Chapter 9  
Impact of Digitization on Learning and Opportunities in the Workplace

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ABSTRACT

Digital technologies have permeated all areas of society, be it education, work, business, government or medicine. This has had a major impact on the world of work and its environment as technology continues to permeate all areas of society. There has been a rapid speed of new technological developments in the area of education. These new developments have created learning opportunities for working people. Digital technologies can now assist workers in their training and education needs thus making the worker of today more viable in the labor market. In the workplace, E-learning has made considerable inroads in the lives of workers development. E-learning is a combination of two important constructs namely learning and technology. Learning is a cognitive process where a student filters knowledge that he retains. Technology if used properly in this era can be used as a teaching tool to enable learning.

INTRODUCTION

The world of work has changed. Big companies have to respond to changes in technology in order to remain sustainable and competitive. Whether you are a large company or business operating in any industry the digital component has affected your everyday human resource operations in some way or another. Companies had to

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-5225-3191-3.ch009
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take the necessary steps to incorporate the rapidly advancing digital transformation into their strategic framework and business models within all levels of the business. Although an additional cost, stakeholders had to come on board so that the business can survive and thrive in this new advanced era of technology. This chapter will focus on various pertinent issues that surround the impact of digitalization on learning and opportunities for the workers within the organisation.

The following key areas will be discussed:

- How are online courses tailored to suit the needs of working people.
- Perceptions on E-learning in the workplace.
- An overview of On-line Training for staff.
- The advantages of new technology on learning for the working people.
- The disadvantaged of new technology on learning for the working people.
- Strategies to align workers E-learning to the Human resource strategies of the organization.

In the discussion, it follows a historical overview of On-Line learning, E-learning and Life Long Learning will be highlighted and discussed.

**Historical Overview of Online Learning, E-Learning and Life Long Learning**

Online learning came into being in the early 1980’s. If we have to trace the footsteps of E-learning its inceptions can be traced back to conventional distance education or online learning. Moore, Dickson-Deane and Gaylen (2011) argue that the origin of E-learning is not certain. Harasim (2006) argues that the genesis of E-learning as based on human collaboration in knowledge work and innovation can be traced to the development of network communication in the late 1960s, and the invention of e-mail and computer conferencing over packet-switched networks in 1971.

The definition of E-learning is an important starting point in the discussion in this chapter. Hedge and Hayward (2004), defined E-learning as an innovative approach for delivering electronically mediated, well-designed, learner-centred and interactive learning environments to anyone, anyplace, anytime by utilizing the internet and digital technologies in concern with instructional design principles. It is all about learning with the use of computers. Wilson (2001) adds that E-learning is construed in a variety of contexts, such as distance learning, online learning and networked learning. Tavangarian, Leybold, Nölting, Röser, & Voigt (2004) argue that there is no unified or explicit definition of ‘E-learning’, but its descriptions often emphasizes change in the mode of delivery, such as “a technology-based learning in which learning materials are delivered electronically to remote learners.”
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