Integrating e-simulations in teaching business information systems

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ABSTRACT

Students' early exposure to the fundamentals of business and information and communications technologies (ICT), creation of a professional skill base, as well as, gaining practical experience in applying this knowledge and skills, are the determinants of students' success in Information Systems (IS) study and their development as IS professionals. This chapter argues that e-simulations, or computer-based and online simulations, can be effectively used to engage learners in interactive learning activities and provide them with real world practical experience in the safety of an educational setting. A research project is subsequently described. A suite of e-simulations were developed and deployed across two institutions to support teaching and learning of Information Systems. Using staff discussions and online surveys, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from the staff and students. The collected data were then analysed to evaluate and guide a sequence of curriculum and technology changes with a view to arriving at an optimum support model for students and teachers using the e-simulations. The findings of the study emphasise the usefulness of e-simulations to accommodate the learning styles of Y generation students, to stimulate their interest and creative thinking, and in meeting industry expectations of IS graduates' ability to fulfil professional roles. Based on these insights, in its concluding remarks, the chapter outlines a conceptual framework for the inclusion of e-simulations in Information Systems curriculum development and teaching delivery.