Preface

In recent years, we have witnessed that e-learning environments have been supporting both intentional and non-intentional learning in new ways through various forms of participation. On the one hand, emergent technologies have the capacity for educational institutions and corporations to become involved in training that helps extend the possibilities of accommodating different types of learning. With these technologies, instructors and trainers not only empower learners, but also create exciting new learning opportunities. On the other hand, technology-enriched learning environments provide new ways of supporting lifelong learning. Learners can interact with other learners through e-learning; thus, gain information from their interactive and social experiences to construct their own knowledge. Consequently, opportunities and practices of formal and informal learning significantly expand within e-learning environments.

With digital and social technologies experiencing an accelerated process of evolution, we believe it is important to go over both cutting-edge, research-based and first-hand, practice-based cases in order to have a better understanding of different e-learning environments. Accordingly, we edited *Cases on Formal and Informal E-Learning Environments: Opportunities and Practice*s. This book disseminates practices and research regarding formal and informal e-learning environments that include case studies, best practices, personal experiences, pedagogical approaches and strategies, related resources and projects, etc.

Cases on Formal and Informal E-Learning Environments: Opportunities and Practices is written for the broader audience. These individuals include educators, trainers, administrators, and researchers working in the areas of e-learning or distance learning in various disciplines, such as education, corporate training, instructional technology, computer science, library information science, information technology, and workforce development. We hope readers will benefit from the work of authors who range from cutting-edge researchers to experienced practitioners regarding the research and practices in formal and informal e-learning environments. Learning environments usually include a variety of, and interrelated, components, such as space, people, technology, culture, etc. With this in mind, the book covers focal

points of e-learning environments: communities, activities, and strategies. Specifically, this book is organized into three sections of formal and informal e-learning environments: (1) Networking and Learning Communities (Chapters 1-7), (2) Professional and Disciplinary Implementations (Chapters 8-12), and (3) Pedagogical Design and Implications (Chapters 13-19).

*Cases on Formal and Informal E-Learning Environments: Opportunities and Practice*s provides not only the advanced and latest developments of formal and informal e-learning environments for experienced professionals, but also provides clear and detailed practices/projects for novice readers. Cases inside this book can easily adapt to suit a variety of information and communications technology related courses/workshops and specific needs of students, instructors, professionals, and administrators. For instructors and trainers to utilize these studies in their courses and workshops, an additional set of support materials for each case is available, which includes: (a) a list of questions and answers for the case, (b) an epilogue and a list of lessons learned, and (c) a list of resources for further study. The book can be used as a research reference, pedagogical and professional guide/textbook, or educational resource in the area of e-learning environments.

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