The Values of Civic Education through Information Technology

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Abstract

Citizenship is closely related to the progressive steps of decision-making process for new education policies being applied in these last years. Once the attention was only focused in writing , reading , and arithmetic , as being enough for a fully educated citizen. Today the citizenship is happily coexisting and shaped by technology. Digital citizenship and democratic citizenship are closely related on the ways how this knowledge is mastered and practiced in order to make this relationship valuable. In order to clearly view citizenship education and digital democracy , first we must have a clear knowledge in the subjects. It has been heard for the implementation of new technologies in the classroom as part of European Union recommendations. This is important as citizens are educated with efficient knowledge in technologies but this is also a civic education as new digital technologies bring together participants and promotes a functioning democracy. In order for this to be fully achieved bias must be avoided and promotion of digital citizenship with its ethical values must be shown to a democratic society. In this way , a new sphere will be available to not only as a digital reality but as a fully comprehensive necessity in order to fully achieve democratic standards.

Keywords: policy , citizenship , digital democracy , civic education , digital technologies , democratic standards.

1. Introduction

In our everyday life, we hear words such as: digital communication, high technology, network access etc. This is due to the fact that the technology development has created an inseparable functional connection in every life sector. Every citizen is an active participant without his consciousness in the process of technology development. Different services offered in a natural way becomes part of our everyday life, starting from electronic games for children and continuing with programs that help in our learning, in fulfillment with the education policies and have a main role in the individual development. In this article I would separate the IT role in the field of education, government, business.

2. Aim

The impact of technology in the way of thinking and decision making for some of the main sectors in a democratic society.

3. Research Methodology

It was based in the study of existing base literature by picking out the experiences on the IT implementation in the national context. The practice analysis of implementing technology in the sectors of education, government, business.

4. Objectives

1. To describe the actual situation about the influence that technology has in a democratic society.
2. To appreciate the aspects of implementing technology in the sectors of education, government, business. To highlight some of the main technologies implemented in the above sectors.

5. The Attempts to Introduce and Implement Technology in the Teaching Process

The one which has the privilege to feel the impact of e-technologies is education. This is obvious as thanks to education and the knowledge it spreads thanks to education now we have all these technological developments, so education sector is the root of all changes. As technology advances, so do the sophisticated learning technologies. In order to fully accommodate and implement the technological development, sometimes the education sector needs to be a step ahead with its policies and infrastructure. Education policies aim the implementation of technologies, but in the practice aspect of the implementation of education programs the achievements are not satisfactory.

Universities have been in the market for so long but only now they are paying more attention to find the answer to the question on "How to be more coherent and fulfill the standards?". The partial answer that helps in these cases is: implementing the latest technology.

The first tentative goes back in 2000`s when distance learning it was first introduced. But it is not a wide teaching practice. In those years the concept of e-teaching was too innovative to be fully implemented and operable. This type of education could have made possible high education for every one interested in quality learning and would democratize the university as a knowledge institution. May be the fear was big as the idea of classic education scheme would degraded with the implementation of distance education scheme which was inherited from western countries but even the standards it required should have been part of long term education strategies (Carr-Chellman, 2006)(Carr-Chellman, 2006).

Education strategies have as priority the investment in web based technology in order to fulfill the standards. The government itself is now investing more money than ever in collaboration with Google in order to make people more consent about technology and motivating all the interested people to better implement technology in every education aspect. The contract with Microsoft which still continues not only for buying genuine Microsoft products but even with training the middle school teachers with some software for making the teaching process more interactive. But there is a big gap here. The certification of teachers still does not mean that the teaching process will be fully interactive.

Still some universities have understood the importance of technology and have started implementing it before government imposed it. To be mentioned is the case of UNIEL with the EMS system and UNYT with EGNOMON, EPOKA University with its own e-system. Even though this technology is just seeing the grades online and managing the professors work still e-learning is far away compared this with the development that this technology has.

6. Processing the Data

Technology does not only bring difficulty into writing the right it policy, but even it may be time consuming for understanding its data due to the large data amount its systems generate. Even here, technology makes it easy thanks to "Educational Data Mining". This discipline is in its emerging days but still helps with the development of methods for understanding the data types needed to understand students since 2004.

This new discipline encapsulates the best knowledge from Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (Shimura & Sison, 1998) (Shimura & Sison, 1998). The interactivity involves 4 steps:
1. Collect data. Interaction information is stored in the database of the LMS.
2. Preprocess the data. The data is transformed into an appropriate format.
3. Apply data mining. The data mining algorithms are applied to create and execute the model that discovers the knowledge and patterns of interest. In order to achieve this goal a data mining tool can be used.
4. Interpret, evaluate and deploy the results. The model obtained is interpreted and used by the educator for further analyses. The educator can use the information discovered to make decisions about e-leaning system and process (Romero & Ventura, 2007).

There are many open source tool that help teachers finding new patterns and extracting information from the served data. Here it can be mentioned softs such as: DBMiner, IBM SPSS Modeler (former SPSS Clementine), DB2 and Intelligent Miner.

7. E-government

E-government is gaining field as similar services offered in other countries are popular and successful. Citizens use these services and feel comfortable. In difference from ICT sector which suffers from inherited problems, e-government services are experiencing their best days.

A closer step towards Europe is made through e-technologies, but the real work towards fulfilling this target started in the last decade. It was 2007 when Microsoft and Albanian government signed a contract to purchase genuine software and pc for schools, 2014 when a new contract was signed with Google.

E-government is not just a goal towards European standards but it is a new frontier for Albanian citizens, a new democratic way of seeing how laws and government work are made. It all starts as a simple web page where the navigation through institutions and agencies is categorized. This initiative has brought the National Agency of Information and the Ministry for Innovation in close relation. This successful collaboration was adopted even by the Ministry of Defense with their new system of e-services not only this Ministry but even others are starting to invest in e-services. As many public sectors apply new technology, the information society and digital integration can be explained with real actions and not only as just simple words. Not only the institutions which apply this technology, profits from this but even the society, international community, different type of organizations; as are these lasts that organize training courses for interested people and other necessary investment for the infrastructure. So, we can say that there is a useful system of values which serves to a democratic society which makes it transparent and monitored.

8. Changing the laws

This technological developed in such a very short time, for Albania means that the legislation was unprepared and international assistance from foreign western countries was needed. We can mention some of these:
  ➢ The compilation of a legal framework against cybernetic crime (Penal Code)
  ➢ The establishment of the office of the Commissioner for Data Protection
  ➢ New "Law on Personal Data Protection" (No. 9887, date 10. 03. 2008), was adopted in conformity with 95/46/EC directive;
  ➢ "Law on Electronic Signature" (No. 9880, date 25.02.2008) was adopted in conformity with EU experiences(99/93/EC directive); (Website of Constitutional Court).

All these law enforcements are weak since there are other actors that contrast this technological development. The weakness for these e-systems continues with security bugs and information not being fully secured or the interaction not being properly encrypted. This is one of the other bad outputs of the bad technical infrastructure and that there is much work to do on how institutions share and utilize their infrastructure. As there is more work needed for the marketing sector in order for the population to be concerned about the existence of these e-services, as these kinds of e-services are less visited than other commercial sites. There is the case where a website publishes the legal acts better than the official web pages related to law. If there exist a legal contract between courts and the company or the company makes use of their service, there does not exist any publication about it. From this we can deduce that there is information leak. Staying to this, most ICT programs such as e-government in developing countries fail with 35% - 50% being classified as total failures (Dada, 2006). Most e-Government-for-Development Projects Fail: "How Can Risks be Reduced?".

From the many workshops and recommendations, it is clear that technology and government together can improve service delivery, increase transparency, decrease corruption, and offer a wide democratic participation and less bureaucratic procedures. Thanks to e-services the citizen can be part of an e-interaction by e-mailing, calling the government office or get the documents with a matter of click, as known as one stop shop.

9. E-business and EU directives

Business is the sector that changes every day thanks to the informative technology.

Thanks to a connected network and technology, business applyes their benefitts creatively in oder to be more present in the social development and not only. Still there are no information how much money this type of techonoly generates in Albania.

E-business thanks to technology is easily accesible and can be monitored. E-business and law collaborate together in order to make this happen. The years 2008-2009 were important for IT as the law on e-commerce and on electronic signature were approved. (Website of Constitutional Court).

Some directives from EU imposed the Albanian government to make new laws. The approval of these laws completes the legal framework and satisfies the engagements undertaken in "The stabilization and Association Agreement" (SAA). This law is in full conformity to the Constitution, to the provisions assigned in Acquis Communitaire and especially to the Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Union "Concerning the services of Information Society" (or commonly known as the Directive on e-commerce). The e-commerce law aims to establish a legal framework in the inner

market for e-commerce, a framework which guarantees a legal security for the business and consumer. These changes are generated as part of the process into being part of EU.

A sucesful collaboration among the Government of Albania, USAID, Albanian-American Development Foundation, Microsoft, Cisco, Albetelecom is the creation of an organization such as Protik. Many activities have been organised there such as start ups. Engaging the youth towards the programming of a better product that has the community as its focus makes it a competition to bring out the best from our youth. People involved there create a working environment and they get their benefits from their apps.

This new culture needs to be in coherence with the growth of the education level and needs to become an everyday culture for the Albanian society reality. Education needs to be in coherence with technology as the students that are prepared need to have a vision beyond their knowledge. It is needed to teach to our youth how to be creative and to give out their best in a competitive market. Society need to respond to the technological developments.

10. Conclusions

Today, one of the priorities for the educational policies is the implementation and development of information technologies which will help developing a democratic society. We can mention some of the conclusions of the study :

1. The development of information technology will bring innovation in the teaching and learning process.
2. There is a high demand of infrastructure capacities for implementing information technology in the education area.
3. Technological innovations develop at the same time different social sectors and human resources in order for fully implementing this technology.
4. A coherent development needs an inclusive education.

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