eLearning as a Means of Training for Companies in the 21st Century
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The rapid evolution of information and communication technologies is currently having a profound impact on the way of doing business. Over the past few years we have witnessed the transformation of a whole series of sectors. Bookshops, music and banking are perhaps the most visible and talked about examples of the impact of the Internet on established business structures. Nevertheless, recently we have also seen the transformation of other sectors, as is the case of the education and corporate training sector.

At the beginning of the new millennium, more and more companies now consider learning and training to be a powerful competitive tool. The increase in the capacity of companies to process information has brought a growth in the rate of creation of new products and services, the production cycles have been reduced, the useful life periods of the products have been shortened, etc. All this means that information and specific training quickly become obsolete, and so continuous training today is more necessary than ever before. The constant development of knowledge and abilities, which must be effective and speedy, at any time and in any place, is thus required.

This is all taking place within the context of the majority of developed countries having a patent lack of qualified workers. According to a study carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers, seventy percent of the Fortune 1000 companies cite the lack of trained employees as being the principle obstacle to sustained growth. Companies’ training departments are finding more and more that traditional training is insufficient as a means to meet the growing demand for training, since it has a limited physical infrastructure, a high cost, and employees do not have time to be absent from work during relatively long periods of time in order to receive information.

All this has led to an important increase in the eLearning initiatives. A whole series of new players has emerged, concentrated on three segments. Firstly, content providers, producers and intellectual property editors, who can be taught using a series of methods and means, with either physical or "virtual" attendance, whether all at once or individually. Secondly, technology providers who create the tools, the corporate systems and all the hardware and software necessary for eLearning training, creation, use, delivery and management. Finally, the new service providers which offer a variety of services, such as education and training portals and providers of online consultancies for training needs and potential. It is envisaged that all this will have a great impact on the corporate training and education sector.