# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER TWO - DISTANCE LEARNING TODAY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER OBJECTIVES:</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISTANCE LEARNING MEETS THE INTERNET:</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INFINITE POSSIBILITIES ABOUND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DELIVERY METHODS</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUDIO AND VIDEO LEARNING</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LMS – LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ONLINE LEARNING VS DISTANCE LEARNING</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADVANTAGES OF DISTANCE LEARNING</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USEABILITY</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS ONLINE EDUCATION FOR YOU?</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARE YOU A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR ONLINE EDUCATION?</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT IS NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE LEARNING?</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARDWARE</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOFTWARE</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SKILLS REQUIRED</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOW TO SUCCEED IN DISTANCE LEARNING</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KEY TERMS</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUMMARY</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASSIGNMENTS</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REVIEW QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES - FAQ</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Distance Learning Today

Chapter Objectives:

After reading this chapter, students should be able to:

- Recognize the different types of Distance Education
- Distinguish between Asynchronous and Synchronous Education
- Understand the role of LMS – Learning Management System in Distance Education
- Recognize the advantages of Online Learning
- Decide if he/she is qualified for Online Education
- Identify the tools needed for online education
- Identify the skills needed to succeed in online education

Question to Explore:
In this chapter, we will explore the following questions:

- What is distance education?
- What impact did the internet have on distance education?
- What is the difference between distance education and online education?
- What are the types of distance education?
- What is asynchronous and synchronous education?
- What are the advantages of online education?
- Is online education for me?
- What equipment do I need to participate in online education?
- What skills I need to succeed in online education
- What are proctored exams?
DISTANCE LEARNING TODAY

DISTANCE LEARNING MEETS THE INTERNET: INFINITE POSSIBILITIES ABOUND

http://www.c-spanvideo.org/program/OnlineL
http://www.edutopia.org/online-learning-overview-video

The World Wide Web is probably the most significant development of the internet. Some form or another of the web, with its distinct ability to provide various links to all homepages on the internet, will probably replace what we now know as television, as well as traditional correspondence and distance learning courses. As discussed in chapter one, many colleges and universities are already offering fully developed distance courses and degree programs leading to a graduate degree earned totally on the internet. The future of higher education is inextricably bound to the development of the internet; so much so, that it is safe to say that the use of the internet for teaching and scholarship by both faculty and students will increase
even more in the very near future. Do not be surprised if you are not able to find a school that does not offer online courses in the near future.

If the internet lives up to its promise and blossoms into a truly revolutionary worldwide network of connected computers, then we will have to think in new ways about our old world. The constraints of time and space are not relevant on the internet. In internet time, Japan is as close to you as your computer; New York is no nearer or farther than Beijing; and snow, sleet and dark of night will be vanquished as the worst enemies of the timely postal system. Emails fly out to their destinations in milliseconds. Letters that physically took a week to cross the ocean from North America to Europe now arrive in minutes. Huge files are now downloaded, duplicated and dispersed across the commercial universe in seconds. In the business world, people use e-mail to avoid telephone tag. In the world of academia, instructors use e-mail to consult with the entire class by sending a message to everyone at once on a listserv\(^1\), or they tutor individual pupils in a cyberspace\(^2\) "study" built for the purpose of a one-on-one conference at an electronic university.

The market for educational software is flooded with multimedia\(^3\) and teleconferencing software that can simulate the teaching processes of a traditional learning situation. The internet brings a new dimension to education: the ability to share information with students not only across campus, but across the world.

Another exciting feature of this new multidimensional media, is the access students have to hundreds, even thousands of libraries currently or soon to be online, as

---

1 Listserv: a digitally recorded and saved list of people and addresses to whom one message is mass delivered.
2 Cyberspace: a virtual area or piece of the internet; a realm of electronic communication.
3 Multimedia: the combined use of several media, as sound ad full-motion video in computer applications.
well as the creation of electronic archives for research and scholarship. The searching, sorting, and retrieval capacities of data-banked libraries are unprecedented, as are the many other possibilities for a new, highly interactive kind of study. Scholarship is energized by the internet and its newly modernized digital reading, writing, and researching features.

If you think there is a limit to the internet, think again. A complete and successful brain surgery was performed on the internet, the surgeon was in New York but the patient was in a hospital in London, England. How would you like to shake somebody’s hand that lives in California from your office located in Texas and feel the warmth of that hand? Alternatively, how would you feel about being able to smell a perfume by clicking on its name on the internet? It sounds like science fiction, but scientists are working on such a scenario. Transmitting senses on the internet as successfully as we have succeeded to transmit data, voice and video is currently under study. Some believe we can transmit our senses and feelings as well.

There are different methods of distance education delivery, from the oldest form conducted by mail delivery systems to the newest form of synchronized mobile learning.

---

4 Data-banked: information saved on the web and/or computer for easy access
Types of distance education courses/programs offered today:

- **Correspondence:** conducted through regular mail
- **Internet Distance Learning:** conducted either synchronously or asynchronously
- **Telecourse/Broadcast:** content is delivered via radio or television
- **CD-ROM:** the student interacts with computer content stored on a CD-ROM
- **Pocket PC/Mobile Learning:** where the student accesses course content stored on a mobile device or through a wireless server
- **Integrated distance learning:** the integration of live, in-group instruction or interaction with a distance learning curriculum

**DELIVERY METHODS**

**Asynchronous technology** - is a mode of online delivery where participants access course materials on their own schedule. Message board forums, email and recorded video are pieces of asynchronous technology. Asynchronous technologies may include audiocassette, printed materials, voice mail/fax, and videocassette/DVD, as well as on-demand streaming (delayed). When a student has a question, he/she emails the instructor; when the instructor goes online, he/she will respond. In other words, when the instructor and the student are present at two different locations and at two different times, then it is asynchronous communication and education. Most distance education institutions use the asynchronous method in delivering education.

**Synchronous technology** is a mode of online delivery where a class of students and the teacher are “present” at the same time, thus requiring a timetable and/or
schedule to be organized. Web conferencing is an example of this type of technology. In addition to web conferencing, synchronous technologies include web-based VoIP, telephone conferencing, video conferencing, direct-broadcast satellite, and internet radio and live streaming. It is similar to a traditional classroom setup, but the students and the teacher are not in one place. When the teacher and the student are physically at two different locations, but interacting at the same time, this is synchronous education, also known as Live Interactive. The cyber classroom has arrived. This is the closest one can get to real life learning experience. Few schools are currently using this technology; however, the number is increasing. This delivery method tends to be more demanding on both the student and the teacher and it is rather costly.

Some schools combine both technologies: asynchronous and synchronous. Students who are attending live lectures at specifically coordinated and scheduled times are participating in synchronous learning. Other students, who are viewing the lectures on their own, but different schedule, will be using asynchronous delivery.

**HYBRID OR BLENDED LEARNING**

A third type of delivery exists: Hybrid or Blended Learning: With this manner of delivery, part of one’s education is in a physical classroom with face-to-face interaction. The remaining part is by distance education. Many people seem to like this approach; therefore, more institutions are incorporating classes using this technique.
AUDIO AND VIDEO LEARNING

The use of video in teaching and learning is becoming a common practice with today’s educators. Streaming audio and video is playing a bigger role in delivering courses and programs of study. This form of technology brings distance education alive by allowing online students to use their visual and auditory senses to learn complex concepts and difficult procedures.

LMS – LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

The Learning Management System is an information system that administers instructor-led learning courses and tracks student progress. It can be used for both asynchronous and synchronous learning, and is a framework for an instructor to better control and facilitate the classroom. It allows the Instructor to post syllabi, course lectures, assignments, study guides, projects, and tests. This feature also allows classroom chatting and interaction.

(A Sample Layout of the LMS pages follows on the next two pages.)

According to Mr. Michael Lambert, of the DETC:

“The new technology is not a magical answer for every distance learning problem: it must be approached with caution and common sense. Above every other consideration, you must decide what you want the technology to do for you.”

Just as there are numerous and varied types of courses offered, there are also numerous and varied modes of transmission. Students may enroll in such courses as English and other languages, green technology, security protocol on the internet and even doctorate programs in education or business. As the old saying goes, “the world is your oyster.” In this case, the oyster is distance learning and all that it offers.
Weekly outline

CIS-100 Information Technology and Distance Learning

Instructor Information:
Stephen Uko, Online Instructor

Instructor Email:
stephen.uko@myact.edu

Course Email:
cis100@acot.edu

Yahoo Messenger: acot_stephenuko

Credentials:
BS Business Administration - Kansas State University
Experiences:
15+ years in Technology and Business Environment

Term: 1S - 2011
Duration: July 5th - August 14th
Live Lecture Times:
Monday: 6:30 - 9:00 PM CST
Wednesday: 6:30 - 9:00 PM CST
Friday: 6:30 - 9:00 PM CST
Outside Lecture Times: Available by email or IM - Yahoo.

*Attendance of all lectures is highly recommended, however, minimum attendance is once per week.

For additional ACOT policies please click here.

ACADEMIC HONESTY STATEMENT
ACOT expects that all work you submit for grading is your own work and the result of your own preparation. Do NOT submit the work of others as your own. If you copy, quote, or paraphrase the work of others, or if you incorporate their ideas into your own original work, you must provide a complete reference citation. ACOT policy states that all work submitted for assessment shall be "solely created by the student." By enrolling in this course you are confirming your observance of this policy.

Online Tests:
Weekly tests are available between Friday and Sunday midnight CST. Tests taken after Sunday will lose 10% per day. No tests will be accepted after Wednesday. Students who have military obligations can make special arrangements with their instructor.
ONLINE LEARNING VS DISTANCE LEARNING

Thus far, both of these terms have been used interchangeably. Actually, there is a slight but important difference between the two. According to the US Department of education, Distance Education is defined as education or training courses delivered to remote (off-campus) sites via audio, video (live or prerecorded), or
computer technologies, including both synchronous (simultaneous) and asynchronous (not simultaneous) instruction. This predicates the definition of online learning which specifies distance learning utilizes the internet and asynchronous or synchronous delivery. In short, **online learning means distance learning on the internet.**

Since the internet is becoming the most dominant and cost effective method of communication, one can deduce that Distance learning via the internet should become an equally cost effective method of education.

**ADVANTAGES OF DISTANCE LEARNING**

**UNLIMITED RESOURCES**

Loosely defined as a worldwide library, the internet encourages students and teachers to find and use new information. New internet search tools with highly developed, elaborately personalized sorting abilities evolve daily. These tools allow individuals to find, retrieve, utilize and skillfully organize the most recent, interesting, or relevant information, data, images, videos and even software that they desire.

In traditional institutions of higher learning, students often do not interact with fellow students beyond the walls of the classroom they share. On the internet, students have the opportunity to interact with other students around the world. Instructors have similar opportunities to interact with other instructors teaching the same subject anywhere in the world. Instructors can also invite comments and ideas from experts at other universities and in the industry, regardless of their geographical location. If, for instance, a teacher or student has a problem with something stated by the writer of the course textbook, there is nothing to stop that
student or teacher from sending a question, comment, or criticism to the textbook author at his or her email address or homepage.

**EXPEDIENCY**

Because information changes rapidly and the process of researching, writing, and publishing is tedious, it is almost impossible for a textbook to be current by the time it reaches the market, especially when dealing with technology. Internet technology provides an inexpensive way for information to be updated and distributed expediently, allowing students and teachers to have immediate access to current information.

Using the internet can also save time. Students have access to the libraries of the world within the confines of their own home or office. With no need to leave the house to search the stacks or to request material be sent from around the world, students can accomplish their work much faster.

The expediency and simplicity of online education has caused many corporations to encourage their employees to pursue higher educations, degrees and training via the internet. Because internet education need not involve an employee's protracted absence from work, both the employer's and the employee's costs are minimized. Everyone benefits.

Finally, the internet also means environmental savings. Textbooks are printed on paper—a renewable resource, but not an unlimited one. Traditional print is part of a system that relies on industrial technology, which, incidentally, destroys natural resources. Online publishing will save volumes of paper and therefore tremendous numbers of trees; the new alternative is the eBook. The e-book does not destroy resources; it is printed and published online and is considerably cheaper to make.
THE INTERNET DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE

Electronic communities are real communities, and problems that plague the real world also affect the virtual world of the internet. However, physical differences, needs, and prejudices disappear. The internet does not discriminate. Socially induced prejudices toward appearance, gender, race, country of origin, and behaviors are virtually eliminated on the Net. Here, students are judged solely on their performance, skills and interactions, unlike many face-to-face encounters.

USEABILITY

The internet is a powerful tool that is relatively simple to use. Finding and retrieving information is a matter of learning to use search engines. Good minds are hard at work researching and developing new and improved devices that are easy for everyone to use.

The internet makes technicians of us; all we have to know are the basics of the software and hardware. Minimal computer skills must be mastered. Typing skills transform into "keyboarding." New computer friendly vocabulary allows one to understand that a "mouse" isn't a furry little animal scurrying about your cupboards. Students should know how to use the computer, install software, create folders copy files, move files, backup files, zip files, email attachments, and use IM messengers, and more in order to participating in an online education.

6 IM: instant message; back and forth, instant messages in real time.
A GLOBAL CLASSROOM
The World Wide Web is not an inhospitable environment. The hyper-textual nature of the internet plays upon innate human desire to connect this with that, and that with this, and then these with something else. It is user friendly.

Surf among the millions upon millions of individual homepages already on the internet and find people rejoicing in all the color, sound, and enjoyment of self-discovery and expression. The inviting feel of the experience accounts for the fact that the internet has the capacity to be the largest educational enterprise ever undertaken. While much of what we have learned has come from formal educational situations in traditional schools, every individual is capable of learning to learn, so to speak, on the internet. We can learn about our world and ourselves more than we ever dreamed possible by using self-planned and self-directed online learning activities.

Because online education offers a variety of learning environments, the experience can be very rich. You can learn from and interact with not only the instructor but also other students. You no longer feel restricted by the limited experience of one individual controlling the learning environment of a few classmates. The world is your classroom.

*Online education provides learning environments that previously did not exist.*
IS ONLINE EDUCATION FOR YOU?

MOST PEOPLE AGREE that having a college or university degree enables one to earn a higher wage than someone without a degree. Simply put, a degree helps you attain a higher quality of life. However, it is not always so easy to go back to school to earn a degree—there are bills to pay, a family to support, and long hours at the office.

Thankfully, recent advances in technology and the rise of the internet are beginning to make education more convenient and less expensive for all kinds of students, especially nontraditional students. If you cannot afford to leave your job or family to study full-time, online/distance learning may be just what you are looking for.

ARE YOU A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR ONLINE EDUCATION?

Online education or distance learning is particularly suited to people who are unable to attend classes regularly due to work, family, or other obligations. Here are just a few of the personal situations distance learning benefits.

Professionals

Professional men and women who have already started a career are working full time want to maintain that career. Add to this the responsibilities that come with supporting a family there is little time to allocate for education.

Contemporary professionals seem to live on the go. Microwave ovens were invented for them, as were the edge-city motels and extended-stay apartments that rise high alongside the perimeters of urban airports. Their jobs require frequent travel within the country or abroad. The modem attached to the laptop or notebook computer is changing their lives in many ways, not the least of which is the possibility of continuing a formal education online.
Single Parents

Single parents are in a unique position. They must work to provide and support their children. Most cannot leave their jobs to go to school full time, and even going part time means finding and paying for child care. Online distance education allows these parents to study on their own home, in their own time, nearly eliminating the need for child care and allowing more time at home.

Physically Challenged

Physically challenged individuals who are not comfortable in classroom settings or who are unable to drive to school can benefit from online distance education classes. They can study in the comfort of their own home without having to worry whether or not the school can make adjustments for their special needs.

Educators

Educators are responsible for educating others. They cannot skip many school days to further their own education. Online education allows teachers to pursue new avenues of interest and acquire specialized and postgraduate degrees.

Military Personnel

Military personnel are often stationed in isolated or remote areas. Even if they are near an urban center, their duty schedule usually does not allow them the freedom to attend traditional universities. For them, online education is an advantage.

International Professionals

International professionals and students who want or need certain specializations, or who simply enjoy cosmopolitan boundary-crossing, may want to work "here" but live "there." Online education makes it possible to study in North America
from abroad or vice versa. Degrees awarded by accredited American colleges and universities are highly valued and recognized around the world. International professionals and students can now get a US or Canadian college degree without leaving home.

Most people belong to one of the above categories. In deciding whether to pursue an online education, it is imperative to understand that while it might be convenient, it is not easy. It requires the discipline, dedication, and equally hard work as in traditional (brick and mortar) schools. Actually, it requires more motivation, and dedication; daily classroom encounters with the teacher are non-existent. Organization and self-motivation are vital. The online teacher assumes that you will do your part without someone reminding you.

WHAT IS NEEDED TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE LEARNING?

Basic computer equipment is required for success in an online educational program. It is preferable for the student to own his/her own computer and have constant, any time access. However, one can still succeed borrowing from another or using a public facility.

HARDWARE

If you do not have a computer at home, going online will require you to buy one with certain features. At minimum, you will need a computer with a modem.

---

7 **Hardware**: the mechanical, magnetic, electronic, and electrical devices comprising a computer system, as the CPU, disc drives, keyboard and screen.
**Computer**

The computer used for online education doesn't have to be very fast or have a lot of memory. A PC compatible machine with 2 to 4 GB of RAM memory and at least 200 GB of hard disc can do the job. However, to take full advantage of the online features, the minimum to consider is the following configuration:

- 2.0 MHz Pentium processor (the faster the better)
- 3 to 4 GB of Ram (memory), the more the better
- 17-inch high-resolution monitor
- Sound card, speakers, microphone
- Webcam
- All-in-one printer, scanner, and fax

At the time of publication, such a configuration ranges in price between $500 and $1,000.

If your job requires a lot of travel, you might want to consider a laptop. Laptops are slightly more expensive than desktop computers, but they provide a convenient way to access the internet from virtually any location. A configuration similar to the one above currently ranges in price from $600 to $1,200. An advantage inherent to some laptops is the webcam, used for face-to-face communication.

**All-in-One Printer/Scanner and Fax**

This is a very convenient device that allows you to print, scan, and even fax documents when hocked up to a phone line. Such a device
can cost between $100 to $200, and it is worth it. The initial cost must be calculated with projected ink cartridge to get a fair cost. Some all-in-one-printers have wireless capabilities, which make it even more convenient to use. While this all-in-one is convenient, a simple printer would also suffice.

**Modem**

A modem is a very important piece of technical equipment. The dial-up modem (uses a standard phone line) is disappearing because of its slow speed. Currently users are taking advantage of the DSL\(^8\) connection, which is a high-speed connection over phone line or a Cable modem, which is even faster. Users who are located in remote areas might have to use satellite, which experience, has proven the speed is slow and there is a noticeable delay in sending and receiving the signals. A laptop should have wireless capabilities, for use it in a coffee shop; most laptops on the market have that. Many smart devices such as ipad or iphone can access the internet. Few schools, at this time, are using this technology to allow students access their online platform, but the number is increasing.

**Jump or Flash Drive**

It is a storage device capable of storing data, songs, video clips, etc. It can be used for backup. It is recommended to backup schoolwork on such a device.

---

\(^8\) DSL: digital subscriber line: a technology that allows high-speed transmission of text, audio, and video, usually over standard telephone lines; a form of broadband transmission.
PC Digital Video Camera

A digital video camera supports video-conferencing needs and provides the convenience of face-to-face communications from your desktop or notebook PC. Your instructor, classmates, friends, and family will be able to see you thru their computer screens. The web-cam or PC digital video camera allows real time communication and viewing between instructors, students, friends and family. Parties on both ends much possess the same equipment potential. A color digital camera costs between $20 and $100. Many laptops and computers available on the market already have built in webcams, thus eliminating the need and expense of an auxiliary one.

INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS

To get on the internet, one needs to sign up with an internet service provider (ISP). An ISP is a business entity that sells internet access to the public; in the same way the phone company sells phone service. There are many national and local ISPs to choose from, including MCI, NetCom, AT&T, Sprint, America Online, Microsoft Network, and CompuServe. Most national providers have toll-free numbers, which you can find by calling the toll-free information operator at 1-800-555-1212. Local ISPs also provide connection services. Communities have a growing number of providers, which can be found in the local Yellow Pages of the phone book. Visit with friends and relatives to find out what providers they use.
Internet Service Provider Guidelines:

- Select an ISP that provides unlimited access for a flat fee. Average monthly charges are currently $30 to $50, with no additional charges.

- Those who travel a lot, and want online services, are better off with a national provider. Most hotels now provide internet access for a charge.

- Make sure that the national provider selected has a toll-free number to access and that there is no phone charge for using it. Even three cents a minute can add up to a lot of money.

- An ISP should not only provide internet access, but around the clock technical support as well. Customer support should be available 24/7 to answer customer questions. Do not hesitate to e-mail or call your internet service provider.

SOFTWARE

Windows is the most common PC operating platform. Windows 7 is the most recent edition currently used on microcomputers. This state-of-the-art software comes already installed on most computers and can be automatically updated online. Although this book is geared toward PC users, Macintosh users will recognize Mac OS X lion (10.7) as the most recent Mac OS. Either system will not have any problems taking advantage of online education. Check with your Mac vendor for appropriate configurations.

Word processing packages such as Microsoft Word for PCs, Open Office or MAC Freeware is crucial and should be installed on your system. This is around a $200 - $300 dollar expense. Most communications with the school will involve word processing. Microsoft Office 2010 is the most recent edition, which includes very helpful programs such as Word for word processing, PowerPoint for designing
presentations, Access for designing databases, Excel for creating spreadsheets, and Outlook for email, contacts, and scheduling.

- **Email Account**
  An email account is imperative for online distance education. A personal email account can be used if you already have one, or you can create a separate account dedicated for schoolwork. Your internet provider usually provides you with one free account. Google, Yahoo and Hot Mail provide free email accounts.

- **Instant Messaging Program (IM)**
  Is a form of real-time direct text-based communication between two or more people using personal computer or other devices, some incorporate audio and video as well.
  The most commonly used ones are: Google and Yahoo, and both can be downloaded for free at:
  
  www.Google.com  
  and  
  www.Yahoo.com

**Browser**
You will also need a browser: a program that enables you to access the World Wide Web and use the internet. The most common browsers on the market are Internet Explorer, and Firefox. Both are available on the internet and downloaded for free. Other 2011 browsers include,

Chrome 9 - 13, Firefox 4 - 5, Internet Explorer 9, Maxthon 3.0, SeaMonkey 2.1, Opera 11.50, Safari 5.1

Microsoft Internet Explorer can be found at:
http://www.microsoft.com/download

Firefox can be found at: http://www.firefox.com
Antivirus Software

Computer malware such as viruses are "digital infections' created by malicious programmers. Malware cause unwanted behavior on a computer and range from being relatively harmless to very destructive.

Computer viruses do not infect humans! On the other hand, they do behave like a biological virus: they can replicate themselves and spread from one computer to another when you use an infected disk or download an infected file. There are measures you can use to protect your computer from infection by viruses. To learn more about them and how to practice safe computing, visit this site:

http://www.avg.com

Installing virus finding and eradicating software, known as anti-virus software, on your computer to warn you if you are infected is vital. This warns if an incoming site or email has a virus and periodically scans and checks your machine for any virus. It removes or quarantines the virus. Check your local software store to find the latest versions, and upgrade as often as possible with free downloads over the internet. This software is around $50 for a year and often allowed to be installed on 2 or 3 computers. Some of the most popular and effective are Norton, MacAffee and Viper. There are some lesser known products available for free on the internet, but one is cautioned regarding the effectiveness of these.

PDF Writer, one in particular which is easy to use, and free, can be found at:


This software enables you to convert any word document to read only file (cannot be edited).
File Zipping

Trying to email a big file can be a problem. Some email programs limit the size of the file for an email, in most cases to 5MB. One way to overcome this restriction is to compress the file to make it small enough to fit within the parameters for emailing. This feature is available on Windows 7. However, there is also another program which is very common, and freely downloaded at:

http://www.downloadster.org/

Enhanced PC Efficiency:

Keeping your computer running efficiently is a challenge. The following download is designed for just that. Integrated registry tweaks help improve PC startup time. Removing unwanted registry errors may also help boost your PC's startup performance. http://www.samsoft.com

SKILLS REQUIRED

As mentioned earlier, it does not take a computer guru to study online. Basic knowledge of how to use the computer and navigate the internet is sufficient. The next chapters in this book are set up as a guide to assist in accomplishing that. Introductory courses to computers abound within your local community. Your internet provider may also be a valuable source of training, or you can get a friend to give you a few hours of computer tutoring. There are also a number of books and videos that explain the basics simply and clearly. Most computer communication will be through the keyboard, so it will save a lot of time and frustration to be able to type. It is not necessary to type eighty words a minute, or even forty words a minute, just know enough to be able to find the keys on the
keyboard. *Typing Tutor, Mavis Beacon* and other software packages can teach you how to type relatively quickly and painlessly. You can find many free software packages on [www.Download.com](http://www.Download.com). Just be aware, not every vendor who advertises “Free” really means free; some software vendors offer free trial only. So be cautioned, if they ask you for your credit card information, then it is not free, and an expectation to pay for it at one time or another exists.

**SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH LIMITED INTERNET ACCESS, OR PEOPLE LIVING IN OTHER COUNTRIES:**

If you live in a country where internet access is very new and not easily available, your access to the internet does not have to be online. It can be "batch" or offline. You can logon to download your lecture to your computer for later review when you are offline. You will still be able to do most of your college work successfully. Most military students who are located abroad with limited access to the internet fall into this category.

If internet access is not available at your house, find an internet "cafe." These cyberspace gathering places are becoming popular in many countries. Internet cafes may have many computers available for public use for a minimal fee or hourly rate. Many libraries, colleges, coffee shops and restaurants now have internet access using Wifi which enables you to access the internet using a laptop.

**THE SEARCH ENGINE**

Most of you have used this tool. The GOOGLE search engine allows you to find anything you can think of on the internet. All you have to do is to go to [www.Google.com](http://www.Google.com) and type key words identifying what you want to find. The
results might be overwhelming. Other search engines are available, such as Yahoo, Bing and ASK. A comprehensive list is available at [www.thesearchenginelist.com](http://www.thesearchenginelist.com). Practice using a search engine. Search for Online Education and see how many links you find. Next, search for Free Typing Tutor, you should find many free software packages to download.

**HOW TO SUCCEED IN DISTANCE LEARNING**

**Studying at Home**

Taking a course online may sound to some like an easier way to earn a degree, merely because it is a more convenient way to study. However, don't be fooled into thinking that online courses take less effort! Online courses and programs offered by accredited colleges usually are designed by the same instructors who designed the traditional programs. They are not any "easier" than any other kind of academic work. Intellectual work is real work—hard work. Even though you can study from the comfort of your home, you will need to allocate as much time and attention as possible to each course you take. The following suggestions will help you create an effective study environment

**A Room of Your Own**

Create a study space in your home where you can set up your computer and where you can study without interruption, such as a spare bedroom. If you want to deduct the cost of the space from your taxes, the IRS likes you to have doors on the room you read and write in, and no TV (check with your accountant for more details).
**Dress for Success**

Although many think taking classes in their pj’s is the goal, some students dress for their online/DL session as they would do if they were attending a regular classroom or even an actual business meeting. Some school delivery systems allow you to broadcast your video picture. This doesn't mean you need to wear a power suit to work online from your own home, but you should treat your study time with a respectful formality.

**Food is discouraged**

Food and chewing gum is not encouraged, especially with interactive live sessions with classmates and instructor. As a point of interest, although you are at home, having a glass of wine or a beer when you are attending an online class actually is not permitted, according to the alcohol and drug policy in all schools.

**Time Management**

Get into the habit of studying at certain, specific times of the day or evening. Discipline yourself to adhere to this schedule. Assume the responsibility of establishing boundaries around educational work in your home, and ask your family members to respect those boundaries. This will probably take some adjustment on all sides. Let good will and patience rule the day.

Think of each study session as a business meeting -- it should have a starting and an ending time. In the same way, think of schoolwork as part of a job—give yourself deadlines and stick to them. Finally, use your time well by being convinced of its value.
Develop the Ability to Concentrate

Concentration is a real skill that needs to be developed. At the end of a busy day, you may have to conscientiously prepare for it. Do not be too concerned if it takes a while to focus your mind on schoolwork; like any skill, you will need to practice it. You will get better at it. Unlike many other life skills, however, the concentration you need in order to do academic work can elude you if you try too hard. Try to be Zen-like about it. Do not rush at it or try to grab it. Never panic if it does not come to you. Like any other personal activity, you must find what works for you. "Study to be Quiet," is the British saying. Discover what you need to do so that you are relaxed but alert.

When you sit down to a work session, close your eyes and concentrate on slowing down the busyness of the day. Breathe easy. Be quiet. Read something short and simple to focus your eyes on words. Imagine your pulse calming, your blood slowing, and your heartbeat steady and strong. Clear the mind. Begin.

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Student evaluations in an online school are not much different than in a traditional school. You are evaluated based on your assignments, projects, and tests. Those using Federal funding, such as financial aid, are evaluated based on attendance. It is important to mention that missing class or failing to perform an academic activity for three weeks during an online course will cause you to lose your financial aid funding.

ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments for online classes may be longer and require more time and effort.
The purpose of a multi-task assignment is to test for knowledge by allowing the student to research the subject and demonstrate they understand the concept or procedure.

Online schools, like their counterparts, have honesty policies. Students are expected to do their own work. Assignments are usually posted in the school LMS and are time sensitive. This means they have a deadline for submission. It is recommended that you type the name or title of the assignment in the email subject line along with your name when submitting the assignment to your instructor. That makes easier it for the instructor to identify the student and the assignment.

Get confirmation from the instructor for receipt of the assignment. Some email programs, such as Outlook, will do that for you. It will confirm when the instructor receives the email, as well as when he/she opens the email. You must set this feature in Outlook.

**QUIZZES AND TESTS**

Quizzes are a popular form of testing knowledge, and many courses go by the honor system regarding cheating. Quizzes are often timed, thus discouraging checking questions in the textbook or online. Exams and larger tests may be proctored to regulate fairness and validate learning.

Online schools have had difficulty controlling cheating on quizzes, tests, or examinations because of the lack of teacher proximity. In a classroom situation, a teacher can monitor students and visually uphold a level of integrity consistent with the institution’s reputation. However, with distance education, the student is completely unsupervised. Some schools address integrity issues concerning testing
by requiring students to take examinations in a controlled setting, which is called a “Proctored Exam”.

**Proctored Exam Defined**
A proctored exam is one in which an independent, reputable, third-party proctor verifies the identity of the test-taker and monitors the test-taker while he or she completes the exam to ensure the integrity of the testing process. The results of a proctored examination should reflect the test-takers own knowledge and competence of the course in which he or she is enrolled. Both the school and the student approve the proctor, although it is the student’s responsibility to secure a suitable proctor. The test is online, but only the proctor receives the password or code to unlock it. The test-taker must provide the proctor with valid government-issued photo identification, to confirm his/her identity. The exam can be taken in a testing center, library, college or any other authorized center. The proctor cannot be a family member or a friend; the proctor must be a registered proctor of a testing center, college or university administrator, or librarian and must be approved by the school. A new technology is now available which enables the student to proctor an exam in his/her own home.
KEY TERMS

Internet
Worldwide interconnection of computers and computer networks that facilitate the sharing or exchange of information among users.

Network of Networks
Millions of private, public, academic, business, and government networks, of local to global scope, that are linked by a broad array of electronic, wireless and optical networking technologies.

Distance Learning
A field of education that focuses on the pedagogy, technology and instructional system designs that deliver education to students who are not physically on site in a traditional classroom or campus. The source of the information and the students are separated by time and/or distance.

Synchronous Learning
A mode of online delivery where the student and the teacher are present at the same time but in two different locations. Students get immediate answers to their questions from the instructor. It can be also called Live Interactive learning.

Asynchronous Learning
A mode of online delivery where students and the teacher are present at two different locations and at two different times. Students’ questions are sent online, then the instructor goes online to view and answer the questions.
**Hybrid or Blended Education**
Part of the education process is in a classroom - face to face, and the remaining part is by distance education

**LMS – Learning Management System**
Learning Management Systems or Learning Content Management Systems can be used for both synchronous and asynchronous learning. This is a framework for an instructor to better administer the classroom, and where the course syllabus, assignments, study guides, projects, and tests can be posted.

**Video Conferencing**
Participants can be seen and heard.

**Web Conferencing**
All parties are online at the same time.

**Direct-Broadcast Satellite**
Refers to satellite television (TV) systems in which the subscribers, or end users, receive signals directly from geostationary satellites. Signals are broadcast in digital format at microwave frequencies. DBS is the descendant of direct-to-home (DTH) satellite services. (Wikipedia)

**Internet Radio**
Radio stations broadcast through the internet

**Live Streaming**
Means taking the media and broadcasting it live over the internet. The process involves a camera for the media, an encoder to digitize the content, a media publisher where the streams are made available to potential end-users and a content delivery network to distribute and deliver the content. The media can then be viewed by end-users live. (Wikipedia)
**E-mail**
Electronic mail delivery system expressly using the internet. Personal accounts and mailboxes are established.

**Message Board Forums**
An online discussion site where people can hold conversations in the form of posted messages.

**Voice Mail/Fax**
Transfer of voice and/or printed documents over electronic equipment.

**On Demand Streaming (Delayed)**
The replay, at a different time, of a live streaming session.

**Accreditation**
Granted by a DOE approved agency to a school meeting specific educational criteria. Assurance to schools and students of quality education.

**Contact Hour**
Time spent under the tutelage of an instructor.

**Credit Hour**
Specific calculation of time spent in the classroom and outside the classroom to merit credit for a class

**Direct Cost of Education**
Cost of tuition, books, and fees
Indirect Cost of Education
All cost associated with education, except direct costs, including cost of transportation to school – gas and wear and tear on your car, snacks, and other related expenses.

Proctored Exams
An independent, reputable, third-party proctor verifies the identity of the test-taker and monitors the test-taker while he or she completes the exam to ensure the integrity of the testing process. The results of a proctored examination should reflect the test-takers own knowledge and competence of the course in which he or she is enrolled. The test-taker must provide the proctor with valid government-issued photo identification, to confirm his/her identity.

Proctor Qualifications
The proctor must be a registered proctor of a testing center, college or university administrator, or librarian and must be approved by the school.
SUMMARY

Coupling distance learning with computer technology and the internet has created opportunities for higher education and degrees that previously seemed out of reach. Receiving courses at one’s own time and convenience makes pursuing an education a viable option for working adults. Since the internet is becoming the most dominant and cost effective method of communication, one can deduce that distance learning via the internet should become an equally cost effective method of education.

Students are able to capitalize on the vast resources and time saving speed available through the internet. They can tap into current and updated dictionaries, libraries, encyclopedias and other reference materials, all from the confines of their own home. Internet technology provides an inexpensive way for information to be updated and distributed expediently, allowing students and teachers immediate access to current information.

Two ways exist for measuring the wealth of a college education. The first is personal pride and self-respect gained in the academic knowledge acquired. The second is in the financial gain a degree garners. Higher education, over a lifetime, produces thousands of dollars more than one with only a high school diploma.

Those who choose to pursue an online degree come from myriad and diverse situations. The freedom of time and space afforded by online education is most beneficial to working adults and single adults.

Online educators work diligently to provide a high quality education. The DOE and various accrediting agencies are available to ensure students that their education is legitimate and of quality. The expectation for students to perform in an honest and skillful manner is as prevalent in online education as in traditional
education. With all parties meeting quality expectations, one can be assured his online degree is of great value and resource.

ASSIGNMENTS

Answer the following questions, and submit the answers to your instructor:

1. What is the difference between correspondence and distance learning?
2. What is online education?
3. What is the difference between synchronous and asynchronous communication, give examples for each.
4. Explain the hybrid course of study.
5. Give advantages and disadvantages of the hybrid course.
6. What is accreditation?
7. Explain how technology has affected distance education.
8. Write a one page essay describing why you chose online education.
9. Write any suggestions or features you would like to see in distance education.
REVIEW QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES - FAQ

Having read this far, you may be thinking that online learning is perfect for you. However, you may also be wondering how certain aspects of it work. Below are some commonly asked questions and answers.

1. **Are online degrees legitimate?**

Yes, degrees offered online through a regionally or nationally accredited college or university, or through institutions that are accredited by any agency recognized by the US Department of Education, are legitimate. State-approved college degrees are not accredited, but can be of good value, especially degrees offered by colleges in California. California has strong requirements on state-approved colleges. There are, of course, "fly by night" businesses that will print diplomas for a price. The granting of phony degrees in exchange for money has plagued the educational system for about as long as legitimate schools have existed. The virtual world of the internet is bound to bring out more than a few old wolves dressed in new sheep's clothing.

2. **How do I verify that my online degree is from a legitimate and accredited school?**

Check the credibility of an institution prior to enrollment. It is a simple process, just go to the US Department of Education website and check the list of accredited colleges and universities at:  [http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx](http://ope.ed.gov/accreditation/Search.aspx)
Enter the School name in the “Name of School” field and search. This will give you information on whether the school is accredited and the agency it is accredited by, in addition to some history about the school. If the school has an OPE ID on the upper right corner of the screen that means it is also approved for Financial Aid (Title IV funding).

OR

Council for Higher Education Accreditation - CHEA

The Council for Higher Education Accreditation database lists more than 7,800 degree-granting and non-degree-granting institutions and more than 19,700 programs that are accredited by United States accrediting organizations that have been recognized either by CHEA or by the United States Department of Education (USDE) or by both.

3. Will my degree say online on it?

In most cases; the answer is No, your online degree is the same as an on-campus degree, the only difference is the method of delivery. Most schools issue an official diploma.

4. Is online education easier than traditional education?

The same curriculum developers or teachers who designed traditional programs design online programs; they have the same academic requirements. Online study is convenient but, should not be misconstrued as easier.
5. Does getting an online degree take less time than a traditional degree?

To some degree, the answer is yes, because you do not have to wait a semester or a year for an offering. It depends, however, on the school and how quickly one can complete the program courses. Here are some general timelines: associate degree, eighteen months to two years; bachelor's degree, three to four years; master's degree, eighteen months to two years; doctoral degree, three years or more. Some people finish their degrees online in less time.

6. Is online education less expensive than a traditional education?

It is if you take into consideration that you are saving the cost of campus living expenses or transportation expenses to get to and from school. Online credit hour cost is the comparable to the cost of a credit hour on campus in most colleges; a few colleges charge less.

7. How do I take my exams?

Most schools use proctors to monitor some exams. They are available in many states and in some foreign countries. If your state does not have a proctor, you can recommend one to your school. The proctor will monitor your exam to verify that you are the student who is supposed to take the exam, make sure you stay within the prescribed time limit, and meet the school's standards. New technology has recently been introduced which allows the student to do a proctored exam from home.
8. How much time should you allocate to study for an online program?

The answer to this question is rather difficult, depending on the program, your academic background, and your experience, as well as the number of credit hours you are taking. Generally speaking, you should expect, two hours of studying or outside preparation for every lecture (contact) hour. The Carnegie Unit and the Student Hour (also called a Credit Hour) are strictly time-based references for measuring educational attainment used by American universities and colleges. The Carnegie Unit assesses secondary school attainment, and the Student Hour, derived from the Carnegie Unit, assesses collegiate attainment. So, if you are taking a three-credit hour course over a period of six weeks, you are expected to have 7.5 contact hours with your teacher, and 15 hours of outside study, for a total of 22.5 hours a week.

9. Do online programs offer financial aid?

Accredited colleges and universities that participate in Title IV funding can offer federal financial aid. Other schools that are not participants in Title IV funding might offer payment plans. In many cases, employers reimburse some or most of your education when enrolled in an accredited school. Service organizations readily offer scholarships

10. Do I have to be computer savvy to enroll in an online program?

This varies depending on the school you are attending. It is definitely a big plus to be computer savvy, knowing the basic computer skills. Many schools offer a one-week training to educate their students on computer and internet skills, before they start the online program.
11. Are all fields of study available online?

No. Many colleges and universities are not yet offering online education for all their programs, but the number is increasing as the technology is improving. The next few years will witness a dramatic increase in number of institutions offering this kind of education and hence in the variety of degrees available.

12. Can I study from a foreign country?

Yes, you can be virtually anywhere on the planet -- if you have a place to plug in your computer and internet access, you can do your online study.

13. What kind of equipment will I need to pursue online education?

You need a computer, and internet access.