Podcasting Language

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English is increasingly the lingua franca (as it were) of commerce, the internet, science, indeed many areas of human endeavor. Learning English is critical to international success for countless individuals in non-English speaking countries. As mobile technologies have matured so have the possibilities for learning. Researchers in Australia and Taiwan suggest that podcasting could be used to foster a positive attitude in learning English as a foreign language.

Writing in the latest issue of the *International Journal of Mobile Communication*s, Peter O'Neill of the Faculty of Business and Economics at Monash University, Victoria, and colleagues at the National Chung Hsing University, in Taichung, suggest that enthusiasm for mobile technologies could make learning more attractive. "With the improvement of mobile devices, mobile learning can be applied to all mobile devices, including smart phones, PDAs, laptops, netbooks, tablet PCs, mp3 players and so on," the researchers say. Indeed, previous researchers have demonstrated just how effective the use of such technologies in teaching and learning can be.

A podcast is a digital recording, usually of a broadcast service, made available over the web or via a free subscription service to a portable device capable of playing audio or video files. Podcasts have become very popular in the US and elsewhere. However, while Taiwan has a relatively sophisticated blogging community, podcasting has been somewhat limited to business use. The researchers have investigated several variables - age, gender, technological experience and willingness - to see whether podcasting for language learning might be quickly adopted in Taiwan.

Their results show that while podcasting will be a different experience, the factors which influence technology adoption are still important, but at the moment potential users do not completely understand whether applying podcasting in learning language is a good idea or not.

"The complexities of a system and the supporting resources have generally been important issues when applying new technology. For podcasts, the operation is intuitive, and the software and hardware requirements are low. A challenge for the future is thus how to keep the operation easy and the resource requirements low," the team says.

SOURCE [1]

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