



In the Lab of Tomorrow - InLoT

The project “In the Lab of Tomorrow” aims at investigating the feasibility of a successful and innovative service for science teaching and learning as a business case. The project looks upon informal science education as an opportunity to transcend from traditional classroom based teaching, to a “feel and interact” user experience, allowing for learning “anytime, anywhere”.

In recent years, many studies have highlighted an alarming decline in young people’s interest for key science studies and mathematics. Since the origins of the declining interest for these studies are found largely in the way science is taught in schools, this will be the main focus. In this context, whereas the science education community mostly agrees that pedagogical practices based on inquiry-based methods are more effective, the reality of classroom practice is that in the majority of European countries, these methods are simply not being implemented.

The purpose of the InLot services is to deepen the students’ understanding of scientific concepts by effectively associate every day activities with scientific enquiry and experimentation and strengthen their appreciation of scientific processes. The project aims at investigating the feasibility of the business case of the use of wearable computers and wireless technologies and sensors for educational purposes. These pedagogical concepts and learning practices will implement a set of demonstrators (scenarios for science teaching), employing advanced and highly interactive technologies and also personalised ubiquitous learning paradigms in order to enhance the effectiveness and quality of the teaching and learning process. The consortium believes that in addition to enriching the repertoire of learning opportunities, the blending introduced by the InLot service will help meet the challenge of 'science for all,' i.e., providing science education opportunities tailored to diverse and heterogeneous populations of future citizens.

The project’s main objectives are:

- To demonstrate and pilot the Lab of Tomorrow service with high school teachers and students.
- To perform an extended validation study of the InLot service, concentrating on user acceptance and interoperability as a major input for the final business plan.
- To develop a detailed business plan that will provide a technical and commercial overview of the value of the chain of the services. In this framework a clear and sound feasibility study of the business case will be achieved.
- To develop the marketing strategy and the associated short and medium term action plan for the full deployment of the services provided.

The main aim of the InLot service is to support the users of the Lab of Tomorrow system in their classroom activities. At the same time users will have the opportunity to become members of the InLot users’ community in different countries who will be able to exchange educational and training materials. The InLot service will offer to teachers the means to convert existing learning material in the form of Learning Objects and characterize it with appropriate metadata for the science domain. Furthermore, the InLot service will also offer to the user the opportunity to search the Web-based Learning Object Repository using appropriate search criteria based on the metadata of the Learning Objects. Teachers will be able to upload their materials and use the materials uploaded from other teachers. Some demo scenarios will be uploaded from the pedagogical team mainly as guidelines and ideas for the use of the system.

EU Funding	1 M Euro
Duration	June 2007 – November 2008
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