

## **Annex 1**

### **Examples of e-initiatives in higher education**

1. Perhaps the most comprehensive e-development within the UK is Scottish Knowledge, set up by a group of Scottish universities and UK businesses to act as a commercial and global marketing partner. Its launch in early 1999 has been followed by the pragmatic development of materials, with opportunities for the partner universities and a marketing presence in key markets. It operates a model of modular programmes built from multi-source suppliers in order to provide tailor-made solutions to clients. This has some similarities with our proposals for the e-U.
  
2. Aiming at a different market, with a focus on the UK home market, is the University for Industry (Ufi) which is establishing the 'learndirect' information, advice and e-learning network through a series of locally supported hubs. Ufi is aimed at vocational skilling with a focus on particular skill areas (eg basic skills) and for particular industries. Most of these are further education level and are offered by host colleges and learning centres. This should therefore complement the e-U.
  
3. Another example with a UK base is Universitas 21 which has a network of 18 universities in 10 countries designed to pursue education agendas that would be beyond their individual capabilities. As an incorporated entity, Universitas 21 is able to build on the reputation and resources of its members and those of its corporate partners. The target market encompasses professional adult learners. The programmes will be aimed at graduates already in the workforce.
  
4. Unext, with its headquarters in the US, is working with a consortium of universities – including the London School of Economics and four prestigious US universities – to provide business courses through the newly formed Cardean University. It plans to use the Internet to create a learner-centric environment that is personalised and interactive. Unext works with academics to capture their knowledge in an on-line environment and has invested \$100m in course development before enrolling any students. Its market focus is on continuing education for working adults and for corporations, at least in part to protect the consortium members' current markets from encroachment by others in distance learning.
  
5. An interesting development is The Open University of Catalonia (UOC) based in Barcelona. Launched in 1996 to a pilot market aimed at one programme, it has grown to 20,000 students and 16 on-line courses, all completely virtual, at bachelor, master and doctorate levels. It covers Spain and the Spanish-speaking Americas and will soon also provide broader English language offerings globally. The UOC business model is a public private partnership operating with a network of spin-off businesses and joint ventures funded by a mix of state and private capital. It has invested significantly in a technology platform that it 'lends' to appropriate spin-offs for a fee. It uses 'virtual teachers' from universities in Spain and globally.

6. More recently the governments in Finland and Norway have launched similar initiatives, again with substantial capital and support from both state and industry. Each also has global aspirations. Recently the best selling MBA in Singapore was from Finland because of its innovative approach to e-learning.

7. NextEd is an education and training infrastructure company which partners with universities and others to deliver courses over the internet to the Asian market. It has e-learning technology platforms in six countries and provides education institutions with a technology infrastructure to support the delivery of accredited higher education content and professional training to adult learners. It also has agreements with universities in several countries outside Asia.

8. Fathom is an e-learning portal which makes consolidated provision from multiple sources by aggregating, hosting and distributing content. Working with its partners, which include the London School of Economics, Cambridge University Press and the British Library, it provides e-learning opportunities on a range of subjects for a diverse lifelong learner population. Tools and resources are overseen by an advisory board drawn from its partners. It also offers customers an immediate way to purchase books, journals, periodicals, and articles that are directly related to the subjects in which they are most interested.

9. On the corporate training front, Global Learning System is a web-based corporate training company which recently merged with the European Training Group (ETG) based in the Netherlands. ETG has 60 training locations in 15 countries providing multi-language modules in various formats to large global corporations using the internet and various new media, including video, CD-ROM, connected DVD, satellite and related access systems.

10. Pearson plc is an international media company based in the UK, that has undertaken a series of strategic alliances to invest in on-line education and extend its reach. Pearson Education is one of the largest providers of curriculum materials in print, electronic and on-line formats (in both school and higher education). It has plans to offer a full range of accredited courses in the US in partnership with a number of top business schools and professional bodies.

11. Pearson's on-line Learning Network is an initiative that consists of four integrated networks to serve four distinct learner markets, with revenues intended to be generated by subscriptions, sponsorship, advertising and product sales. The four networks will share common technology, infrastructure and marketing, and be supported by an on-line store, which will host e-commerce opportunities. It has separate networks for higher education, for professional development (focused on English language, IT and business) and for lifelong learning – as well as a fourth for schools.

12. Not surprisingly perhaps, the widest range of developments has been in the US where the 'value chain' in higher education is increasingly becoming disaggregated. This is opening the door for a whole range of new entrants to provide separate components of e-learning, and niche vendors are emerging in a variety of areas. The result is transforming the industry and altering the historical role of universities, both by creating opportunities for partnerships

and by producing additional competitive threats. Examples of disaggregation already operating include 'infomediaries' to inform the college selection process, on-line admission and applications, e-learning portals, supplemental content providers, on-line libraries, separated advising and tutoring, external assessment services, student activity/portal sites, on-line textbook distributors, e-learning platform companies, and campus-based portals.

13. Many colleges and universities in the US – and elsewhere – have already formed innovative partnerships with for-profit vendors in order to capitalise on the market opportunities which arise from the rapidly growing demand, but for which significant resources are needed to develop content. Some of these for-profit companies enable universities and colleges to produce and distribute courses.