) Telephone (administration or competent contacts within the institution)
- c) Personal face-to-face conversation with competent contacts
- d) Web research (Web sites and pages of each institution, articles or other information about the institution)

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## 1. Cyprus

The current supply of e-learning courses in Cyprus is very weakly developed. Learning provision is based upon rather traditional techniques. E-learning provision could be researched in schools and in distance education institutions. E-learning in Cyprus is catching up, but it is mainly offered as a supplement to traditional degrees. Several organizations participate in EU funded projects focusing on e-learning. There are several occasions where institutions in Cyprus collaborate with other international organizations in offering online degrees. Compulsory education

The Cyprus Ministry of education is offering (roumanian) LMS for founding e-learning infrastructure for 650 shools. Use of ICT and e-learning in public shools is in embriotic state content can't be researched in that phase. In the Cyprus school system e-learning content can be found therefore researched mostly in private schools. They use ICT for supporting their pupils in different aspects of learning:

- Using computers for pupils fulfilling homework, assignments, by researching on the web.
- Using applications like Autocad and Photoshop for learning purposes (intra curriculum activity)
- Using specially designed CBT for learning, for example Educational software in Geography.
- Web based activity is not very successful due to the narrow band access.
- There is no observable on-line learning activity in those schools.

### ***Adult and higher education***

#### **Cyprus Productivity Centre**

The Cyprus Productivity Centre (CPC) was established in 1963 by the Cyprus Government, with assistance from the United Nations Development Program and the International Labour Office; the relevant co-operation agreement expired on 30th November 1974 and the Government has since taken over completely the operation of the Centre.

Administratively, the CPC is a Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance.

This system is expected to provide additional support to the traditional training programs and to enable the Cyprus Productivity Center to design and operate **e-learning** training programs in Greek, which will be tailor made so as to meet specific needs of the business community in Cyprus.

The **e-Learning** Management System is expected to be fully operational by the end of 2006.

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## Cyprus e-Learning 2005: Expertise and Business Partnership (Cyprus Portal)

For people to acquire these skills Cypriot education and training programmes must be able to meet the challenges ahead. e-Education will open the door to digital inclusion by responding to the major challenges of the 21st century: to promote the e-Europe initiative and especially the lifelong learning, encourage universal access to global education and help people, particularly youth, acquire the qualifications and skills they need to realise the benefits of the knowledge society.

As the understanding of the role of IT for enhancing learning processes increases, e-learning is starting to show real benefits. There are new opportunities for learner interaction – both face to face and at a distance – by combining traditional education with innovative educational pathways. This 'blended' flexible approach to the provision of e-learning must be complemented by a similar flexibility in content and services.

There seem to be obvious advantages for Cypriot SMEs to use e-learning, as they cannot afford the costs and time involved in sending staff to off-site/abroad training. However, further effort is required to allow small companies to understand, shape and use e-learning tools and methods according to their own requirements. In addition, corporate e-learning solutions often require significant investment in infrastructure, content and services, and are therefore only cost effective when there is a sufficiently large number of learners. Therefore new approaches are required to help SMEs achieve the critical mass necessary for cost-effective e-learning solutions.

Public administration organisations must speculate as to how constraints such as the legal framework, accreditation and policy measures can be reformed to accommodate e-learning/e-training transactions and at the same time exploit the opportunity of providing better service to their citizens. Public figures such as parliament members and ministers must be exposed to the potential growth of this business sector. They have to understand the opportunities in designing tomorrow's digital education that will allow the economy of the country to depart from dependency on a single volume source of income such as travel and tourism, which are so fragile these days.

### HE institutions having some kind of e-learning activity

- Intercollege (the largest higher education institution in Cyprus)  
<http://www.intercollege.ac.cy>
- CARDET (Center for the Advancement of Research and Development in Educational Technology) (a non-profit research and development organization focusing on e-learning)  
<http://www.cardet.org>
- University of Cyprus  
<http://www.ucy.ac.cy>

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## Open University of Cyprus

<http://www.ouc.ac.cy>

The procedures for the establishment of the Open University of Cyprus proceeded as the Interim Governing Board is taking the necessary measures to commence the operations of the university in January 2006. The Interim Board has convened in 12 sessions and has dealt with issues regarding the preparation of all budgetary, legal and functional problems for the operation of the university.

Opening: (06/09/30)

Distant learning, in particular in higher education, is now a reality in Cyprus through the start this year of the Open University. Speaking at a special ceremony to mark the start of the first academic year of the Open University, House President Demetris Christofias said a university reflects its era and the conscience of society and described this means of education as progressive and revolutionary.

Open University aims to meet the fundamental need for broad education and offers the inalienable right to education for everybody, irrespective of age, he said. At this early stage Open University will offer two post graduate programmes of study, in the administration of health units and in education.

### Methodology

The Open University utilizes a variety of media to help students learn no matter where the students are located. The following techniques and methods are employed:

- By means of course material in digital form, received either over the Internet or through CDs and DVDs, or from printed course materials.
- By attending lectures via the Internet and, in the near future, using subscription television, at fixed timetables, specified by the teaching personnel,
- By using the Electronic Portal in order to:
- Find relevant information concerning Thematic Units, which are the basic operational units of each course
- Contact professors or lecturers using synchronized and non-synchronized technologies such as chat, videoconferencing, and forums.
- Exchange ideas, thoughts and opinions with other students who are studying the same Thematic Units.
- By directly communicating with the teaching personnel over the telephone at predetermined times.

On-line E-learning provision in the University is in the longer term plans. There is no on-line content provision recently.

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## 2. Austria

Austrian e-learning activity can be observed from different aspects. Government is enhancing the Austrian education system via mayor programs like e-fit Austria, in the framework of the Austrian National Development Plan. On the otherhand there is quite a bit of e-learning activity in the adult education, and training sector. While national programmes are well administed, e-learning on the educational market is a fragmented activity. Many traning compaines have started the introduction of e-learning to support their activities, and there is quite bit of small companies who produce e-learning material for internal use of the industry.

### ***Collection of links to enterprises working in the e-learning field***

- Click and Learn  
<http://www.clickandlearn.at/>
- Infowerk  
<http://www.infowerk.at/>
- Xplain  
<http://www.xplain.at>
- Kochmedia  
<http://www.kochmedia.com/>
- Dynamicmedia  
<http://www.dynamicmedia.at/>  
In the educational sector, they mainly do not provide courses but our Authoring and eTesting tool (als well as an LMS), so that their clients are able to create their courses themselves. T
- Wu Konig  
<http://www.wukonig.com/>
- Unilog  
<http://www.unilog.at/>
- Easybusiness  
<http://www.easybusiness.at/>
- MIT  
<http://www.mit.at/>
- Digitale Akademie  
<http://www.digitale-akademie.at/index2.htm>
- Wktirol  
[www.wktirol.at](http://www.wktirol.at)
- Bauakademie  
[www.bauakademie.at](http://www.bauakademie.at)
- HR Management  
[www.hrmanagement.at](http://www.hrmanagement.at)
- Wiener Trainerakademie  
[www.wienertrainerakademie](http://www.wienertrainerakademie)
- Sriptech  
[www.striptech.at](http://www.striptech.at)
- Teamconsult  
[www.teamconsult.at](http://www.teamconsult.at)

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- Perfect Training  
[www.perfecttraining.com](http://www.perfecttraining.com)

## ***Training providers:***

- WIFI  
[www.wifi.at](http://www.wifi.at)
- BFI  
[www.bfi.at](http://www.bfi.at)

## **bit media e-Learning solution**

[www.bitmedia.cc](http://www.bitmedia.cc)

Bit media is a definite mega-provider in Austria. bit media is offering its services under different web addresses, like:

- [www.lernportal.at](http://www.lernportal.at)
- [www.bildung.at](http://www.bildung.at)
- [www.sbx.at](http://www.sbx.at)

In each case the provider of the courses (content) - is bit media.

Additionally they also develop and operate the technical solutions (e-learning portals/learning management systems) through which the courses are delivered.

Overall figures:

- Number of course enrollments in 2005: 32000
- Number of online courses: 126
- Average number of enrollments per course: 250

This data is a collection of the e-learning portals powered and operated by bit media

## ***Higher education***

### **The Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (WU)**

WU is one of the largest business schools worldwide. It has a total of more than 25,000 students, and more than 4,000 freshmen enrolled for the academic year starting in October 2002. Each semester, approximately 2,000 courses are offered at the WU. The Learn@WU project was launched in order to ease the learning situation for freshmen. The main objective of this project was to provide an electronic learning environment for students and faculty in order to support the mass courses.

As of May 2003, Learn@WU had more than 8,500 registered users, of whom about 4,000 used the system regularly (all first-year students). Usage patterns on the platform change substantially during the semester.

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At the beginning, students use Learn@WU to download educational material accompanying the courses they wish to take. Later they prepare for the exam by using self assessment tests.

## **University of Innsbruck**

They are a "traditional" University but have an eLearning Policy since 2000.

Their main tool is Blackboard, in 2005 they had about 1300 active Blackboard courses with about 18.000 students using BB in some way (which means almost all "active" students are using BB). In 2006 all their "traditional" courses also have an associated BB course, but faculty are still free to use those courses.

The number of "eLearning only" courses is still small - but will increase when Bologna compliant study programs start in 2007. They also have an active community of teachers developing eLearning materials, help desk and support staff for eLearning.