

# Megatrends in e-learning provision project

## Report on Norway



**Per Arneberg**

### **Norway Opening Universities**

The search for megaproviders was carried out with a base in Norway Opening Universities (NOU). NOU is a national governmental agency for flexible and lifelong learning in Norway. NOU focuses primarily on higher education and has a good overview of e-learning at higher education institutions. In addition, the project partners at NKI has detailed and extensive knowledge about other parts of the distance education landscape in Norway. Thus, the list of megaproviders identified (given below) should be considered exhaustive.

The search has identified four institutions that are clearly megaproviders. Three of them are private education institutions and one is a public university college. The three private institutions provide courses within higher education, secondary level education and vocational training. The university college offers higher education courses. The four institutions are:

- NKI Distance Education (NKI DE) ([www.nki.no](http://www.nki.no)). NKI DE is a part of the NKI group and offers courses within higher education, secondary level education and vocational training. In 2005 NKI DE had 12 217 course enrolments in 470 distance education courses. Some of the courses (and enrolments) are based on traditional correspondence teaching. However, more than half of the students follow their courses online and a

majority of the courses are given online. Thus, NKI DE clearly qualifies as a megaprovider.

- NKS Distance Education (NKS DE) ([www.nks.no](http://www.nks.no)). NKS DE offers courses within higher education, secondary level education and vocational training. In 2005, NKS DE offered 104 online courses and thus qualifies as a megaprovider. The number of enrolments in the courses were 2200 in 2005.
- BI Distance Education (Norwegian School of Management) ([www.bi.no](http://www.bi.no)). BI Distance Education (BI DE) is a part of BI (Norwegian School of Management), an on campus based institution. BI DE provides courses within higher education and vocational training. BI DE had about 8500 course enrolments in 54 online courses in 2005 and thus qualifies as a megaprovider.
- Sør-Trøndelag University College ([www.hist.no](http://www.hist.no)). Sør-Trøndelag University College offers courses at higher education level. In 2005, the institutions had about 2500 enrolments in 148 online courses, and thus qualifies as a megaprovider.

Another institution that was considered is the The Norwegian Networked University ([www.nvu.no](http://www.nvu.no)). This is a consortium presently consisting of 1 university and 5 university colleges. These are: Agder University College, Bergen University College, Nord-Trøndelag University College, Stord/Haugesund University College, Sør-Trøndelag University College and University of Stavanger. The consortium used to act as a common provider. However, during the last years, the participating institutions have increasingly been operating as independent providers, and in 2005 they ceased to operate as a common provider. They nevertheless continue to cooperate on research and development related to online e-learning. Thus, today the consortium has several activities aimed at building knowledge and competence within e-learning provision and has important dissemination activities related to this (for example a yearly conference). Because the consortium does not act as a common provider, it was not nominated as a megaprovider. It should be noted that one of the members, Sør-Trøndelag University College is on its own a megaprovider (see list above).

In addition, all higher education institutions in Norway (with exception of a few small privately owned ones) have implemented a virtual learning environment (VLE). Typically, a central part of a VLE is a commercial Learning Management System (LMS). Other systems are often linked with the LMS, for example administrative tools. A large number of these institutions have more than 5000 students or 100 courses using a VLE (for example, more

than 15000 students use a VLE at The University of Oslo). However, surveys done in 2004 and 2005 show that the VLEs are often used to mediate simple text based information to on campus students (for details, see Arneberg et al. (2005) and Arneberg 2006)). Even though the VLEs are also used for distance education, this use does not amount to the volumes required to be qualified as a megaprovider (with the exception of the four providers listed above, of course). Thus, even though e-learning through use of VLEs can be said to be widespread in higher education in Norway, the use does generally not conform with the kind of e-learning that the Megatrends project focuses on. Therefore, a large number of Norwegian higher education institutions with widespread use of VLEs are not considered as megaproviders in the current project.

### **Litterature**

Arneberg, P. Wilhelmsen, J., Støver, L.-E. and Iversen, A. (2005). Utredning om digital tilstand i høyere utdanning, – Om forhold knyttet til bruk av IKT i undervisningssammenheng. Norgesuniversitetets skriftserie 1/2005.

Arneberg, P. (2006). Utredning om digital tilstand i høyere utdanning, fase II. Om organisatoriske forhold knyttet til bruk av IKT i undervisningssammenheng. Norgesuniversitetets skriftserie 1/2006.