

SPECIAL PRESENTATION BY NEXTED

THE TOTAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

Paul McKey

CTO NextEd Ltd

paul.mckey@nexted.com

Abstract

With the advent of online education the Universities of the world are for the first time exposing their wares in a public space, the Internet, in direct competition and comparison to similar commercial offerings.

While the argument for the University offering as being one of 'accredited academic quality' is easy to win against its unaccredited training and professional development competitors it is not necessarily as easy to suggest the university offering is always a better 'product'.

Universities typically have little experience selling their wares in a commercial environment where price, service and immediacy matter. It then comes as no surprise that when a mature adult learner is shopping around, universities are often being overlooked for education alternatives more in tune with the requirements of a modern lifestyle.

The Total Student Experience offers a conceptual framework for the discussion, delivery and measure of an online educational system from the student's perspective. It suggests a model with four distinct layers, which individually and collectively, effect the learner's overall satisfaction with the system. The four layers are presentation, function, education and administration with a number key variables occurring within each layer.

This paper will discuss the use of this framework and the importance of the underlying assumption that the university 'product' in the online environment will be measured not only by its traditional hallmarks but also by the key elements of the medium in which it is offered. When that medium is the Internet these elements are convenience and relevance, service and value, and the antithesis of the mass production era of education and personalisation.