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Advantage for the Future

Project Plan for e-Learning 2001-2003
Ministry of Education, Science and Culture

New vision - new ways

Information and communication technology (ICT) offers diverse opportunities in schooling. It opens up previously unknown avenues of study and teaching, bolsters the connection of schools with the rest of the world and provides new opportunities in communications. Over a brief period, computer technology and the Internet have changed education, the ways of business and people's lives – and will shape the school system still more in the future.

The Ministry of Education's future vision entails utilising the features of the Internet as an information utility for schooling. There, educational materials shall be imparted purposefully and communications established between students, teachers, school administrators, parents, employers and all those connected with education. This vision entails that traditional teaching practices develop into what may be called distributed education, with students engaging in studies in distributed learning schools.

As an extension of the Ministry's policy on ICT, efforts have been devoted to strengthening the premises for using the technology in schooling. Now, the educational gateway menntagatt.is has been opened, with information on the points of focus in education and ICT that the Ministry will work on over the next two years. The guideline for this work will be that Iceland continue to be in the forefront in the utilisation of new technology in schooling and providing an advantage for students in the knowledge society of the future.

Address

The Ministry of Education's Project Plan for e-Learning 2001-2003 entails that information technology be utilised for the benefit of education and culture to create an advantage for the Icelandic nation in the economy of the future. Introduced here is the concept of distributed education, which entails an entirely new vision of learning and teaching.

The Internet will play a key role in enabling students to engage in studies in many schools at once and shape the curriculum to their own needs. Distributed education will increase equal rights and everyone's access to studies and create previously unknown opportunities for education. Icelandic schools have already shown that they are capable of harnessing new technology for the benefit of education. It is impossible to say where man's search for knowledge will lead him in the electronic world, but the ways described here aim at facilitating this search.

I wish to convey my sincere gratitude to all those doing invaluable work in preparing this project plan.



Björn Bjarnason
Minister of Education

I. Learning and teaching

Teacher education

- ▶ The focus will be on changed teaching practices in individual subjects with continuing education courses that take into account the needs of various professional areas.

Distributed learning and teleprocessing

- ▶ Distributed learning will be bolstered so that students can engage in diverse studies regardless of where they live.
- ▶ Research and development in the field of teleprocessing will be augmented.
- ▶ The supply of fully developed distance studies leading to university degrees will be increased.

Specialised education in ICT

- ▶ The ties between studies in ICT and the business community will be increased and emphasis placed on diversity in the supply of new studies in secondary schools and universities.

Foreign collaboration

- ▶ More purposeful co-operation will be promoted with other countries in the field of distributed education. Individuals and schools will be supported for further participation in foreign collaboration on the utilisation of ICT.

II. Educational content

Digital educational material

- ▶ The production and adaptation of teaching software for the Internet will be encouraged.
- ▶ Digital material at libraries and other cultural organisations will be adapted to the needs of the educational system.
- ▶ The preparation of instructions on the use of digital educational material for teaching will be supported.

Quality supervision

- ▶ In co-operation with teachers, the quality of educational material will be evaluated.
- ▶ Information will be provided on how suitable educational material is vis-à-vis the objectives of curriculum guides.
- ▶ Means will be devised to inform users about quality criteria.

III. Equipment

Connections

- ▶ Secondary schools, universities and continuing education organisations will be linked on a high-speed network.
- ▶ There will be wireless networks in secondary schools and universities.
- ▶ All classrooms in primary schools will have access to the Internet.
- ▶ Experience in pilot schools from experiments with portable computers and wireless networks will be utilised to find realistic and efficient means in these matters for other secondary schools.

Equipment

- ▶ Support will be provided for the use of diverse equipment in schooling, such as portable computers, electronic books and mobile telephones.
- ▶ Experiments will be done with alterations to school buildings to support distributed education and reduce the need for new construction.

IV. Educational gateways

Educational gateway menntagatt.is

- ▶ A database with information on educational material.
- ▶ Dissemination and exchange of educational material.
- ▶ Connection between educational material and curriculum goals.

Curriculum guide gateway

- ▶ An interactive platform providing access to curriculum guides for all school levels (namskra.is).
- ▶ The possibilities include working with objectives and obtaining material related to them as well as instruction on the Internet.

Library system

- ▶ All libraries in Iceland will be connected in a single library system.
- ▶ Accessibility to books and diverse digital material.

Metadata recording

- ▶ The producers of educational material will be able to record it according to standards.
- ▶ Suitable recording forms with accessible instructions will be published.

Information utilities

- ▶ Detailed information on schooling, studies and teaching at all school levels will be accessible on the Internet.

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