

Increasing Educational Productivity

A combination of digital platform-based services and physical services will serve the need of a large majority of customers who are looking for professional skills, tells **Udai Singh**, Chief Strategy Officer, NIIT Ltd, to **Elets News Network (ENN)**

Use of technology has become an integral component of education. According to you, what are the challenges Indian higher education system is facing with regard to implementation of technology?

e-learning is not a new concept but is still developing. In the coming years, we are likely to witness dramatic changes in the space. Education industry today is battling several challenges like accessibility of quality education, expert teaching faculty etc. Even premier institutes like IITs and IIMs are faced with shortage of faculty. Therefore, technology in education should be used constructively and appropriately so that it has maximum impact. Technology *should* be used to resolve the challenges posed due to limited number of expert instructors.

The need of the hour is to embrace technology in education. If best institutes showcase their technology, it sets a trend for the rest to follow. This would require evolution in terms of pedagogy and education in design. The system has to evolve from teacher-centric to learner-centric with teachers becoming a part of the environment that fosters learning.

Online education can cover a wide spectrum of courses and curriculums from vocational courses, special skills training to degree courses and higher education courses. However, in a country where diplomas and degrees have greater importance than the actual knowledge or skill gained, a lack of accreditation and acceptance of online courses is an issue. With time, I think India will move towards a blended learning model.

NIIT is a blended player in the education space. We believe in a combination of digital platform-based

services and physical services at physical locations that will serve the need of a large majority of customers who are looking for professional skills.

With the help of technology, how can Higher Education Institutions play a pivotal role in imparting education to the public at large and serving the greater need of society?

We, at NIIT, believe that technology is becoming critical but pure technology delivery model can't deliver the results. So, you need the combination of technology and people-based delivery. In India, and other developing markets, technology can be a potent force multiplier that can dramatically increase the impact of other scarce resources such as expert instructors and physical learning infrastructure.

Recently, NIIT has launched a digital learning platform NIIT.tv, an Internet TV portal that can be accessed on a computer, tablet or smartphone anytime, anywhere. In the initial phase, over 20 skill-based training programmes in IT, banking and finance, retail and management were made available, which scaled up to more than 50 'live' as well as 'on-demand' courses.

'Access' to all & 'Quality' of education are the major fault lines in the education system in India. What role can technology play in bridging these fault lines?

The education space is evolving. Today, online learning opportunities and use of digital learning tools can help increase educational productivity by accelerating the rate of learning, reducing costs associated with instructional materials or programme delivery and better utilising teachers' time. Technology



Udai Singh
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can ensure access to quality education anytime, anywhere.

At NIIT, we have always used technology-enabled delivery models innovatively to impart quality education to our students. We launched Netvaristy.com, one of the first initiatives in terms of online learning as early as 1996. Synchronous Learning Technology used in NIIT Imperia is another such example. We have also pioneered the concept of Cloud Campus in India.

How technological transformations and innovative learning tools can change the education landscape in India in the coming decade?

Technology is enabling multimodal teaching, changing curricula and spawning rich forms of online research and collaboration. Online-collaboration tools, software that supports individually paced learning and learning-management systems are among the communication technologies most expected to improve academics over the next five years. ■