

Perspective of Thai Students toward E-Learning Study

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***Abstract* - eLearning websites is the advance educational tool developed in the twenty-first century which generating new era of education under the concept of anyone can study at anywhere in anytime. From the middle of 1990s onward, the number of colleges and universities where provided courses and degree programs via eLearning mode has been growing dramatically. The term eLearning was not much well known in the beginning, but later it seemed very common especially in the university community. For Thailand, the government has developed a master plan for ICT use in education for the years 2004-2006. Although the growth of eLearning in Thailand continuously increase, the country was considered to rank below first 40 countries of the world as eLearning readiness country. As a result this paper was proposed to survey the perspective of thai students toward eLearning study as well as to measure their readiness to study on eLearning mode. This paper would be first to review the concept of eLearning and the trend of eLearning in Thailand. Then the methodology to survey the students was discussed. Finally, the paper would be ended with survey result and conclusion.**

***Keywords* - E-Learning, Education, Thailand, Thai Students**

I. INTRODUCTION

Elearning websites is the advance educational tool developed in the twenty- first century which generating new era of education under the concept of anyone can study at

anywhere in anytime. By the end of the 1990s, eLearning was predicted to become one of the fastest growing, knowledge-based industries in the developed world and the single most important transforming influence on education and corporate training and development (Sloman, 2001). Arrigo (2005), from the middle of 1990s onward, the number of colleges and universities where provided courses and degree programs via eLearning mode has been growing dramatically. Also, Bose (2003) stated that eLearning was born during the dot-com frenzy, and the term eLearning was not much well known in the beginning, but later it seemed very common especially in the university community. Sloan- C (2007), eLearning became a part of everyday life, accessible and affordable for anyone, anywhere, at anytime.

For Thailand, the government has developed a master plan for ICT use in education for the years 2004-2006, and there were four major strategies includes the use of ICT to improve teaching and learning; the use of ICT to enhance the educational management and service effectiveness; the personnel training and developing; and ICT equipment provision and distribution for all educational levels (Suktrisul, 2004).

Although the growth of eLearning in Thailand continuously increase, the country was considered to rank below first 40 countries of the world as eLearning readiness country. Refer to Downey and Rattanapian (2003), due to the increasing growth rate of networks and technologies, Thailand ranked in 37th of overall in terms of eLearning readiness

when compared with other nations around the world. In addition, even though several educational institutes especially for higher education level both public and private universities have gradually brought eLearning as the part of their teaching/learning convey to students, but the office of higher education commission still limit to permit the opening of full eLearning program in several universities particularly for master degree level.

As a result this paper was proposed to survey the perspective of thai students toward eLearning study as well as to measure their readiness to study on eLearning mode. This paper would be first to review the concept of eLearning and the trend of eLearning in Thailand. Then the methodology to survey the students was discussed. Finally, the paper would be ended with survey result, conclusion, and recommendation for further studies.

II. DEFINITION OF ELEARNING

eLearning is the transforming learning delivery where allowing to the reach online source of information which is the solution for individual study and can reduce the pride and stimulate the common coalition (Sloan-C, 2007). Horton (2001), proposed that eLearning was the use of Internet and digital technologies to create experiences that educate fellow human beings.

III. ELEARNING IN THAILAND

Thailand has developed a master plan for ICT use in education for the years 2004-2006, and there were four major strategies includes the use of ICT to improve teaching and learning; the use of ICT to enhance the educational management and service effectiveness; the personnel training and developing; and ICT equipment provision and distribution for all educational levels (Suktrisul, 2004).

The trend of eLearning in Thailand tend to grow more and more as many academic institutions especially university level have begun to offer courses through eLearning mode and due to the government plan to

extend the educational opportunity by focusing on eLearning technology. Suktrisul (2004), Universities; schools; and various educational institutions have worked together to strengthen innovate ways to develop education and eLearning will be expanded to all education levels including for teacher training.

According to National Electronic and Computer Technology (2007), eLearning was considered as the new latest learning technology, which were gradually mentioned, and many organizations in Thailand more and more interested to bring this technology to develop the teaching/studying system in their organization. Although the growth of eLearning in Thailand continuously increase, the country was considered to rank below first 40 countries of the world as eLearning readiness country. Refer to Downey and Rattanapian (2003), due to the increasing growth rate of networks and technologies, Thailand ranked in 37th of overall in terms of eLearning readiness when compared with other nations around the world.

According to College of Internet Distance Education, Assumption University (2007), some groups of educational experts have asked the Civil Service Commission or "CSC" of Thailand that whether or not eLearning degree was accepted, but some members of the CSC were not up-to-date and stated that it would not be accepted. As a matter of fact, Prof. Srisakdi Charmonman wrote the first draft of the decree to legalize eLearning in Thailand, and was published in the Royal Gazette, Vol. 122, No. 120 Ng, October 26, 2005, Page 8-10, which allowed universities in Thailand to offer eLearning degree programs and so the graduates of eLearning degree had the same rights and privileges as the graduates of classroom learning.

And according to Downey and Rattanapian (2003), until year 2002, there were approximate 20% of universities in Thailand has offered some form of eLearning / Distance Education programs and most of these offerings were involved with broadcasting of video from one institution to another versus

utilization of Internet-based eLearning environments.

College of Internet Distance Education, Assumption University (2007), in January 2006 was the pioneer or the very first group of eLearning students in degree program in Thailand, as Chulalongkorn University has completed the development of eLearning Bachelor Degree in Software Engineering but had not yet announced when to start offering it through the Internet. Meanwhile, Kasetsart University had announced over 2,000 courses in eLearning but not any complete degree program yet, as well as Ramkhamhang University had announced eLearning courses but not any complete degree program yet also. The actual situation is most universities in Thailand are said to be developing eLearning (College of Internet Distance Education, Assumption University, 2007).

Until year 2013, there were very few learning programs in Thailand opened in eLearning mode which were operated by Graduate School of eLearning, Assumption University includes PH.D. in eLearning

Methodology, Master of Science in Management, Master of Information and Communication Technology, and Master of education in Teaching and Technology. The graduate School of eLearning, Assumption University was developed from College of Internet Distance Education that founded by Prof. Dr. Srisakdi Charmonman.

IV. METHODOLOGY

Structural questionnaire survey through 1,057 Thai students age between 15 and 25 years old who studies in both public and private educational institutes varies from highschool level to master degree level and over were collected in this paper to view their perspective about trend of eLearning as well as their readiness to attend eLearning mode of study. Percentage value was the analysis method to present the result.

V. RESULT

The table below represents the survey result on perspective of Thai students toward eLearning study.

TABLE I
PERSPECTIVE OF THAI STUDENTS TOWARD ELEARING

Perspective	Yes	No	Not sure
Thailand has potential to implement teaching/learning via eLearning mode	73.79	15.52	10.69
It should provide teaching/learning via eLearning mode as the optional channel for learners to source out the knowledge of studying	76.16	15.14	8.70
Interested to study via eLearning mode	74.17	15.33	10.50
Ready to study via eLearning mode	69.82	18.16	12.02
To study via eLearning mode enable to motivate to be more interested lesson studied	73.23	14.38	12.39
To study via eLearning mode enable to have more time on studying in specific lesson	74.74	14.95	10.31

According to the table, there were 73.79% of total samples agreed that Thailand has potential to implement teaching/learning via eLearning mode, while 15.52% of them disagreed, and 10.69% not sure. In addition, there were more than three fourth of total samples or 76.16% agreed that it should provide teaching/learning via eLearning mode

as the optional channel for learners to source out the knowledge of studying, while 15.14% disagreed, and 8.7% not sure. And, there were almost three fourth of total samples or equal to 74.17% interested to study via eLearning mode, while 15.33% did not interest, and 10.5% not sure.

Moreover, there were 69.82% ready to study via eLearning mode, but 18.16% not yet ready, and 12.02% not sure. Then, there were 73.23% agreed that to study via eLearning mode enable to increase their motivation to study, while 14.38% disagreed, and 12.39% not sure. Finally, there were almost three fourth of total samples or equal to 74.74% agreed that to study via eLearning mode enable them to have more time to focus on what they studied, while 14.95% disagreed, and 10.31% not sure.

From the survey of 1,057 samples, it could summarized that there were approximate three fourth of thai students agreed that Thailand has potential to implement teaching/learning via eLearning mode, and should provide teaching/learning via elearning mode as the optional channel for learners to source out the knowledge of studying. In addition, there were 74.17% and 69.82% of thai students interested to study via eLearning mode and ready to study via eLearning mode respectively. Also, more than 70% of total samples agreed that to study via eLearning mode enable to increase their motivation to study as well as to have more time to focus on what they studied.

This paper could summarize that although thai students agreed that Thailand has enough potential to provide eLearning mode of studying as well as majority of thai students themselves ready to study on eLearning, the belong authorities of educational management still not much concern on education via eLearning mode and there are still less number of educational institutions provide full eLearning programs due to the limitation of legal as well as idea and attitude of senior officials belonged to education management in this country.

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(Arranged in the order of citation in the same fashion as the case of Footnotes.)

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