

3-G mobiles to help school learning

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Recent research suggests that most children spend more time ‘gaming’ than doing homework. So what if gaming were homework or at least ‘out of class work’?

A European-funded project at Manchester Metropolitan University aims to show how games and mobile technologies can be combined to give new learning experiences for schoolchildren, particularly in their own time.

The eMapps.com Project aims to support the design of games which teachers are willing to adopt for pedagogic purposes and to therefore contribute to new teaching methodologies through multimedia.

New generation

SMS, GPS, the Internet and the new generation of 3G mobile technologies will provide the tools for a new form of training using games that can be played at anytime or in any place.

Geoff Butters, a researcher in MMU’s Centre for Research in Library & Information Management (CERLIM) said: “Many of the skills valuable for successful game play, and recognised by both teachers and parents, are as yet only implicitly valued within a school and curriculum context.

“In future, learning will move increasingly from the classroom into the learner’s environments, both real and virtual.”

Learn through GPS

Schools across Europe, will develop learning games for 9-12-year-olds for use on handheld devices, piloting the idea first in history and geography, using Global Positioning System (GPS) technology.

The €2.8 million project is funded under the EC's Information Society Technologies 6th Framework Programme and concentrates initially on eight of the new member states – Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Hungary, Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

The project will deliver local training courses to teachers, provide a multi-lingual handbook for training and a web-based training platform.

Added Geoff: “On a cognitive level, play encourages the development of our concepts about the world. The challenge is to design new learning games where teachers set the theme and the player can then explore whatever permutations of that theme he or she desires.”

Source: Manchester Metropolitan University

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