**Name of the committee** : UNESCO
**Issue :** Recognizing and setting standards for online education and training through an international framework, while promoting accessibility
**Name of the chairs :** Diego Saugnac, Gemma Elena Joyce

# *Recognizing and setting standards for online education and training through an international framework, while promoting accessibility*

***ICTs for SDGs:***

Unprecedented challenges require unprecedented solutions: this is the reasoning behind the overall theme of FerMUN 2020, "ICTs for SDGs". Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have the potential to accelerate progress towards every one of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the role of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) is to maximise this potential. FerMUN 2020 is a chance for young people from across the world to come together in support of this mission.

## 1. Introduction

Several factors make it impossible for some people to benefit from a normal education. An alternative to this problem is online education. Against everyday problems such as geographical location (rural areas in developing countries for example), financial cost, discrimination or disabilities, institutions such as the International Telecommunication Union aim to find alternatives to address educational problems. As our problem is closely linked to problems of access to education, it is important to understand some of the terms that will be discussed later.

### a. Definitions :

**Online education** (or online training) is an alternative way of learning or training via new technologies, on the Internet.... The quality of learning varies depending on the means used. Indeed, going on the Internet by your own means or contacting a specialized teacher is very different. (See video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=viHILXVY_eU)

**Standards** are limits or conventions that people, institutions... must follow.

**MOOCs or Massive Open Online Courses** are courses on the Internet. They are:

- Courses and not conferences or reports. These courses are at a university level.
- Courses available on the Internet.

- Free and open access courses. No prerequisites are required from participants. In addition, registration on the various MOOC platforms is completely free of charge. Only the issuance of (optional) certificates is charged. This does not mean, however, that the content delivered on these platforms is free of rights. In general, it may not be reused or distributed without the consent of the authors.
- Mass-distributed. The number of participants per course can vary from a few thousand to more than 100,000 participants. However, not all learners necessarily intend to follow instruction from beginning to end, and only a small proportion of learners are truly active.

## 2. *Overview of the situation*

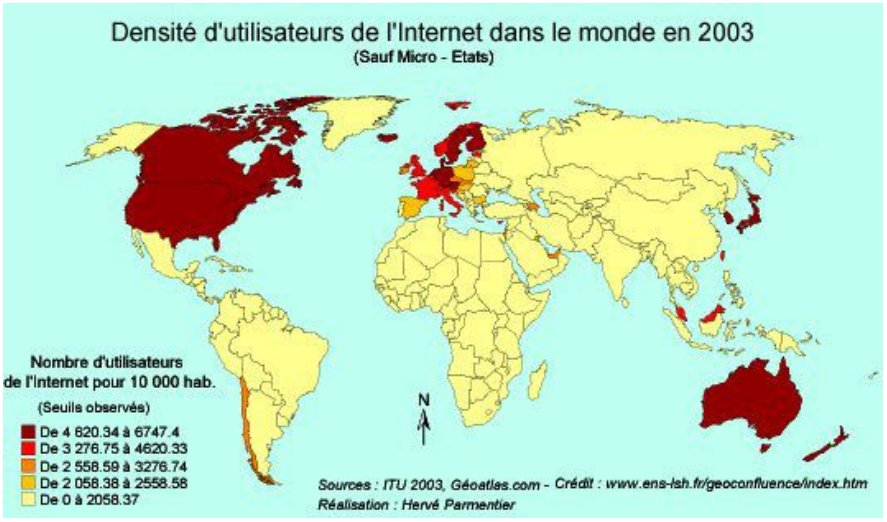
This problem has emerged over the course of the 21st century, particularly with the arrival of new technologies. Indeed, as it has recognized that new technologies are developing, the UN has begun to address them directly. By linking UNESCO with new technologies, the United Nations aims to make the best possible use of this new medium.

This issue aims to affect different sectors, related to education. First of all, online education mainly affects society, as access to this new medium of learning is beneficial for individuals of all ages and genders. As a result, society is facing an almost egalitarian way of benefiting from online education. In addition to affecting society, online education and training will impact the economy. Indeed, companies will increasingly specialize in the production of new technologies (laptops, smartphones...)

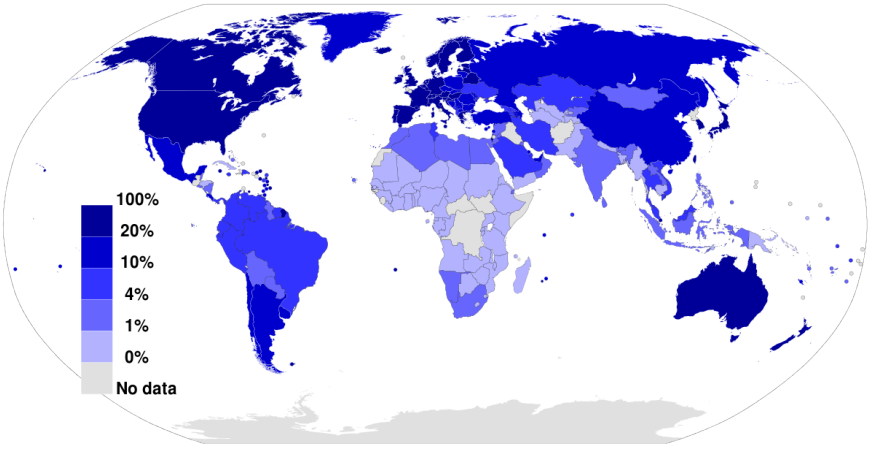
Traditional educational institutions may be affected by these changes. Positively, in the case where teachers use technologies to teach, and negatively if they are replaced by them. This change in educational methods will allow secondary schools to renew their equipment.

The main advantage of e-learning is accessibility. However, e-learning has the disadvantage of this quality. Indeed, despite a large number of potential users, some people cannot use this mode of teaching. In geographical areas such as some African countries where access to the Internet is difficult or even impossible, it will be necessary to wait until the new technologies are even more developed. The consequence of this problem is the under-exploitation of a new and effective way of learning. Another shortcoming of online education is that learners are autonomous and do not always have the motivation or ability to study on their own.

Despite a poor distribution of Internet or servers, an improvement has been seen since the beginning of the century.




Number of internet users per 10 000 people, 2003




Internet users as percentage of the population, 2012

## 3. Case studies

# Case study 1: ENGIE - online employee training

A major international energy company, ENGIE, based in France, relies on its 3 business lines of Electricity, Natural Gas and Energy Services to support and develop a new vision of energy in the world: accessible to all and sustainable. They have more than 150,000 employees in 24 business units and 70 countries.

ENGIE trains its employees in the various corporate and local authority offers and in skills for using new CRM and invoicing tools.

**CHALLENGE**

- The overall challenge is to reorganize the teams and redefine the missions of each one.
- Train all sales and customer managers in the various "Companies and local authorities" offers and the new tools implemented (Sales Force & SAP) as part of the company's reorganization."Optimize the course by moving from the classroom to a Blended Learning approach.
- Support the transformation with courses on digital and soft skills.

**SOLUTION**

- The ENGIE Coorpacademy platform has been deployed and includes 6 e-learning courses to be validated before the classroom.
- ENGIE then moved from a face-to-face approach to a Blended Learning approach, based in particular on the platform's Analytics.
- Transformational courses on soft skills and digital skills were added a few months later.

**RESULTS**

The company has gained more than 1,000 employees, more than 500 certifications and 85% of courses completed. The French company Engie has therefore started to use e-learning to reinvigorate their company.

# Case study 2 : E-learning in Tunisia

**A - The Tunisian Virtual School:**

**1) Presentation of the virtual school:**

The virtual school is part of the process of building the school of tomorrow. It aims to consolidate autonomous and collaborative learning through the use of the potential offered by the new information and communication technologies.

Since 28 January 2002, the experimental phase of the Tunisian virtual school has begun. The Tunisian virtual school is organized around three axes: support and supervision, Arabic language learning and ICT training.

**2) The objectives of the virtual school:**

In addition to improving academic performance and the quality of education, the virtual school affirms the principle of equal opportunities since its users benefit without distinction from high-quality courses and carefully selected resources.

**3) The difference between 'real school' and virtual school:**

The virtual school is distinguished by its flexibility, whether it concerns the choice of courses to be taken, the timetable or the pace of work. The assimilation of knowledge is improved and some difficulties encountered in the classroom are overcome. It is in fact the complementarity of two modes of learning that contribute to improved academic performance and level.

**B - The Tunisian Virtual University: http://www.uvt.rnu.tn/**

**1) Presentation of the Tunisian Virtual University:**

For many years, distance education has been contributing to the education system around the world. Universities must adapt to participate in new educational strategies.

**2) The objectives of the virtual university:**

The objectives of the creation of the virtual university are as follows:

- Enable students to integrate new information and communication technologies (NICTs) into their learning;
- Satisfy requests for access to constantly updated knowledge;
- Develop flexible lessons that can be addressed throughout the year;
- Foster a new type of relationship between students and between students and professors;

- Facilitate collaborative learning;
- Respond to a growing demand for training;
- Increase the material resources of the pedagogical network by integrating the home computers of students, professors and other staff members of the virtual university;
- Meet expectations for flexibility in time, place, group size, etc. constraints

## 4. Possible solutions

| Solutions | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|
| Make online education more accessible, especially for people living in areas where education is not a priority. | The level of illiteracy is reported to be significantly lower.<br>All individuals would have the same means of education, so this would reduce inequalities. | The cost of this type of operation, which is international, would be disproportionate and not all countries would be able to invest enough to benefit from this new educational tool. |
| Require / encourage delegations of the unesco committee to contribute financially to measures such as those above. | Countries will be able to benefit from these new measures independently of the quantity of capital they are able to invest. | Not all countries will be equal in this respect because they do not all have the same financial capacity. |
| Encourage nationalised companies to undertake the creation of a means of recruitment and teaching via the Internet and distance interviews. | This would attract new employees because the recruitment process is easy and accessible. It would help these companies be more productive and competitive. | A significant base investment is required, which may be risky. |

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