MOBILE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT STUDY AND ITS POTENTIAL IN IMPROVING THE LEARNING PROCESS

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Abstract

In the last few years, the usage of mobile devices has seen a dramatic increase. Our everyday lives are more and more dependent on the latest developments of these technologies. The way we use these devices changes with the increased processing power and capabilities. As a result, today we can better access services that were desktop exclusive less than a decade ago. Among the most important factors that have contributed in this boom of mobile devices use is their extreme portability, the opportunity to access many services anywhere and anytime, combined with a steady increase in computing power and expanding ecosystem of applications. Taking advantage of this peculiar moment, the research was focused on the use of mobile devices to aid the process of teaching and learning. Mobile Learning is a relatively new field and in Albania there is no thorough implementation at the moment. As a first step in the study, the goal was to have a better view of the real scale of the spread and use of mobile devices among the youth in general and students in particular. A survey was made among students of various fields and specialties in the Faculty of Natural Sciences in Tirana. With a questionnaire targeted specifically at this group the next step was trying to understand not only the degree of usage but also the various reasons and main interests behind it. After gathering and analyzing this data, the results showed, quite unsurprisingly, an extensive and very frequent use of mobile devices throughout the day. The slight surprise lay in the fact that aside from playing and chatting, students were quite interested in using mobile devices for school and study. All this clearly shows the potential and need for studying and implementing Mobile Learning in the study process. Following the confirmation of an underserved area in Mobile Learning, various options and possibilities of implementation were considered for such services, with particular priority given to the real-time accessibility of academic textbooks and papers, improving student-teacher communication as well as communication among students, personalized studying, better access to students' progress and results etc.

Keywords: mobile devices, learning, mobile learning, survey.

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