

World's Largest e-learning Programme Rolled out to Indian Schools

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Images available

Over 4,000 pupils from schools in four regions of India will have free access throughout the month of November to the prestigious Heriot-Watt SCHOLAR online learning system, thanks to the British Council and SCHOLAR's publisher Interactive University (IU). Access to the programme will allow students and teachers to assess the benefits of SCHOLAR as a classroom and homework support aid, doing away with the need for remedial evening classes.

SCHOLAR is unusual in e-learning terms in that it offers interactivity from a bank of 44,600 web pages and fosters learning communities within school groups. Subjects on offer to the schools in Delhi Metropolitan Area, Ahmenabad in Gujerat, Kalcutta, Chennai (previously Madras) include Maths, Physics, Chemistry and Biology. SCHOLAR's fully interactive materials are supported by over 5000 quizzes and assessments so that pupils and parents can gauge their progress and teachers can focus their learning support where the pupils need it most. There is also a comprehensive staff development programme.

It is hoped that this could help reduce the overall cost of education for those pupils who participate in this programme. The many similarities between the Indian and Scottish school system also makes SCHOLAR a good match in terms of supported learning.

The project follows a pilot exercise earlier this year, where SCHOLAR was made available to students studying year 11 and year 12 examinations. A resounding 97% of pupils cited SCHOLAR as having significantly assisted with their understanding of the subject and the examination pass rate has increased in line with these opinions.

Originally developed to improve the educational attainment standards within the Scottish High School system for 16 and 17 year olds, SCHOLAR has more recently been adapted to support A level syllabuses in England and Northern Ireland as well as education systems in China and Norway. One of the unique aspects of the SCHOLAR programme is the fact that it combines the best of modern e-learning techniques whilst retaining the role of the teacher as the central element of the pupils' learning.

Sanjeev Roy from the British Council said: "We are delighted to give students and teachers the opportunity to trial SCHOLAR on a no-obligation basis. It's a good match with our curriculum and can definitely add value to any student's learning experience."

Originator of SCHOLAR and Chief Executive of Interactive University, Professor Roy Leitch said: "SCHOLAR is a great tool which engenders enthusiasm for study in even the most reluctant students. The Scottish education system has been heralded for its excellence for many years and through its partnership with Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh, IU has harnessed this, through SCHOLAR and other programmes, delivering it to pupils and teachers throughout the world. We are delighted that the British Council sees SCHOLAR as a valuable resource and look forward to the project's development."

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Notes to editors:

About the Interactive University www.interactiveuniversity.net

Interactive University is a market-led organisation specialising in the development and delivery of accredited distributed learning programmes within the global post compulsory education sector. The university's primary objective is to become Scotland's centre of excellence in e-learning and the leading source of e-learning products, services and technology.

About SCHOLAR: <http://scholar.hw.ac.uk/>

SCHOLAR is a programme of Heriot-Watt University initiated in 1998 to develop extremely high quality interactive materials for delivery over the internet. It was developed in partnership with secondary schools and further education colleges. According to Heriot-Watt Professor Phillip John, Chair of the SCHOLAR Forum the success in Scotland is not only due to the quality of the materials but the associated professional development programme designed for classroom teachers. SCHOLAR is published and distributed by the Interactive University on behalf of Heriot-Watt.

About Heriot-Watt University www.hwu.ac.uk

Edinburgh's Heriot-Watt University is a leading provider in science, engineering and business education with courses designed for business, industry and the professions. The University has wide experience of international degree programmes and supported e-learning, with currently more than 10,000 students studying in 130 countries worldwide. Overseas programmes include the distance learning MBA, one of the largest and most popular in the world.

About The British Council www.britishcouncil.org.in

The British Council connects people worldwide with learning opportunities and creative ideas from the UK and builds lasting relationships between the UK and other countries. The purpose of the British Council is to win recognition abroad for the UK's values, ideas and achievements, and nurture lasting, mutually beneficial relationships with other countries. The British Council was established in India in 1948 and became a Division of the British High Commission in 1972. In India, The British Council works in 11 cities, its head office is in New Delhi with offices in Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkatta.

SCHOLAR is currently piloted in Delhi-Bhopal-Chandigarh (North), Pune-Ahmedabad-Mumbai (West), Chennai-Hyderabad-Tivandrum-Bangalore (South) and Kolkata (East.)