



Using tablet computers in the agricultural sector in Spain



Telefónica Learning Services (TLS) has been working with the Agrarian Association of Young Farmers (ASAJA) in Spain to develop learning and training opportunities using tablet devices.

The key objective of the project was to introduce new technologies to boost farmers' computer skills and to help them become part of the information society, whilst at the same time enhancing their productivity and efficiency on the farm.

This training was subsidised by the Tripartite Foundation for Continuing

Training (Spanish acronym FTFE) through its contacts programme. ASAJA contracted Telefónica Learning Services to manage the training programme.

Farmers study in Teruel – An example

In 2012, following repeated requests from farmers wishing to learn more about new technologies and their applications in agriculture, a study was set up in three municipalities in the province of Teruel: Tornos, Calamocha and Torralba. Forty-six farmers with a basic level of education and who lived in remote locations were given iPads

with 3G connectivity. The iPads with 3G were found to be very useful for these students, who spend most of their time outdoors because connectivity is guaranteed anywhere. These students not only live in places which are not easily accessible, but also move from one place to another working in different fields and farms. They were motivated to learn and communicate with each other and the teachers. The teachers and students appreciated the high specification of the devices they had been given, and valued the ability to consult online training manuals.

About Telefónica Learning Services

Telefónica Learning Services (TLS) is part of the Telefónica group of companies. Launched in 2011, it is responsible for Telefónica's eLearning services in 20 countries.

TLS brings together a multiskilled team of educators, consultants, technology experts, web developers/designers, subject matter experts, teachers, tutors and student assessors to reduce the digital 'divide' in employees' skills and professional development

Their bespoke learning solutions for companies and public administrations include learning management systems, content and services for computers, tablets and smartphones and working with social media and augmented reality. They reach more than 500,000 students every year via many different organisations.

The Agrarian Association of Young Farmers

is an independent agrarian association that looks after the interests of its affiliates. It has more than 200,000 members working directly on farms, both as owners and tenants, including family members who work in operating activities. It is known as ASAJA, its Spanish acronym.

See www.asajanet.com.

How the learning is organised

TLS has been offering training in the use of PDAs to the agricultural sector since 2008, and more than 250 students have been involved. TLS considers that students are best taught using a mixed methodology of eLearning and tutorials as, for professional reasons, they cannot attend full-time face-to-face courses. The eLearning training platform (a+ LMS) is used which allows users to interact with online contents and trainers to track students' progress using SCORM-compliant procedures.¹ Online facilitators guide students' learning and encourage student interaction. a+ LMS also allows both synchronous communication in real-time, and asynchronous communication where students and teachers connect at different times.

The students are trained to use the devices in the following range of ways:

- to connect to the Internet, and elements such as Wi-Fi and Bluetooth
- to operate GPS
- to enhance their computer literacy
- to synchronise with a PC, including calendar functions.

Farmers receive 150 hours of eLearning training and 40 hours of tutorials, involving a maximum number of 15 students. In order to secure the participation of the farmers, TLS also arrange an initial face-to-face training session with the teacher to ensure that all



devices are correctly connected using Wi-Fi and that iTunes synchronisation could take place.

Once the training has been completed, it is expected that the farmers can use their devices to organise farming calendars, control the irrigation times and better record their farming outputs.

Successful students are issued with a certificate of completion and allowed to keep their devices as a gift for participating in the project.

Conclusions

- Giving each student their own personal device eliminated the digital divide.
- 3G connectivity, coupled with portable devices, meant that learning was not restricted to any geographical or physical space. It is important to train people to use the devices independently in different places.

- Participants were helped to acquire basic information communication and technology skills before the classroom sessions through online training.
- The combination of theoretical and practical education using face-to-face and online teaching methods helped to keep participants actively engaged.
- Being able to adapt content from academic environment so that it is accessible to everyone helps to eliminate social, geographical and trade barriers.

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About GSMA

The GSMA represents nearly 800 mobile operators and has over 6 billion connections worldwide. We are working in mEducation to help bring the operator and education industries together to address market barriers, foster collaboration and speed up the adoption of mobile education services. For further information please contact us at meducation@gsm.org or visit www.gsma.com

"Students are very interested in these devices and applications. It should be available in more municipalities, as there is a large demand from farmers for this type of training."

Jose Soler Marco, Teacher, Teruel



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