



EDUCATION AND CULTURE

LEONARDO DA VINCI

Second phase:2000-2006

Project: «Title»

(www.nettskolen.com/in_english/megatrends)

Encuesta para casos de estudio del proyecto Megatrends

Facts about the institution

Name of institution	ÉLOGOS
URL of institution	www.elogos.es
Country	Spain
Levels in the education system	Professional, vocational, lifelong training and learning
Interviewer	Pedro Fernández Michels
Interviewees	Alfonso Alvarado Planas. 91 405 04 06 alfonso.alvarado@elogos.es Vega Pérez-Chirinos Churruca. 91 590 10 30 vega.perez@elogos.es

Contextual factors

Market size

For the Spanish national context it can be said that the total population of Spain is 40 million. Spanish is the common language in all 17 autonomous regions. Three of these regions have an own language which has official status within the region.

Due to the characteristics of the business segment covered by ÉLOGOS it is of special interest to highlight the Spanish market regarding outsourced e-learning activities.

The following figures give a rough description:

Private companies: outsourced market 560 millions of € * 11% e-learning = 62 millions of €

Public administration: outsourced market 158 millions of € * 7 % e-learning = 11 millions of €

Social sector: outsourced market 500 millions of € * 12% e-learning= 60 millions of €

Other public administration programmes alongside social agents ("Forintel", a National support program for training in telecommunication technologies within the ESF (European Social Fund): = 10 millions of €.

TOTAL: 143 millions of € en 2006

ÉLOGOS covers about 20% of this market.

Market readiness to use online technologies

ICTs have not yet reached a satisfactory degree of diffusion in Spain, despite recent progress. Internet penetration among households is low compared to the other EU members. One important reason are the high prices for Internet connections. Broadband diffusion, however, has been comparatively fast in the last three years, in particular in the more developed and urban parts of the country such as Catalonia.



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In the last years, the technical equipment in companies, public administration and private users has improved considerably, so that the infrastructures in the field of ICT are no longer an impediment for the development of e-learning, despite some exceptions.

The country has a low score on the Digital Divide Index, which means that disparities in access to and use of the Internet between sub-segments of the population (genders, age groups, socio-economic groups) are considerably bigger in Spain than in most of the EU25.

Target group acceptance of e-learning

The acceptance of e-learning within companies and the public sector can be considered relatively high so that the advantages of virtual teaching and training no longer have to be proved beforehand.

As indicated by Eurostat, in 2003 Spain maintained a high number of enterprises connected to the Internet (85%), the same as the average for the most technologically advanced, old member States.

The eLearning market is evolving rapidly: 95% of large companies in Spain have at least some eLearning strategy, and two thirds of them already implement a training scheme, even if it only involves traditional training delivery methods. However, it has been noted that the more companies become committed in training of their staff, the more they choose blended eLearning solutions.¹

Digital literacy in population

It can be assumed that digital literacy in the target group is relatively high. However the percentage of the total number of Spanish people aged 16 to 74 that do not use the computer or the Internet is slightly higher than the same figure for the UE-25.²

National policy

Neither the central government nor the regional administrations are carrying out a specific policy in order to promoting e-learning. The projects that are being undertaken are more generic and only have an indirect effect on the development of e-learning.

¹ www.euser-eu.org

² DEMUNTER, Christophe (2006): "How skilled are Europeans in using computers and the Internet?" [Online article]. In: *Statistics on focus. Industry, trade and services 17/2006*. (Data retrieved on 30/10/2006). URL: http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NP-06-017/EN/KS-NP-06-017-EN.PDF



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“Following the e-learning initiative launched by the European Union in 2000, the Spanish government has developed a set of policies and initiatives to promote eLearning. The main points of this policy are:

- providing all schools with the equipment and facilities for accessing ICT;
- developing Internet courses and training;
- setting up an observatory and laboratory concerned with the educational applications of ICT, thereby supporting innovation and development in such applications;
- strengthening cooperation between Latin America and Europe in the area of ICT in education.

Moreover, several plans and projects are dedicated to eLearning for vocational purposes. These are supported by the Spanish Government through the European Social Fund, and through FORCEM (Continuing Training Foundation). It is indicative of the situation that 30% of all training plans presented in 2002 were related to eLearning. Moreover, the Ministry of Industry Tourism and Commerce has created FORINTEL, a program to promote the use of ICTs in enterprises, which offers eLearning courses. Currently, the Spanish government has launched the Plan España.es for the period 2004-05. One of the action points of the Plan is the promotion of accessibility to training and digital content.”³

Historical context

1. How would you describe the history of distance education in your institution?

ÉLOGOS entered the field of distance education over 15 years ago. From the beginning it has always been the state of the art and it succeeded in keeping its position of a leading company in Spain.

2. How has competence in e-learning developed in your institution and how has it contributed to your success?

ELOGOS has evolved according to the market, starting with interactive videodiscs and CBT applications. Finally the company developed online solutions on an own platform, customized content development and the most advanced processes of service delivery.

³ www.euser-eu.org



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3. Has this development been abrupt or would you describe it more as a gradual step-by-step process)?

E-Learning has been developed gradually undertaking continuing investments in innovation that have grown year after year, while the demand became more mature.

ÉLOGOS avoided making strong investments in the first part of this decade when the market was still very incipient.

4. How has online education been followed up by evaluation and research and how has this contributed to your success?

E-Learning has always been a decisive element of our program and we are considered the leading firm in the main companies and institutions of the country.

Technical issues

5. How would you describe competence in information and communication technology in your institution?

The company has solid experience in the use of technology. In addition, ALCATEL, one of the former owners of the company was simultaneously one of the main clients which made it necessary to have a large number of expert consultants in ICT at disposal. This has undoubtedly contributed to define the technological profile of the internal team of consultants.

In this sense it is day to day practice to use technology in projects and teams that deliver training and consultancy services to the clients.

6. To which extent are e-learning courses in your institution based on widely used technologies that can be taken into use by students without requiring them to buy additional hardware or software? (in addition to what they have from before)

The tools and applications developed by ÉLOGOS itself and the ones ordered from third parties have to fulfil certain requirements regarding usability, compliance with the market standards and easy handling.

Clients and students can access the company's courses and platforms using standard browsers. Also, the contents designed for clients follow the SCORM standard in order to be able to incorporate them into SCORM compliant platforms.



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- 7. How would you describe the integration between different IT-systems that are involved in e-learning in your institution? How has this contributed to your success?**

Due to the ability and competence of the company's team in the field of technology, the possible problems derived from processes of integration of contents and applications in different environments that might even be incompatible are usually solved efficiently and to full satisfaction of the clients.

- 8. What are the strengths and weaknesses of your e-learning administrative systems (from enrolment through delivery to certification)?**

The administrative systems have evolved, based on the company's own developments, focussing on the client's needs (access to administration, data-tracking, new functions...) on one hand, and covering the needs of improvement in the business processes, optimizing the activity chain on the other hand. The latter produced an improvement in the processes of student contact, enrolment and data capture, programming, monitoring processes and tutoring, reporting, notifying and evaluation of students' progress, quality control of the training process, emission of diplomas and certificates etc. The current result is an efficient system that provides information and support to the administrative side of the training and allows guaranteeing the efficiency of the training cycle with an optimized use of resources.

Courses

- 9. Which types of subjects are covered by online education in your institution and what is the relative importance of different subjects?**

The training fields covered by ÉLOGOS are:

- Soft Skills: Interpersonal communication and presentations, leadership, teamwork, personal efficiency and productivity ...
- Sales Skills: sales techniques and commercial negotiation, client services and winning over the client, commercial management and accounts management ...
- Business Management Skills: Project management, marketing, finances, quality ...



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- Information and Communication Technologies: Programming languages, software engineering, systems and webs, IP technologies and mobiles...
- Computer technology in the office: Operative systems, office programmes and e-mail.
- Languages: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish..

Although every single area has its specific weigh, the management skills, the commercial field and the languages tend to be especially important.

10. How would you describe the “onlineability” of the subjects your institution has chosen for e-learning?

Depending on the subject, ÉLOGOS chooses the most adequate tools and environments for teaching and learning. Certainly there are subjects that are more difficult to handle in a totally virtual environment, whereas others can be taught especially well with ICT. ÉLOGOS works with a range of different scenarios that include blended learning, distance learning, distance learning based on materials delivered on CD-Rom and others.

11. Do the online courses provided by your institution have flexible start-up and progression?

Yes, always.

12. What is the role or importance of synchronous and asynchronous communication between students and teachers and among students themselves?

We use both communication channels in all our programmes. Communication takes place via e-mail and forums as well as through programmed events that are carried out in a chat-like environment.

Management, strategy and attitudes

13. How would you describe involvement from the institution leadership in terms of being supportive, and how has this been important for success?



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The company leaders have clearly supported the idea of using technology in training processes. This has been vital for the success of the company's strategy.

- 14. How would you describe the attitudes of the different groups of staff towards online teaching? How has this affected your success?**

There is a wide consensus regarding the growing importance of online education for the success of our company. Nevertheless, ÉLOGOS does not see technology as an objective in itself, but as a medium in order to achieve improvements in the learning processes, in the administration of these processes, in the teaching methods and in the final results.

- 15. Does your institution have a strategy for online education? If yes, what is (briefly) the content of the strategy and how is it followed up by employees in your organisation?**

Online training stands as an additional channel that provides important advantages regarding the problems an organisation might have to face. Therefore the consultant businesses that are able to integrate the necessary contents in an adequate way in order to offer the services the clients ask for, will place itself in a privileged position.

- 16. How does your institution deal with quality issues related to online education and has quality contributed to success?**

We obtained the ISO-2000 certification in 2001 regarding all of our internal processes and external services. This shows that our quality policy is not only based on the permanent evaluation of the courses run by ÉLOGOS, but also on the guaranteed quality of our processes

- 17. How would you describe the effectiveness of your administrative routines in online education?**

Although there are always reasons to improve which we try to identify permanently, effectiveness in the administrative routines can be described as very high.



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18. To which extent do teachers involved in online education have predictable and manageable workloads?

Our experience in the development of online contents and in the development and the authorization of online plans allows us to estimate in a relatively precise way the probable workload of each of our contracted projects, so that we can adequately plan the necessary implication of the consultants involved.

19. To which extent does your institution collaborate with other educational institutions and how has this affected success?

The recent fusion between FYCSA and GRUPO DOXA is one of the most visible consequences of collaboration between institutions. In addition we cooperate with other institutions of the field through the "Circulo de Consultoras" and with other educational institutions like the BRITISH COUNCIL.

20. How would you describe the credibility of your institution (both formal and informal) with the government and public administration and how has this been an important criterion for success?

Our experience and curriculum vouches for us and facilitates the company's credibility with the public administration, which in many cases has shown its confidence by asking for our services (AENA [public company that manages the country's airports] , CORREOS [postal service], Comunidad de Madrid, local entities and councils all over Spain).

21. How are you able to handle the large number of online courses and students?

Key factors are very powerful management skills and competencies and the possibilities offered by the use of technology for automatic and optimized business processes.



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Economy

- 22. How would you describe the cost-effectiveness of online education in your institution? How has cost-effectiveness affected success?**

The cost effectiveness in ÉLOGOS' online education is very high. Our administrative systems are highly optimized which allows us to use important economies of scale due to the big investments undertaken during the last years. As a consequence, we obtain high effectiveness thanks to controlled costs.

- 23. To which extent is income from operation of online education stable and predictable?**

This depends on the ability of each organisation to generate contracts and capture students (demand). And it depends on many other factors, some of which are not controlled by the organisation itself (economic situation, rules and regulations...).

- 24. To which extent does your institution experience pressure to be flexible to be able to adapt to a changing market?**

ÉLOGOS is a private company and does not have any other sources of income apart from its clients. It is, therefore, subject to the pressure of the competitors on the market, which is enormous and forces to constant innovations and the adjustment of the offered solutions according to the evolutions of the market.

- 25. To which extent does your institution apply a strategy of flexible employment and use staff to adapt to changes in markets?**

Partly in those activities that are easy to externalize, that have a low added value and that have very little or none impact on the client.



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Other Factors

- 26. What other factors have contributed to sustainability, robustness and the achievement of critical mass in your institution?**

The right configuration of the strategy, the experienced team and the important amount of knowledge and technology gathered in the past years.

Additional information about the development of ELOGOS and the projects carried out by the company

ÉLOGOS is the result of the fusion between FYCSA and the DOXA-group. It can look on over 20 years of presence in the field of consultancy and training in institutions and companies aimed at managers, engineers, postgraduates etc.

ÉLOGOS combines the most innovative methods and technologies in the solutions it offers.

It is also important to mention that the company put much effort in research and development of new training technologies and it can be considered a pioneer in computer assisted teaching and teaching through interactive video.

Already in 1990 the company was approached by the National Employment Office (INEM) in order to design, produce and manage the institutions distance training programme about The Management of Small and Medium Companies. Using the advantages of computer assisted teaching and the tools for online tutoring, ÉLOGOS established a personalized and flexible teaching and learning system for the required disciplines (finances, marketing, tax-laws etc.) of about 4000 participants over a period of two years.

In 1992, ÉLOGOS took part in the project "500 años después" ("500 years later"). This was directed by the "Sociedad Estatal del Quinto Centenario" (State Society for the Fifth Century) and consisted in computer controlled multimedia stations that provided, on CD-I, information in different languages about five centuries of Ibero-American, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish history. This order was given to ÉLOGOS after having developed a prototype for an interactive videodisc (CD-I).



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In the first half of the nineties ÉLOGOS also carried out the project "LETRA", which was part of the ATENEA-program of the Ministry of Education. In this case, the advantages of the CD-Rom were widely exploited. Its educative content concentrated on Spanish and Latin-American literature of the 20th century and the information was offered in a hypermedia structure.

Later ÉLOGOS developed new multimedia systems for distance education aimed at computer engineers, computing service specialists and specialists in auto-edition (MILTINEM-Project, 1994).

Another milestone in the companies services in distance education was the Distance Education Project for the "Federación Española de Hostelería" that reached over 5000 professionals of the Spanish Hotel business and the gastronomic sector. ÉLOGOS developed extensive multimedia based training material that covered different aspects of the sector's management (marketing, quality, accountancy, nutrition, equipments etc.). ÉLOGOS also delivered the correspondent tutoring and monitoring services.

ÉLOGOS has traditionally taken part in European R+D projects, particularly in projects that belonged to European programmes for the research and development of training technologies. Since the company participated as a coordinator in the Latin Project of the COMETT program, its consultants have cooperated in many more programmes like IMPACT, RACE, DELTA, EuroPACE, ADAPT, NOW, YOUTHSTART, LEONARDO and EUROTECNET.

At the beginning of the current decade, ÉLOGOS concentrates firmly on e-learning developing innovative solutions that lead to the strong growth the company is having this year (60% above the sales in 2005, a trend that is going to continue in 2007).

It has been a constant policy to incorporate the most recent technologies in the projects dedicated to the company's clients. This policy seeks constant innovation, which is reflected in a large number of students and of training hours

The concrete figures are:

- Over 80.000 students trained by ÉLOGOS each year.
- More than 200 titles in online content repository.
- Over 6 millions of student hours a year.



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- About 180 active training portals for the company's clients.

One of its main achievements has probably been to be able to integrate the acquired know-how in the process of development of people and organizations using technology in order to reach a maximum of efficiency and applying scaled economies for the training.

Another key factor has been the gradual development of e-learning within the organisation undertaking continuing investments in innovation that have grown year after year, while the demand became more mature.

ÉLOGOS avoided making strong investments in the first part of this decade when the market was still very incipient. Instead, the company decided to collaborate with multinational partners like NETg or Auralog that offered very competitive products.

In the case of emergent markets like the field of e-learning it is very important to know the sector's state of the art in Spain and in other, more developed countries like the US in order to recognize trends and avoid making the usual mistakes. This is a rule that every company should follow when it tries to enter an emergent market sector.