

Content Development for e-Learning at the National Defence University of Malaysia

Abstract

The National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM) is the youngest public university in Malaysia. Much is yet to be done at this unique university because since its inception, the use of information communication technologies has been amongst the priority areas to be addressed. This paper attempts to identify the challenges of content development for e-learning practice at the NDUM and to suggest ways to overcome the challenges. The methodology of this paper will mainly be content analysis of various reports, governmental documents and texts, as well as semi-structured interviews with lecturers and administrators who are directly involved with the development of e-learning.

Findings of this paper highlight three important challenges for content development for e-learning at the university. Based on these three challenges, two ways of overcoming the challenges are also discussed. The main implications of the findings of the paper are twofold. Firstly, the awareness level of academic staff about the importance of providing students with alternative or supporting tool for learning is very low. Although this is an old time issue, it is remarkable that retired military officers, who now serve as contract lecturers at the NDUM, do not 'appear' to understand the significance of training students with new technologies. Secondly, content development for military related courses is bound by security issues, and this has hindered the participation of 'real' people who understand the running of military institution, culture and life to contribute to content development for military related courses.

Although the university can always refer to the existing policies about security and confidentiality of learning and teaching materials, miscommunication and misleading of information will occur at one point or the other. Therefore, in an attempt to give students the exposure and experience to e-learning, the first step, which is to develop content, has alerted the university to the various crucial challenges to come.

Dr Jowati binti Juhary
Centre for Liberal and Language Studies, National Defence University of Malaysia
National Defence University of Malaysia

Themes: Information and Communication Technologies and the First Year Experience