Autonomous learning: researchers develop Study Buddy for professional development

Digitalization is gaining speed. To keep up with it, lifelong learning is becoming increasingly important for professional success. But how do you find the right course for your needs and learning preferences among the many available options? Study Buddy, the virtual companion for professional development, aims to show the way through the jungle of options. The joint project with the participation of Jacobs University Bremen is funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

Increasing learning success, identifying gaps in knowledge and understanding at an early stage, reducing the dropout rate in continuing education measures, and supporting learners’ knowledge gain are the central goals of the project. “The Study Buddy knows the learner. He knows which methods are best to acquire the desired knowledge, which career steps are to be pursued, and with which learning offer these goals can be achieved,” said Christoph Lattemann, Professor of Business Administration and Information Management at Jacobs University. He is supervising the project together with psychologist Pia Gebbing.

Artificial intelligence (AI) plays a crucial role in the development of an individualized, rather than a standardized, learning offer. While interacting with users, Study Buddy is designed to identify their needs and provide learning support that adapts to their habits and circumstances. “The individual user is the focus,” said Lattemann. “For example, if the user prefers and works best when learning with videos, then the user will be offered them.” For education providers, this means that they will be able to adapt their offerings to meet needs with increased flexibility.

In developing Study Buddy, the researchers at Jacobs University will build on their experiences with digital learning content during the pandemic. "We have been proving for almost a year and a half how well online teaching can work," Lattemann emphasized. Study Buddy also incorporates experiences from another research project, which focuses on the question of how the creativity of individuals can be promoted by means of digital teaching.

The joint project is being conducted under the direction of the Institute of Information Systems at the Technical University of Braunschweig and its Center for Continuing Education. In addition to Jacobs University, AKAD Bildungsgesellschaft and Oskar Kämmer School are also involved. Other associated partners are ai-z GmbH, swiss moonshot, the Braunschweig Chamber of Industry and Commerce, and the Braunschweig City Center Working Committee. The project is being funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research for a period of three years with a total of around 1.6 million euros.

About Jacobs University Bremen:
Studying in an international community. Obtaining a qualification to work on responsible tasks in a digitized and globalized society. Learning, researching and teaching across academic disciplines and countries. Strengthening people and markets with innovative solutions and advanced training programs. This is what Jacobs University Bremen stands for. Established as a private, English-medium campus university in Germany in 2001, it is continuously achieving top
results in national and international university rankings. Its more than 1,550 students come from more than 110 countries with around 80% having relocated to Germany for their studies. Jacobs University’s research projects are funded by the German Research Foundation or the EU Research and Innovation program as well as by globally leading companies.

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