
Editorial

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We are all aware of the challenges that the ever-increasing pace of technological development poses to our educational system, industry, business, and the whole society. Keeping up-to-date with the development has become a concern for every individual.

Global interdependencies, through which both technological and economic developments in one region have immediate influence all over the world, are a pressing issue for our educational system. Experiences from many countries indicate that the use of modern information technology as a part of the education and training process offers an effective means to enhance learning. Especially in areas of science and technology where the development is particularly fast, distance education is virtually the only way to disseminate effectively new information on discoveries, inventions and applications.

Many programs have been initiated both in Europe and elsewhere to support and develop the use of educational technology, distance education, computer-based training and open learning. National and regional programs have demonstrated the benefit in facilitating access to education for different groups of the population, especially those in large and sparsely-populated areas. This is an important aspect for equality in educational opportunities and for providing opportunities to undertake training independent of time and other constraints. The many international, cooperative efforts in this field, on the other hand, are an indication of the potential for the global diffusion of knowledge and information.

The distance-education project in the USSR which has been initiated by the International Association for Continuing Engineering Education is a seed not only for a national scheme for the Soviet Union. It also offers an entry point for Soviet institutions to participate in the expanding international networks of education supported by information technology — for the benefit of development in the USSR as well as for the benefit of all counterparts. The extensive experience in traditional correspondence education in the USSR provides a very fertile soil for this seed.

I am very pleased that Finland, both as a close neighbour of the USSR and as the host country of the International Association for Continuing Engineering Education, may play a central role in this process. I wish them every success for the project.