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Mobile, Informal and Lifelong Learning
A UK Policy Perspective

For the last 20 years or so the UK has been what one might call a hyperactive educational policy domain. The role of technology, in particular its harnessing for education, has been no exception. Unlike other European countries, the UK education sector benefits not just from professional associations providing self-help support for educational professionals, but also from a number of so-called ‘quangos’, quasi non-governmental organisations at arms-length of the government, yet tasked with the (support of the) implementation of government policy. In this paper, we will look analytically, and critically at central government policy and implementation in the UK with particular reference to mobile learning in the context of the wider e-learning strategy. In particular, we will look at the trajectories set up by policy documents as well as the work of the British Educational Technology Agency (BECTA) and the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) from formal education at primary, secondary, further and higher education into the use of digital technologies outside formal education and the world of work. We will examine the government’s conceptualisation of informal and mobile learning, assess its appropriacy and discuss the role, and potential of mobile devices for learning within it.

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