

E-learning is here to stay

Interaction with Mr. Beas Dev Ralhan, CEO, Next Education India Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad

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Next Education aims to be quality education solution provider in the country. We are working closely with our network of 6000 schools to understand the challenge they perceive in the next few years and how technology/content based solutions can help them handle that, says Beas Dev Ralhan, Chief Executive Officer, Next Education.

What are the new trends in the digital education?

I am only qualified to speak about K-12 so please take my answers in that context only as trends for competitive exams and higher education might be different. Digital education adoption is happening at school as well as individual learner level. At the school level, we are observing that schools have adopted some sort of digital solutions over time but are now looking for integrated solutions across spectrum – labs, classroom and assessments. Furthermore, there is a lot more.

On the self-learning front, we believe that it is still nascent stage due to lot more school involvement of the child (typical student reaches home only at 2:30pm) and over reliance on neighborhood tuition center. However, trend here we are observing is desire to have proper evaluation of the child by parents to help him in specific areas. Therefore, I believe that new trend here will be personalized learning based on rocket science level evaluation state machine.

How important and significant is E-learning in the near future?

E-learning is here to stay. It is also picking up in tier-2 and tier-3 towns because educational content needs to be made much more lucid there because of lack of teaching facilities and quality teachers. The kids are also lapping up digital media there because all school-goers today irrespective of where they reside are much more visual thanks to creative cinema and TV.

E-learning tools today have interesting facilities like learning a language, especially, English through creative audio dialogue and animation. Such methods are very useful when students get set to crack tests like Toefl and Ielts later on in life.

We are at a very important crossroads in terms of education in India. The number of children enrolled in schools as of 2009 was about 227 million. The pupil-teacher ratio was estimated to

be 32:1. If you consider the RTE recommendation of 30:1, we are short by about 500,000 teachers.

Cost is a major deterrent, so how can E-learning be introduced in the rural India?

For a rural scenario, simple tools that don't require much of an infrastructure to install in schools can be offered. At Next Education, we are proud to say that we were first company in India to introduce world class digital solution at prices which were unimaginable in those days by building a solution which can be run in independent classrooms. In fact, majority of our customers are in rural and tier II cities.

What are the future plans of Next Education?

Next Education aims to be quality education solution provider in the country. We are working closely with our network of 6000 schools to understand the challenge they perceive in the next few years and how technology/content based solutions can help them handle that. As per our understanding, in the immediate future next step is to revolutionize the way we conduct our labs because labs is opportunity for personal learning/adaptation. Schools are keen to use that opportunity and we believe that technology has that answer.

According to you, how can quality and access to education can be improved in our education system?

Digital learning and digital learning tools are a good breakthrough in this regard. Every child must know the basics of handling a computer-system even if it in a remote village.

Of course, needless to say, we need better classrooms and basic infrastructure in villages. Only if children enjoy going to school and parents feel encouraged to send them to school will the turnout improve. In cities, access to education is not a problem and quality of education can be enhanced with regular teacher-training workshops.

Digital media is a major advantage to our education system. And the system by itself is good.

Source:

<http://studyworldonline.in/e-learning-is-here-to-stay/#more-6096>