# Current trends in digital learning technology

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to the physical classroom. Google Classroom, Google Meet, Canvas, Schoology etc are some of the platforms where instructors and educators can upload their lectures, enhanced with audio and video supplements- and students can make use of them in their own scheduled time. This kind of learning can also be combined with a Learning Management System(LMS) to yield the best outcome. A learning management system allows an educator to keep track of the curriculum covered, students' progress, grading etc. In fine, no aspect of physical learning including attending lectures, reviewing materials, practising for exams, attending tests- need to be left out in case of virtual learning. On the other hand, it takes into account the varying circumstances of both the student and the teacher and enables the learning process to be far more flexible, relaxed, interesting and accessible.

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**OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**

As it has become increasingly easier to have an online presence, educators worldwide have created a massive ocean of Open Educational Resources (OER). There's now high quality, top-notch educational content on the internet on any topic imaginable. There is no discipline of education for which professional resources cannot be found on the internet. This has become possible thanks to high speed, instantly accessible internet becoming a permanent fixture in our modern lives. These open resources are free to use, distribute, share and usually download. Some of the biggest OER students and educators should be aware of are Lumen Learning, Merlot, OER Commons, Open Learning Initiative, Khan Academy etc. As a forerunner of the Open Educational Resource movement, MIT OpenCourseWare still stands as one of the most prized resources for learning for students all across the globe.

Plenty of textbooks are available at sites such as College Open Textbooks, MIT Open Courseware Online Textbooks, OpenStax CNX etc. Apart from formally structured educational programs, a wide-ranging mix of topics can be learned through sources like PBS Learning Media, Ted-Ed, Big History Project, Smithsonian Learning Lab etc.

**OPEN ONLINE COURSES**

There are now websites specializing in offering open online courses. Some of these sites offer certification at the completion of a course. Not all these courses are entirely free but they still present an invaluable repository of knowledge. Some of the best websites offering professional educational courses on a vast array of topics include Coursera, Udemy, Udacity, EDX, LinkedIn Learning, Open Culture, Academic Earth, Open Yale Courses, Stanford University Open Courses etc.

**IMMERSIVE LEARNING, VIRTUAL REALITY AND AUGMENTED REALITY**

According to EdWeek's Market Brief, by 2021 over 70 million students worldwide will experience a newer form of learning with the intervention of virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR). VR constructs and models a scenario for students to be immersed in while AR enhances an existing image or some other educational resource. Through immersive learning using VR and AR, students can participate in the rising trend of experiential learning. Immersive learning clarifies complex topics that cannot be easily explained through theory alone. For example, for medical students, VR creates an experience where the learner can travel through the patient's body to study the intricate details. Immersive learning takes the experience of learning to a newer, far more enjoyable level and is sure to make its permanent mark in the advancement of tech trends in learning.

ILLUSTRATION: **SHAHRIAR RAHMAN**

**GAMIFICATION**

Gamification is the development of learning systems in the guise of gaming. Learning is far more enjoyable when the pressure and anxiety associated with earning a grade are taken away. Up to now, gamification of learning is mostly associated with the K-12 learning sector. But with the arrival of super-sophisticated technology that serves to blend higher education topics with a gaming environment, gamification can no longer be dismissed as a frivolous experiment. In the EdTech industry, gamification is now attracting massive funding and constant research is being conducted as to how gamification can practically affect the learning experience of all ages and levels. Duolingo, Brainscape, Virtonomics are some of the widely used instances of gamification in education.

**ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

As the poster child and torch-bearer of the unstoppable technological march, AI is not left out of the education sector. AI is now extensively used to carve out a suitable curriculum for learners of all levels and disciplines, to study the patterns of failure and come up with solutions to key problems, to model and create courses according to the specific needs of the learner. AI is being integrated into all the traditional educational technologies to enhance their abilities. It plays a vital role in adaptive learning and anticipates the difficulties that both students and teachers may face in the coming days and constantly works to provide practical, enduring solutions.

EdTech as an industry is still just scratching the surface. As we become more aware of how we want to educate ourselves and come to terms with the new perceptions surrounding education, technology will surely take us by the hand and lead us towards the desired direction.

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