Chapter 14
The Impact of Information Communication Technology (ICT) to the Greek Educational Community

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ABSTRACT
The aims of Greek education system is to give to students the ability to develop the required skills, character and values that will enable them to contribute to the prosperity of Greek Society, Greek Nation and humanity. The fulfillsments of these aims require a dynamic educational system with the potential of incessant adjustment emanated from the interaction between national education and societal needs and demands. Living in an information and knowledge society where quality is its goal, Greek education system has to be enriched with all the characteristics and means that specify educational quality. In a framework, where educational changes are unavoidable due to the entrance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and especially the use of World Wide Web in Greek education system, an effort to present the current impact to Greek Educational community is attempted. Specifically in this chapter there is a reference on ways, efforts, stages and methods that have been set for the application of ICT to Greek education system and presents effects, issues, trends and utilization of World Wide Web by the Greek educational community.

INTRODUCTION
Computer revolution, multimedia advancement together with the combination of speedy, effective and without barriers communication in relation with the tremendous amount of information have set a new base for co-operation, collaboration and teamwork at national and international levels. During 1990s, the advent of the World Wide Web (WWW) had opened up new possibilities in the education sector as it became one of the most important delivery medium.

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Any type of learning that utilizes a network (LAN, WAN or Internet) for delivery, interaction or facilitation, falls in e-Learning type of learning. E-Learning gives new opportunities based on a more individualized type of teaching, where pupils and students are able to control their learning process and teaching has to be organized in the form that learners learn to learn and also understand that they have the responsibility of their learning progress. The greatest achievement, that the combination of technology and information has brought, is the delusion of “being there” in “cyberspace” which is a “non-physical” place.

Nowadays, it is worldwide accepted that the role of Information and Communication Technology in society’s development is continuously increasing and the meeting of its requirements demands an active reaction to the challenges that information society generates. As our society becomes more and more dependable on information and knowledge processing, it is required by individuals to have a concrete and wide educational basis over which they will be able to build the new knowledge. It is generally accepted that “today students” who are the “tomorrow citizens” should be “digitally literate” and this can be achieved only if they have already gained the basic skills that will allow them to take the advantages of equal chances in a world where digital functions are diffused. Consequently, educational systems have to offer to its candidates the demanded opportunities for “not to be left behind” in our “Knowledge Society”. This following up of scientific, technological and socio-economic developments generate the need for the acquisition of specific knowledge and training according to individual needs (Race, 2000). The traditional educational forms are not adequate to meet these demands so the adaptation of innovative educational or training forms is required to be set in action (Hanseth & Monteiro, 1996; Barak, 2007). The most common one which can satisfy this demand of continuous learning process is Distance Learning or Distance Education or Tele-Education, where its application is based on ICT and more specifically on World Wide Web. This new form of education where its fans and devotees are increasing globally, gives the opportunity to individuals to be educated according to their time schedule, their careers’ needs and the most important in their places. Of course, this means that the individual who will use this new educational form has already gained the basic required skills (Mungania, 2003).

It is a fact that in Greece, the applications of technological developments in all sectors including the educational one arrived with a little delay. During the last twenty years the Greek Governments have identified the important role that ICT plays at all society’s levels and sectors and they are investing heavily in the promotion and application of ICT in Greece. Nowadays, despite the enormous efforts that Greek Government is applying the progress rate of the use of ICT is very low in comparison with other developing countries. World Economic Forum in its Global Competitiveness Report points out that Greece in Networked Readiness Index is the 56th among 131 developing countries (World Economy Forum, 2007-2008).

A digital environment requires availability of computers, Internet connections and ICT skills and this environment becomes an effective one only when individuals know how to master them.

A study that has been conducted by European Commission- Information Society and Media Directorate General under the title “Benchmarking Access and Use of ICT in European Schools 2006” which included statistical data relative to computer availability, internet connection and ICT use in classroom for subjects’ teaching it pointed out that the Greek figures were very low (European Commission, 2006) in comparison with the other European countries. According to this study:

- The number of computers per 100 pupils:
  - Greece 6 computers/100 students while Denmark 27 computers/100 where 26 have Internet connection.
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