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Using Cellular Phones in Higher Education: Mobile Access to Online Course Materials

Access to the Internet, which to date was mainly limited to desktop computers, is now enabled through a wide range of portable devices. These devices include cellular phones, which are small, widespread, and afford a high level of intimacy. Information needed at a certain time, location or immediacy are typical kinds of information that are natural candidates for access via cellular phones (Seppälä and Alamäki, 2002). Four mLearning pilot projects are now in progress at the Open University of Israel (OUI) which include mobile accessibility to (1) discussion groups held on the websites of academic courses; (2) Video lessons (live & VOD); (3) audio books for students with learning disabilities (for cellular and MP3 players); and (4) administrative information (SMS messages). This paper reports on these four experiments, examining the types of use students may make with their cellular phones and other mobile devices to access support learning materials.