



IGNOU-CEMCA Training Workshop on EasyNow Open source ICT Tools

**July 5-9, 2010
IGNOU, New Delhi**

A Brief Report

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1. Conceptual Framework of the Training Workshop

Introduction

New developments are emerging continually in the realm of distance education. The teaching-learning process is going through tremendous change. CEMCA has developed a set of tools to provide easy and cost effective means of development of quality instructional materials. It has been involved in the training of teachers in the development of quality instructional material. Capacity building of IGNOU faculty for using innovative ICT tools is one of the major activities of NCIDE. In keeping with this objective, NCIDE organized a five days workshop in collaboration with CEMCA to train the IGNOU faculty on the design and development of audio/video instructional material. The workshop was aimed at training the participants on EasyNow which is a select set of easily available open source ICT tools that can be used to produce quality materials for open and distance learning and make them available on the World Wide Web.

Objectives

The main objectives of the workshop were to:

- generate awareness about the potential use of the EasyNow – a select set of open source ICT tools.
- enhance the ICT skills of the faculty to use the easily available open source software for creating multimedia digital content
- enable them to upload the digital material online in the required format.
- prepare multimode digital content encompassing digital text, audio streaming and video streaming, slide streaming etc. Such prepared digital content can then be delivered in multiple mode both online and offline.

Format of the Training Workshop



IGNOU-CEMCA Collaborative Training Workshop

The workshop was organized for five days from 5-9th July, 2010. The workshop was divided into four sessions per day. The five days workshop had sessions on EasyNow, a select set of latest ICT tools aimed at facilitating the IGNOU faculty to develop innovative and quality

instructional materials for web based learning. The workshop had theoretical as well as practical hands-on sessions where the participants practiced developing the multimedia digital instructional content for multiple delivery modes.

2. Proceedings of the Training Workshop

The five days training Workshop on Easynow Open source ICT tools was organised from 5-9 July, 2010 at IUC Lab, IGNOU. In this workshop about 23 faculty members from different schools and centres of IGNOU participated.



The Opening Session

Mr. V. Krishnamoorthy, Consultant, CEMCA was the key resource person. Dr. Pema Eden Samdup, Programme Officer, CEMCA, Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit, Deputy Director, NCIDE, and Dr. Moumita Das, Assistant Director, NCIDE facilitated the participants. Ms. Sujata Santosh, Assistant Director, NCIDE coordinated the workshop.



Mr. V. Krishnamoorthy, CEMCA taking Workshop Session

The participants were divided into five groups. Each group of participants developed a package of instructional material integrating the use of text, audio and video tools. This material can then be easily uploaded on any website.



IGNOU-CEMCA Collaborative Training Workshop

ICT Tools Covered

EasyNow is a select set of easily available open source ICT tools that integrates use of multiple media like text, audio and video tools. It allows for inexpensive production and quick upload by developers. It can be easily learned by the content developers to produce quality materials suitable for open and distance learning. Various tools covered in the workshop are:

- i. **OpenOffice:** OpenOffice is an open-source software application suite available for a number of different computer operating systems. OpenOffice writer is a word processor that can be used for anything from writing a quick letter to producing an entire book.
- ii. **Audacity and Lame:** Audacity is a free cross platform digital audio editor. It is used for recording and editing audio. Audacity requires lame software to convert audio files to mp3 format.
- iii. **CDex:** CDex is an open source CD ripper for Windows with a range of features like jitter correction, normalization, retrieval of song titles etc. It helps to convert CD audio into several formats including WAV, MP3 (using the LAME encoder), VQF, APE, etc.
- iv. **TextAloud:** TextAloud is a Text to Speech software that converts text from MS Word Documents, Emails, Web Pages and PDF Files into natural-sounding speech. It converts **text** into voice and even to MP3.
- v. **AT&T demo:** This is an online tool that can convert around 300 characters of the text to speech at one time.
- vi. **Any Video Converter:** Any Video Converter is a freely available video converter for converting video files between various formats, with fast converting speed and excellent video quality.

Textual Materials

- Tools: Text editor/Notepad, Open Office Writer
- Creating HTML documents
- Creating PDF documents

- Writing Codes for Magnification of pages (as a support to visually impaired)

Audio Materials

- Tools: Audacity and Lame
- Text Aloud: a text to speech software
- Preparing and editing audio files using audacity
- Conversion of audio files to different formats

Video Materials

- Tools: Open office, Windows Movie Maker, Any Video Converter
- Preparing and editing streaming slideshows/ videos
- Preparation, splitting and conversion of enriched videos

3. Outcomes, Feedback and Further Plan of Action

Outcome

The participants learned to install and use the various open source tools. They learned to create instructional material in textual, audio and video formats. The enriched multimedia instructional material package thus developed could then be delivered through CD or web-based mode to the students. The participants also learnt how to create web pages using HTML. The material thus created was uploaded on the web.



Dr. S. Sreedhar, Director CEMCA interacting with the participants

Feedback

The following feedback was received from the participants:

1. The workshop was found to be useful in enhancing the ICT skills of the participants.
2. Follow up workshops should be held to practice the tools covered in this workshop.
3. NCIDE should conduct such workshops in future also. These workshops should focus on training of ICT tools which are useful for imparting instructional to the ODL learners.

4. The participants asked for more guided hands-on sessions of longer duration.
5. The participants asked for follow up workshops to learn to develop multimedia rich instructional material.

To facilitate the follow up of the workshop and to provide a platform for post workshop interaction among the participants, NCIDE showcased the Virtual Training Lounge (VTL). The VTL is a web-based application designed to provide not only synchronous training, but also to sustain the learning experience of the trainees online. The accounts of the participants were created and they were provided their usernames and passwords so that they could access and upload material on to the VTL. Mr. V. Krishnamoorthy will be the expert to help and guide the participants in the follow up interactions.

Further plan of action

- A follow up training workshop for about 2-3- days will be organized for the same group after about one month.
- Each participant will be assigned a few weeks in advance to work on at least two units, related to their courses/area to be developed in the multimode digital content.
 - There will be a peer review of the task assigned
 - Remedial support will be provided to those who have any type of problem in developing the multimode digital content,
 - Based on the comments/assignments in the follow up workshop each participants will modify and finalize the content.
- An advanced level workshop will be organized for the willing participants. The workshop will cover content creation and hosting at advanced level.
- The trained faculty will act as master trainers to facilitate the other faculty in developing e-content in their Schools or act as resource persons for such workshops organized by NCIDE in the future.

The finalized output will be uploaded on website in the first week of September 2010.

4. Concluding Session

On the last day of the training workshop, the valedictory session was Chaired by the Vice Chancellor, IGNOU.

In the valedictory session, Dr. O.P. Sharma Director, NCIDE presented a brief report of the training workshop. Besides mentioning the purpose and objectives of the workshop Dr. Sharma highlighted the outcome of the workshop and said that the different sessions had theoretical as well as practical component covering the easily available and open source ICT tools. However, the main focus was on hands-on practice for developing multimode digital content by the participants. Further he presented the future plan of action.



Prof. V.N. Rajsekharan Pillai, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
Glances through the Workshop Papers

Dr. Sharma proposed to organise follow up training workshops for the same group and similar types of programmes for other batches of IGNOU faculty. He was of the view that all the trainees should master the use of ICT tools covered in the workshop so that they may be able to develop and upload the multimedia programmes at their own.



The Concluding Session

Dr. R. Sreedher, Director CEMCA briefed about the EasyNow package of ICT tools. He informed that the CEMCA had organised such training programmes for the facilities of different institutes in different Commonwealth countries. He expressed his pleasure in organising such programme in collaboration with IGNOU for the IGNOU faculty. He offered to organise such programmes in future also for other faculty members as well as the advanced level programme for the same group so as to make them masters in the field of ICT enabled instruction.



Dr. S. Sreedhar, Director CEMCA addressing the participants

Prof. V.N. Rajsekharan Pillai, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU congratulated the NCIDE and the CEMCA for organising such training workshop for the IGNOU faculty. He said that such low cost ICT tools may be used not only by the IGNOU faculty but a large member of colleges. He suggested that all of us should learn technology in easy way, and the multimedia so developed may be put as Open Education Resource (OER). He was glad to note that the teachers are taking interest in the use of ICT. He desired that all the trainees should master these ICT tools. He informed that IGNOU has set up some ICT training centers in different parts of the country aiming at ICT skill development of the faculty. He said that recently the Regional Centre, Cochin has organised training on the use of ICT.



Prof. V.N. Rajsekharan Pillai, Vice Chancellor, IGNOU
addressing the participants

In order to enhance the ICT skill of the faculty, he gave the following suggestions:

- Such training programmes should be organized continuously in a flexible way as per the need of the faculty.
- Each teacher should use and utilize ICT and subject based pedagogy.
- Bring technology hand to the teachers and learners.

- The present group of trainees should be trained further so that they attain the masters level in using the ICT for enhancing teaching – learning process.
- NCIDE may think of organizing training of the Trainers (TOT) programme also in the field of ICT.

Once again he appreciated the efforts of NCIDE and CEMCA for organizing the programme and extended all possible support to NCIDE for such programmes in future also.

After lunch, the five day training workshop formally concluded with the distribution of certificates by Dr. R. Sreedher, Director, CEMCA and Dr. O.P. Sharma, Director, NCIDE.



Participants receiving certificates from Dr. S. Sreedhar

Dr. Pema Samdup, Programme Officer, CEMCA and Ms. Sujata Santosh, Assistant Director, NCIDE proposed a formal vote of thanks.

Ms. Sujata Santosh
Workshop Co-ordinator &
Asstt. Director, NCIDE