4th Press Release

How to translate a traditional course into an interactive online gamification experience?

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. Other perceived problems may include the cost of the infrastructure required to deliver online courses, the time needed to transform course content into digital online, the 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 of the situation and could promote non-formal initial and continuous VET in the global market.

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.

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 re search 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 de liver results. Also, enabling gamification on online courses can make the learning experience more appealing to learners.

If you want to create a course that is interactive, attractive, and engaging for users, but you don't know where to start, use the results of the i-CONTENT project (A Toolkit for Educators and VET providers for the design and development of online interactive gamified content), implemented under the Erasmus+ Programme. 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 following results have been developed in the project to support the creation of an interactive course based on gamification:

1. A Guide for the design phase of an interactive online Course

This guide 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 make the course interactive and playful enough to maintain their interest. In simple terms this guide provides the knowledge on how to design an appealing course content and effective (delivering the learning outcomes) before proceeding to the development phase.

2. A Toolkit for the creation of interactive content

A toolkit for creating interactive and SCORM content for an LMS/CMS platform (Learning Management Systems/ Content Management Systems) using a set of open source software, free ware and low cost software.

3. A Toolkit for the gamification of an online course

The i-CONTENT GAMIFICATION toolkit includes:

a) a selection of plugins for the purpose of gamifying online courses,

b) a set of comprehensive training guides on their usage,

c) links to download, and

d) examples or case studies how these plugins may be used in an LMS or CMS platform to achieve gamification.

4. i-CONTENT Online Course

The fourth output is an interactive online course that aims to teach the course creators how to design content, how to make it interactive and how to introduce gamification in online asynchronous learning. This course also serves as a demo where one can see the application of what is been described in the three preceding outputs. The course available in all partner languages (Greek, Italian, Polish and English).

5. i-CONTENT Platform

This platform is a one stop shop for trainers to gain skills for the development of online content. The platform provides access to IO1, IO2 and IO3, access to the online course, a Forum Section and a Frequently Asked Questions section. The purpose of this platform is to provide a single point of reference to trainers wishing to learn how to develop an online course; starting from the design of an online course, to converting it into interactive content (with or without SCORM), to gamifying the learning process.

We invite you to follow the project website (https://icontent.projectsgallery.eu/) and Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/icontenterasmus/), where you can find current information on the status of the project and the finished results.