

1st Press Release

A New Project much needed in the COVID times

i-CONTENT, is a new project funded by the ERASMUS+.

These days online courses/training have become extremely popular, due to coronavirus and social distancing. While more and more institutes and companies offer courses online, a vast group of VET institutes and trainers stay away from such methods, mostly due to the belief that online learning may not be as effective as classroom training, the infrastructure required to deliver online courses is costly, the transformation of course content into digital online interactive content is time consuming, there is a lack of skills in the organization to switch to online course delivery and so forth.

But the reality is that more and more learners taking up c-VET or i-VET, find a lot of advantages in online learning. They wish to take a course from the comfort of their office or home, at the time of their choosing, with the option to choose only topics that they need. As we are moving more and more towards a digital era, while globalization is an undisputed fact, VET SMEs (small-medium enterprises) could take advantage and could promote nonformal initial and continuous VET in the global market.

There are thousands of Open Source software and tools to choose from in order to create interactive content without the need of costly software, infrastructure or coding. Even so, converting course materials to online digital interactive courses can be time consuming since a trainer (who may also not be very ICT literate) needs to research for the right tools/software in a vast market of free or low cost open source software, evaluate them, master their usage and then transform the content into a digital interactive content. Moreover, in most cases, open source software are not well documented, you may find fragmented information on the internet on how to use them and a lot of trial and error is required until you figure out how they work. Additionally, it is common that not one tool can do the job. Many tools may be needed in order to achieve the desirable results. Not all tools can work together or be compatible. Testing is needed for compatibility issues and this can be extremely time consuming. Finally, converting course contents in an interactive digital online content may seem trivial, but it is not. There are rules to adhere to, in order to make the course appealing, easy to follow and interactive enough to deliver results. Also, enabling gamification on online courses can make the learning experience more appealing to learners.

Time and human resources can be considerably minimized if VET institutes and trainers have access to a complete framework for the development of interactive, gamified courses by using open source or low-cost plugins and software.

i-CONTENT aims to serve Trainers and VET providers (mainly SMEs) delivering non-formal initial and continuous VET courses who wish to transform the typical classroom led course delivery into an online interactive gamified learning experience (asynchronous and synchronous learning) allowing them to meet current market needs and enabling them to target the global market.

The partnership which includes partners from Poland (ITEE) , UK(RINOVA), Greece (BEE) , Italy (GRUPPO4) and Cyprus (EDITC) has started working on the first deliverable which aims to develop the i-CONTENT DESIGN guide which describes the process of designing an online course, specifically, how to setup the objectives and learning outcomes of the course, how to select what should and should not be included in the content, how to develop the course structure (modules, learning units etc), how to create a compelling and consistent design throughout the course how to put in place navigation rules so that students find it easy to follow and how to plan ahead in order to make the course interactive and playful enough to maintain learners' interest. In simple terms this guide will provide the knowledge on how to design the course content appealing to the learners and effective (delivering the learning outcomes) before proceeding to the development phase.

Learn more about the project at <http://icontent.projectsgallery.eu>