IMPROVEMENT OF E-LEARNING IN TERM OF COMMUNICATION

NORLIZA BINTI ABD RAZAK

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ABSTRACT

E-Learning is becoming more and more popular. People tend to emphasize on its benefits. In Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, students has been provided with E-Learning for both learning and communication purpose. Although, E-Learning comes with benefits such as ability to upload notes, made any announcements, do an online test, forum discussion, blogging stuff and messaging system and unlimited access 24 hours, 7 days a week, does this mean that E-Learning is without its limitation? This present study explores the use of E-Learning for communication among the Fakulti Sains Komputer dan Sistem Maklumat (FSKSM) students. The study identifying the current E-Learning limitations and also preferred communication channels among students through a survey. From the findings, their preferred communication channels are Short Messaging Service (SMS), Facebook and mobile phone. These preferred channels were recommended to be embedded or complimented in the existing E-Learning facilities in term of communication. Study also recommended proposed implementation plan which include infrastructure requirement and communication policies.

ABSTRAK

Pembelajaran di atas taliansemakin popular. Pengguna cenderung menegaskan faedah-faedah yang diperolehi daripada penggunaannya. Di Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), pelajar-pelajar disediakan dengan pembelajaran di atas talian untuk kedua-kedua tujuan iaitu pembelajaran dan juga komunikasi.Pembelajaran di atas talian disediakan dengan keupayaan seperti memuat naik nota-nota, membuat sebarang pengumuman, membuat ujian secara atas talian.menyertai forum perbincangan, penulisan blog dan system pesanan dengan kebebasan mengaksesnya tanpa had 24 jam, 7 hari satu minggu. Adakah ini bermakna bahawa pembelajaran di atas talian tiada sebarang had ke atas penggunaannya? Kajian projek ini mengkaji penggunaan pembelajaran atas talian sebagai medium komunikasi di kalangan pelajar di Fakulti Sains Komputer dan Sistem Maklumat. Kajian ini mengenal pasti had-had penggunaan yang ada pada pembelajaran atas talian dan medium-medium komunikasi yang menjadi pilihan pelajar melalui kaedah tinjauan. Hasil kajian mendapati, medium komunikasi yang menjadi pilihan pelajar terdiri daripada *Short Messaging System (SMS), Facebook* dan telefon bimbit. Medium komunikasi ini disyorkan untuk dimasukkan ke dalam system pembelajaran atas talian yang telah sedia ada. Kajian ini juga mengesyorkan pelan implementasi yang mana termasuk insfrastruktur dan polisi komunikasi.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION

Information and Communication Technology	ICT
Instant Messaging	IM
Short Messaging Service	SMS
Facebook	FB
Social Networking	SN
Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol	TCP/IP
Uniform Resource Locator	URL

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Advanced in ICT have pushed campuses worldwide to start thinking seriously any new available communication channels to make major alterations to improve the traditional communication ways among students. Today, students are offered with a wide variety of communication channels to communicate among them regarding on classroom discussions, assignments and even a general communication needs in their life.

In Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), students have been provided with E-learning for learning purpose but there is still some features on communication purpose also been provided in this website such as forum, messaging system and blog. As the online learning platform for students and lecturers in E-learning is good enough in sharing information about education but how about the communication purpose? Are students satisfied with current communication features in E-learning?

Over the last few years, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) had grown and provides people with a great ways to communicate with each other and gave them new choices in order to get knowledge over the world. Students disclosed with various types of communication mechanism to allow them to communicate and keep in touch with each other. They have the range of options to choose, which one of these available communication channels that suitable and they feel comfortable when use it in their daily routines.

In educational instituitions, growth in ICT have forced students over the world to make a major changes from only used traditional ways of communication to communicate with each other. Students have various types of choices on which of communication channels they want to use in order to communicate among them. These options range from instant messaging, electronic mail (Email), short messaging service (SMS), phone calls, forum, blogs, social networking sites and beside use of E-learning.

This study attempts to improve E-learning in term of communication by first find the limitations of E-learning in terms of communication. This study also identify any available communication channels that currently being used among students to communicate among them and determined the most preferred communication channels being used by students for improvement of E-learning in term of communication purpose.

This research come out with the analysis use of E-learning among students including the limitations in term of communication and the most preferred communication channels being used by students. The recommendations for improvement of E-learning in terms of communication based on the findings results have been discussed.

1.2 Background of problem

Advances in ICT have definitely make changes in student's daily routine life and their communication practice. In the last few years, campuses worldwide have realized this issue. Nowadays, students are offered with a great wide variety of communication channels to communicate among them. Students have many choices on which communication channels that they comfortable with.

In UTM, students has been provided with E-learning website to help them for both education and communication aspects such as an ability to upload notes, made any announcements, do an online test, join forum discussion, blogging stuff and messaging system. The problems with this current existence communication tools available in UTM are it is lack in terms of interactive communication ways such as no instant messaging function and dull interface color. These are some of the reasons why students may be more comfortable and chose other alternative communication tools instead of use UTM official communication channels.

These offered range from instant messaging, Email, SMS, voice call, forum, blog and social networking sites. All of these communication channels help them to communicate among them regarding on their daily routine needs like discussion on their group assignments, class tasks and even general issues in their daily life that needs them to communicate each others.

Cell phones are used by many people, including students to help them in their daily communication. Students can often been seen walking and using cell phones everywhere for both voice call and SMS. Cell phones more used by students for text-messaging with their friends and keep in touch with each other. E-mail also appeared to be used by students to communicate among them. Some students having multiple Email account for their communication purpose (Cyhtia, 2006). Each student is given their own Email account for official purpose and they also use alternate Email

account such as Gmail and Yahoo to keep in touch with their colleagues for informal communication purpose. This alternate Email account have interactive interface and easy to use and it makes students more comfortable to use it.

More communication channels come out. Nowadays, students also use Instant Messaging (IM) technology to communicate with each other. IM allow them to have immediate communication via their computers with others that online using the same IM client. For a few years ago, social networking also widely use by student. Students use this social networking site such as Facebook, Twitter and Myspace to communicate among them and the main reasons are these social networking provides them with fun interface and in the mean time have opportunity to transfer knowledge an any information among them.

It is important things to study further on the limitations of current E-learning in term of communication and find out what are student's most preferred communication channels to communicate among them for future improvement. The results of the findings will be used for improvement of E-learning in term of communication as it will help UTM's goal realized as they can help student's communication practice and the most important is students' satisfaction while E-learning as communication channel to communicate among them.

1.3 Statement of the problem

In order to ensure this project planning become reality, here I listed out some of the problem statements that must be considered to full-fill the objectives of the improvement of E-learning in term of communication. One main question for this

project is “How to improve E-learning in term of communication?” Besides, there are three questions that support the main question that are:

1. What is the limitation of current E-learning in term of communication?

2. What is the most preferred communication channels being used by students?

3. Which communication channels should we embrace to enhance E-learning in term of communication purpose?

1.4 Project objectives

There are three objectives that can be determined in this research project. The objectives of this project are:

1) To identify any limitations of current E-learning in term of communication among students.

2) To determine the most preferred communication channels being used by students to communicating among them.

3) To suggest for improvement of the current E-learning in term of communication.

1.5 Scope and Limitations of the Study

In this project, there are few scope and limitation that being followed in order to make sure that the objectives of the project can be achieved. The scopes in line with this project are:

1) This project will be operated in area of UTM, Skudai
2) Study focus on communication rather than learning improvement.
3) Study focus on current communication practice among students.
4) All respondents are undergraduate students in FSKSM only.

1.6 Importance of project

This project needs to be done as one of the fields of study in faculty which is Master Project and also as one of the requirement to award Master certification. The motivation to conduct this project is the awareness of the importance of the project goal in term of communication among students in UTM. As I foresee, this research has a potential to be use for improvement of E-learning in future by first identify the limitations in term of communication and find out the preferred communication channels that have potentials for improvement purpose.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter focuses on brief introduction of the idea in this project research. This chapter also needs to identify problem statements and addresses all those problems to be solved and come out with a list of better recommendation.