

# Research proposal - Bachelor Thesis 2009

## E-learning 2.0

*Who needs physical gatherings when we have the online world to learn from?*

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Subject: e-learning 2.0  
Date: 14 January, 09

## **Introduction:**

E-learning has existed for over 10 years and even before that there were teachers using different types of technology to teach. The e-learning method uses information- and communication technologies to learn in formal and informal ways. This is mostly being used within companies and educational institutions. E-learning became mainstream with the advent of Internet technology of the World Wide Web.

In the early days of the internet, e-learning existed mostly out of one way traffic (web 1.0). The trainer places information on the internet that the learner can consume. In the last five years the internet, and e-learning in its slipstream, shifted into a 2-way traffic (web 2.0) medium in which content is created, shared, remixed, repurposed, and passed along. This shift makes it easier to take into account the different learning needs and wants of the user. E-learning gets more social, personal and flexible.

For the last few years, web 2.0 applications have become a leading factor within e-learning. With the use of social network sites, communities and blogging or with podcasting, the new generation of pupils are used to mix their own needs and interests and work on it any time, any place, any where. In this way the learners will be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and even present and share it with the world.

E-learning as a standalone method for education does not live up to the expectations and demands of its target group up until now. One piece of evidence for this is that we see pupils and teachers combining e-learning with meetings in physical space. Apparently, physical gatherings still add extra value to the user experience of people in an educational setting.

## **Who needs physical gatherings when we have the online world to learn from?**

People still have a need to meet in person. Online applications try to get people connected the same way but this still doesn't work out as it should. One of the possibilities that this doesn't work out is because of the emotional aspects involved when people co-operate. Emotions have a crucial role in the human ability to understand the world, and how they learn new things. Emotional design theories might provide us with ways to stand up for the lack of emotional support in e-learning tools.

Another possibility might be that people need the physical nearness of other people to be socially influenced to learn and deliver. While cooperating in the offline world, it is easier to check upon and stimulate each other's progress. In the online domain of conversion websites, persuasive design theories create ways to influence people to act in a certain way. How can we use persuasive design to backup possible resistance to learning in an online setting?

## **Thesis question**

*How can we transfer the beneficial social and emotional aspects of co-learning in the offline world toward the online world of e-learning with persuasive design and/or emotional design?*

### **Possible research goals:**

The role of design within e-learning?

- Persuasive design

Why do people prefer social meetings?

Why is physical contact so important within learning?

- Hard to express emotions in an online application

- Emotional design

Can the social and emotional aspects be brought in the online learning world?

## **Product proposal**

The research will bring new input, new thoughts and maybe even new techniques that can help realizing the design for a CMS module for e-learning purposes.

The solutions that come out of the research on the various barriers for e-learning can be applied in a design concept of a CMS (Content Management System) module, focused on e-learning.

### **User involvement**

Primary schools now a days work more and more together in an online environment.

The students and / or the teachers will be new to this CMS module and therefore their needs and wants are also important in the process. While working out a concept design for an e-learning CMS module, it is desirable to adopt user-centered design techniques to get the best results for the user.

### **Validation of the concept**

When the concept is realized it could be relevant to work out a user test. This will give more inside information on the results of all solutions that are applied in the e-learning module and the actual functionality while working with the module.

### **Create added value for Blender**

Together with Blender, it is needed to focus the CMS e-learning (or online cooperation module) on a target group that fits the needs and wants of Blender best. This target group might for example consist of pupils (primary school, secondary school) or teachers. One or two workshops together with the target group might also help Blender to continue positioning Blender as a company consistently working on additions on the CMS and actively involving their customers.

Furthermore the developed concept of a CMS module may be a great startup for future clients that are in need of a similar CMS with e-learning capabilities.