Chapter XI

Current Issues and Trends of Internet-Based Education in the Philippines

Bea V. Espejo
Ateneo De Manila University, The Philippines

Marlene P. Mana
Ateneo De Manila University, The Philippines

Sheila B. Bato
Ateneo De Manila University, The Philippines

ABSTRACT
The Philippines is one of many developing countries that has begun using the Internet to establish closer communication with entities abroad. Some educational institutions have begun engaging in Internet-based distance education to provide accessible, anytime, anywhere education. These ventures have focused on the tertiary level and post-graduate level of education. The quality of the Internet education that they provide has shown them to be at par with western institutions. However, in the primary and secondary levels of education, the situation is one of a large disparity between the levels of education provided by public and private schools of the nation. Many public educational facilities are located in remote areas where they do not even have electricity, telephone facilities, let alone Internet access. Due to lack of funding, the government has been forced to focus first on providing these schools with the most basic of amenities. Aside from these efforts, the government
has also begun to provide ICT facilities to chosen schools that meet the basic requirements for ICT to function. The chapter discusses each of these major points in detail.

**INTRODUCTION**

This chapter focuses on the current issues and trends prevalent in the implementation of Internet-based education in the Philippines. Some Philippine educational organizations have responded to the need to have easily accessible, anytime, anywhere education. The authors aim to put forward the answers to the following points: (1) What is the current situation of Philippine public schools? (2) How prolific has Internet usage become in the Philippines? (3) What type of Internet-based education do Internet-based educational institutions provide? (4) What development stages did the institutions experience in setting up their Internet-based programs? (5) What support does the Philippine government provide for institutions that wish to engage in Internet-based education? (6) What actions should the Philippine government take to promote and provide Internet-based education nationwide?

**BACKGROUND**

The rapid growth of Internet-based distance education worldwide has prompted Philippine organizations to respond by developing their own Internet-based education programs. In comparison to their western counterparts, the Internet-based education program mentioned in this chapter is relatively young, being in effect from anywhere between two to eight years. Aside from the need to respond to this current trend in education, several factors that influenced the feasibility of these programs are listed in the following paragraphs.

Internet usage in the Philippines continues to grow each year. As of the fourth quarter of 2001, an estimated 1.5 million Filipinos had used the Internet out of the 78 million total population. About one-third of these users access the Internet using their home computers (Lugo, 2002), while others gain access to the facility at school or at work. Still others connect to the Internet by going to Internet cafes, whose proliferation has contributed greatly to the growth of Internet usage in the country (Toral, 2001).

The Internet cafes have become popular among the Filipino Internet users because they are able to gain access to the Internet at an affordable price of $.25 to $1.00 an hour (Toral, 2001). This can be used to show that Internet usage is influenced by the economic conditions in the country. If people can afford it, then they
Interactivity in Web-Based Learning
www.igi-global.com/article/interactivity-web-based-learning/2964?camid=4v1a