International issues in using web technologies in higher education.

The purpose of this paper is to indicate the role of international issues in using web technologies in higher education. The main focus is on common uses of web technologies in developing countries and related issues such as accessibility, high price of hardware, software, lack of the knowledge of web technologies, computer phobia and computer illiteracy of students in the higher education of these countries. The second focus of this paper is to identify the role of cultural factors such as language, traditional culture and stereotypical impressions affecting the use of web technologies among students in the universities of developing countries. The educational systems’ goals in the primary and secondary schools and the schools’ culture and curriculum are also important in the success of using web technologies in the higher education of developing countries. Based upon the results of this study, recommendations will be made for success implementation of web technologies.

Participants were samples of students and professors from different majors of the educational department of Isfahan University. Both graduate and undergraduate students were included in this research. Semi-structured Interviews, questionnaires, observations and archive data were the most important data gathering instruments.

The results of this research (2001-2002) confirm the results of other researchers from various universities of Iran and other developing countries. The results indicate that students in both levels have used a few capabilities of the web technologies. The most important use of web technologies was for doing dissertation and research projects. No courses were presented by web technologies. Both groups were positive toward using computers and they believed that web technologies are useful for communicating and acquiring new information. Access to hardware and software, computer illiteracy, lack of research skills and web technologies knowledge were reported by the participants. Cultural issues related to social attitudes and beliefs were other expressed problems. The results of this study indicate that for using web technologies in developing countries, some consideration in different areas should be taken. These considerations would be discussed in this paper.