

Setting up the Structure and Process for E-Content Development

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Dear Editor

I am writing to thank you for publishing the interesting article titled: “The effect of Social Networks and Short Messages through e-Content on Reducing Negative Thoughts in Women”(1). In this article the authors have first developed an e-content and then accomplished the intervention. In this regard I should mention that nowadays, using e-contents in different kinds of education including mobile-based or web-based, synchronous or asynchronous are the necessities in educational settings. It is a pleasure that Iranian universities are taking steps toward the use of technology in their educational research, but these steps should be wisely in line with standards and qualifications. One of the most important components of e-learning discipline is e-content because, on the one hand, without content no education is imagined (2), and on the other hand, inappropriate content can disturb audience learning (3). So, it is important that instructors, facilitators, instructional designers and others in the e-content development team know about two issues:

1- The structure of the team for e-content

development

2- The e-content development process

Both of these issues have been raised by e-content development unit in the virtual school of Shiraz University of Medical Sciences and I think it may be of concern to your readers.

1- The structure of the team for e-content development

First, the formation of the structure is important. The specified structure is provided below along with a description of the tasks and outputs of each step:

As the Table 1 shows, 9 different teams may be formed to produce electronic multimedia content. Although the individuals involved in these teams are not necessarily different, and sometimes a person may go through all the steps involved in producing a multimedia content on their own, it is best to use different fields of expertise in team formation to enhance the quality of the e-content.

2- The e-content development process

Figure 1 illustrates the process of producing a multimedia electronic lesson:

In the first phase of the content development

Table 1: e-Content development team structure

Team name	Team tasks	Team productions
Planning	Planning	Project plan
Text authoring	Writing the first draft and peer review	First draft
Text design	Producing educational chunks	Designed text
Multimedia	Production of each media	Different media based on chunks
Scenario	Compilation of the scenario	Scenario
Development	Execution	Primary educational material
Final evaluation	Review of educational material	Evaluated educational material
Metadata and storage	Metadata preparation and storage	Stored metadata and learning objects
Technical evaluation and presentation	Technical support and teaching material presentation	Final educational material

It should be noted that step by step evaluation is performed at the end of all stages



Figure 1: e-Content Development Process

process, the relevant unit supervisor selects the members, and they plan their work in a 4-hour meeting within a week at max. As the Figure 1 shows, after making the necessary examinations at the planning stage, the first draft of a multimedia lesson is formulated by the author or content expert. After drafting the text, the educational design expert reviews it based on the educational principles and standards, and makes the necessary changes. The two-way arrows in the figure indicate that there is a two-way communication between stages. For instance, at this stage, the educational designer of the text gives the author the necessary feedback, and the agreed text is transferred to the next stage, i.e. multimedia production. At the multimedia

stage, the media tailored to suit the nature and layout of the lesson are prepared. Typically, these media include audio, video, animation etc. After preparing the media, it is possible for the scenario writer to present a mix of these media resulting in the deepest learning in the audience.

Having the scenario, the lesson developer can produce the multimedia lesson using the appropriate software and then the evaluation of the lesson continues until the scenario writer finally approves it. Once the lesson is evaluated, the assets are ready for storage and metadata preparation. The multimedia lessons are also available in a variety of formats such as HTML, exe, and SCORM. To conclude, it is important that authors cite

the exact design and development process in the articles that introduce a form of e-content development in their methodology.

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Conflict of interest

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this letter.

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