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# The Globalisation of Open and Flexible Learning: Considerations for Planners and Managers

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## **Abstract**

Distance education institutions have always managed to teach students beyond the frontiers of the jurisdiction within which they exist as physical entities. The development of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has greatly expanded the number of institutions offering programmes on a regional or global basis. This article looks at some of the problems that such institutions have faced, and continue to face, in terms of delivery of materials, student access to technology, structures, and maintenance of consistency and quality of service. The article ends with advice to planners and managers on the issues that they need to pay particular attention.

## **Introduction**

The development of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has greatly helped the emergence of global distance education systems. New institutions claiming to deliver courses globally are emerging; existing institutions are trying to change their teaching strategies in order to position themselves to deliver their courses more effectively on a global basis; and commentators are predicting the globalisation of education as more and more institutions, in the face of competition both real and perceived, adopt online technologies in order to teach globally. What does the educational planner and manager have to think about when he or she begins to think about "going global"?

In theory there are no bounds to the reach of distance education so that, in an increasingly globalised society, we should be seeing the emergence of truly global distance teaching institutions. Yet not every distance teaching institution operating internationally is really in the globalised distance learning business. There is what Mason (1998: 15) called a "sliding scale" of provision... "from traditional distance education, to international distance education, to online courses, to virtual universities, and finally edging to globalisation". Mason (1998: 12), for example, points to the fact that by far the largest number of "pseudo-global" courses – and most originate from North America – have no face-to-face requirements, and all course material, administration and support are provided electronically or by post. The majority of students are North Americans - whether resident in the USA or Canada, or in another country.

Can we therefore define what we mean by a global open distance learning system (ODL)? For the purposes of this paper the assumption is that a global distance education system offers courses

directly to students using distance education technologies across a number of countries – possibly on a regional basis (for example, across Africa, or within Latin America) or on a multi-regional basis. It does this in a conscious and planned way. This rules out those systems that have some kind of half-hearted *laissez-faire* policy that allows students resident in other countries to enrol on its courses without in any way trying to meet the needs of such students. It also rules out those institutions that sell their courses to other providers. A good example of an institution that buys courses from a number of universities in Australia, Britain and New Zealand is the Open University of Hong Kong. Perraton (2000: 167) has perceptively characterised such arrangements as examples "of old-fashioned trade in advanced goods from rich countries to poor". Such deals are sometimes referred to as franchising arrangements but there is a level at which franchising in these terms is merely the export of learning materials packaged into a pre-determined course, for use under an agreement by another independent provider. Such agreements usually lay down constraints on the adaptation and use of the materials. What they do not constitute is a formal franchising framework which sees franchisees adopt the logo, products, delivery methods and philosophy of the parent organisation. Such franchises do exist in education – for example, Sylvan Learning Center, which has been described as the "McDonald's of Education" (Ritzer, 1993: 116), but have yet to really take off in ODL. We will, however, look at one approach that begins to look like a distance education franchising arrangement later.

### **The rationale for globalised ODL**

The rationale for developing global ODL systems arises from a range of motivations, some altruistic, others less so. Mason (1998: 4-10) identified some of the arguments favouring global distance education: the benefits to students of participating in a course with colleagues drawn from across the world; the provision of access to high quality education wherever a student lives; the way that scarce, top quality expertise can be made available to students anywhere in the world; the provision of access to curricula that embrace a broader spectrum of knowledge than any one institution might accomplish; the search for new revenue in a global market place; and the empowerment of learners who can now choose courses from a range of institutions previously closed to them. To these might have been added arguments based on cost-efficiency (the development costs of a course can now be shared across not just a local, national market, but across a global market). Yet against such arguments are concerns about the dangers of increased learner isolation as students learn from the screen, and not through interaction with their peers and teachers; the reduction of education to a packaged consumer good; and the globalisation of content, with a consequential loss of cultural diversity and richness.

### **The problems of teaching across jurisdictional and cultural boundaries**

Any institution that crosses jurisdictional boundaries faces particular difficulties as it deals with different legal and financial frameworks. Most distance teaching institutions that teach across jurisdictional boundaries began to do so in response to individual student demand, rather than as a matter of conscious policy from the start. However, there are distance teaching institutions that from their very inception have been truly multi-national in their scope. The University of the South Pacific (USP) is a particularly early example of a successful multi-national extension project based on second generation distance education technologies (that is, educational broadcasting and conferencing via satellite, coupled with the use of printed and audiotape correspondence teaching materials and local support services). USP, which covers twelve Pacific countries spread across four time zones, began teaching in 1971 (the same year that the UK Open University). It "pioneered the sustained use of satellite technology for education delivery" (Matthewson & Va'a, 1999: 283) and, with the support of the governments of all the states that it serves, it has been remarkably successful. The University of the West Indies also uses distance

education methods to teach across fourteen states in the Caribbean. UWI faces the problem that there is no comprehensive plan for tertiary education within the CARICOM (Caribbean Community) countries. It has suffered from long periods of deficit funding because of arrears in subventions from the participating governments. Such difficulties inevitably complicate publicly-funded multinational institutions.

Even within a single country, however, internal barriers can cause problems. In Germany responsibility for higher education is vested with the states (*Länder*), making national provision more difficult. The FernUniversität was set up by the Government of North Rhine-Westphalia, and although it operates across Germany, its local roots secured it "a sound legal basis, a relatively simple way of funding, and a clear political responsibility" (Peters, 1997: 58). The difficulties came where local *Länder* (such as Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg) refused to fund local study centres to support. Crossing jurisdictional boundaries even within a single country can thus create considerable problems for state-funded institutions. The fact that the National Technological University has succeeded in the USA where the ill-fated University of Mid-America failed probably has as much to do with the fact that NTU operates as a private consortium made up of a small independent co-ordinating centre, the engineering schools of leading American universities which provide the courses, and businesses that subscribe in order to get access to advanced training for their staff – an arrangement that provides all the stakeholders with an element of gain.

Crossing national boundaries certainly adds to the logistical and organisational problems of distance teaching institutions. The British Open University, for example, rapidly found that the portability of its system encouraged its students to keep studying even when they moved away from the United Kingdom. The existence of a fairly large community of ex-patriots in Brussels, the administrative centre of the European Community (EC), led the University to open a study centre there in the 1980s, and this rapidly accepted both British and other nationals living in Belgium. By the early 1990s the pressure was on to expand elsewhere in Europe, and the University found itself formally offering its courses for study anywhere in the European Community (and also in Switzerland, largely because Geneva is like Brussels a centre of international bureaucracy). Initially the University was funded as if these EC-based students were UK-based, thus the (then) UK Department for Education and Science gave the University a per capita allowance equivalent to the amount it put into the University in support of funded UK students. Later on this allowance was withdrawn, leaving the University to depend solely on the fees that the individual EC students paid to cover the costs of its European operations. It will come as no surprise that this change in government policy led to a change in the way expansion in Europe was regarded by the University.

But if funding was one question to be faced, other issues were thrown up by the logistical and pedagogic problems of extending the Open University's teaching system across a continental canvass. The University teaches by a combination of means based on textual, audio, video and electronic media, home experimental kits, and local support through study centres and local tutors. Providing a level of service to its mainland European students that matched that on offer to UK students proved problematic. The postal service – the usual method of getting course materials to students in the UK – was not as reliable in some of the countries of the EC, resulting in delayed and lost mailings. Home experiment kits which contain chemicals and electrical equipment, and are an integral part of some courses, were difficult to despatch abroad given different customs and safety regulations, and would not necessarily work in countries whose power systems differed from the UK's. These difficulties precluded some courses from being offered outside the UK. The UK study support system, based on the employment of local tutor-counsellors and tutors, was implicitly designed to work in a system that provided local

group tutorials at study centres convenient to the students, and enabled full-time staff to monitor the work of the tutors. Although there were areas of the UK where the concentration of students on any one course made it difficult to set up a local study group, expansion into Europe meant that, with the exception of relatively few courses in relatively few centres (Brussels, Geneva), most courses in most places were being offered to students who were so isolated from other students taking the same course that local support services on the UK model were just unviable. Telephone tuition, one way in which the University gets round the problem of the isolated student in the UK, becomes more difficult and more expensive where international tariffs kick-in. Postal and telephone-based advisory and tutorial support, offered by tutors and advisors who might not even live in the same country as the student, worked to a degree, but not as effectively nor as cheaply as the local support system in the UK. Access to study centres was problematic if not impossible, though some were set up in Europe, mainly in major cities. New roles, of Country Co-ordinator, emerged to provide some kind of local support, but this only emphasised that the UK-model could not readily be transferred to Europe.

Operating overseas can also expose one to the problems of any international business: exchange rate fluctuations; restrictions on foreign exchange and the export of money from the country of operation to pay for services sourced from another jurisdiction; political turmoil, civil unrest and war. Overseas operations may also require trained staff, and in many countries suitably qualified and experienced persons, able to run a distance teaching programme, may be in short supply. The option of sending people in on short teaching and student support assignments exists, of course, and some institutions have done this – for example, the Open University flew experienced tutors normally resident in Europe into Eritrea to support the delivery of an MBA programme there (Dence & O’Toole, 1999: 57) – but such practices add to cost.

Dence and O’Toole (1999: 57) point to another issue: the need to adapt approaches to local situations. In Eritrea, apart from the need to fly tutors into the country to support the students, ‘the absence of computer conferencing facilities and limitations in the local availability of market/business information ... necessitated the adaptation of some of individual assignment briefs and provision of additional information resources’. Experience also showed that there were cultural barriers to the understanding of some of the materials as well as to a full understanding of what was required in the assignments. Course writers writing in the main for students in advanced industrialised countries assumed tacit knowledge on the part of the students that was actually not valid in a developing country context (ibid.: 58). Cultural sensitivities may raise their head. There were also language barriers and problems to be overcome. None of this is surprising in itself, but it needs to be planned for.

Dual-mode institutions – those that have courses taught by traditional as well as by distance means – may face additional problems. A factor affecting the operations of the University of the West Indies’ distance education programme is the lower priority accorded distance education within the University. The University “finds it difficult to sustain the broader vision [of a regional commitment above local identification] when so much of its life is firmly campus-based” (Brandon, 1999: 135). This is not a problem restricted to those dual-mode institutions with international extension programmes, nor is it one that exists only in financially stretched institutions. Ellis (2000) outlines the problems faced by the Pennsylvania State University World Campus, Penn State’s electronic distance education campus, when it comes to gaining the active support of the faculties and academic and administrative staff. It is not just that campus-based students and research commitments seem to take precedence; it is that there is often a lack of compensatory measures and incentives to persuade people to give up time to support the off-campus programme.

## Technology for global ODL

From another perspective, however, the problems of expanding a second generation distance teaching system to cover other jurisdictions are not just unsurprising; they are increasingly irrelevant. Third generation distance education based on the web apparently gets round many of the problems faced by second generation systems. Course material (themselves potentially multi-media in content) can be delivered electronically not least because many of them are no longer physical goods, but "ethereal goods" (Thompson, 1982) without physical substance; tutorial support and advice can be delivered through electronic mail and computer conferencing systems. These systems can support a higher level of interaction, and both tutors and students are learning how to use the systems effectively. Indeed, new roles are emerging – for example, the e-moderator role (Salmon, 2000). Moreover, these systems can work: an increasing number of institutions are offering courses globally.

Educational provision via the Internet is forecast to increase dramatically. The Gartner Group (1998) predicted that competition would lead 80% of traditional higher education institutions in the United States to deliver 60% of undergraduate content through distance learning by 2003, and, extrapolating from this forecast, to predict that by 2003 more than 50% of all colleges and universities globally will be offering courses to students anytime, from anywhere, to anyplace. This would meet the pressure from students for convenience - education by delivering programmes into their homes – as Ritzer (1998: 11) puts it, 'like Domino's [Pizzas], universities are increasingly in the business of home delivery'.

These changes are being fuelled by the development of ICT technologies – including the emergence of new applications of Web technology, the development of increased bandwidth on the Web, improvements in the quality of the Web, the development of satellite technologies that obviate the need for landlines, miniaturisation, increased memory, and more flexible displays (Oblinger, 2001). However, there is a need for some kind of realism. Not everyone has access to the level of ICTs available in the developed world. The whole of Africa, for example, with 739m people, has 14m phonelines, fewer than the number in Manhattan. Of these, 80% are in six countries. In Britain in 1999 there were 15m Internet subscribers; in Africa there were 1m (Atkinson, 2000). The cost of accessing ICTs may be much higher relative to disposable incomes. The problem with these disparities is that they raise the very distinct danger that globalised distance education will turn its back on questions of equity, and focus instead on those market sectors that can both afford the technology and afford to buy the products that the technology brings to market (c.f. Dhanarajan, 2001).

The development of e-education has also thrown up new problems focused on the copyright implications of electronic text. The ethereal assets of a distance teaching institution and of its teachers become very important. For the purposes of definition

"an ethereal good ... is one that is not tangible, not expropriable and can be copied easily, at a cost that is less than that of a bona fide version. .... It is not tangible, in that it cannot be touched. Nor is it expropriable in that, although I can get back what I gave you, you may have made copies: so just getting back what I gave you is no insurance that you no longer have it. Such a good is clearly appropriable, but never expropriable with certainty. It is these unusual characteristics that lead to the fundamental problems in dealing with ethereal goods, namely the problem of property rights and the difficulty of evaluation" (Thompson, 1982: 16)

As Thompson remarks, property rights and value are closely linked: "Property rights are only

important when there is some value in the property" (ibid, p. 16). In first and second generation distance education systems the problems posed by ethereal goods did not arise because property rights over information were closely tied to the physical entities (books, audiotapes, videotapes) that carried the information. It was these physical embodiments that were assigned value. In effect the information went along free. But technology, having initially made illegal copying much easier, has now cut the relationship between the information and its physical manifestation in the vehicle that carries it. The problem is thus both to protect what can be easily appropriated, and to find ways of assigning value to it and collecting that value when it is used.

The University of South Australia exemplified the problem facing providers in the mid-1990s. Given the restrictions imposed by current copyright law, the University decided not to use third party material in its on-line courses because there can be no question of individual students making a copy under "fair dealing" provisions (Moran, 1996), or of transporting the material electronically into countries where it was not cleared for copyright. But even if there were no legal problems of this kind, there is a need to protect against indiscriminate copying and re-use of copyrighted materials. There are technical solutions: protection can be afforded through encryption (scrambling documents), steganography (preserving their integrity), and "watermarking" (building in electronic traces to trace infringement), but this is only part of the overall problem. Another issue is to ensure within an electronic environment that copyright owners are paid for use of their intellectual property. Direct billing on access to materials solves this issue. Indeed, guarding access to the course site so that only registered students can access the course, and building in electronic billing and payment methods that will enable students to be charged for materials, ethereal goods, and services as the occasion demands, are central to the commercial exploitation of the opportunities presented by the globalising tendencies of distance education.

## **Structure**

The development of Information, Communication and Web technologies provides not just the means to develop a global education business, but also a way of devising new structures to bring this about. The development of appropriate structures is as important as anything else in the development of a globalised distance education system. How might this be done?

### ***Vertically integrated global teaching organisations***

Many institutions are now teaching globally. An early example was Wye College, one of the constituent colleges of the University of London. Drawing on its existing residential course, the College developed a distance-taught diploma and master's courses in agricultural development, mainly for students overseas. Currently the College recruits around 900 students drawn from about 20 countries world-wide. Fees are set at a commercial level and the courses are viable largely because this is a highly specialised niche market, with most students funded by governments or sponsors. In its early years, reliant as it was on second generation distance education technologies, the delivery of the programme 'to a geographically far-flung group of students, many in isolated areas not noted for good communications, presented an awesome challenge' (Bryson & Hakimian, 1992: 107). They were challenges the College chose to manage itself, from inception through delivery to examination and graduation. In other words, the College adopted a vertically integrated approach, retaining close control over all the operations and processes necessary to deliver the programme. More recent vertically integrated approaches include the Pennsylvania State University's World Campus system, and some of the virtual universities that have been set up in recent years. Oblinger (2001) believes that higher education has now come to be seen as big business, providing investment opportunities to venture

capitalists. New firms, such as Hungry Minds, SmartForce, OnlineLearning.net, and Headlight.com, hope to exploit the global education market. Organisations such as the Kentucky Commonwealth Virtual University see themselves as a kind of educational services and utility provider, while organisations with global ambitions include firms like 1 to 80.com, based in Singapore and aiming to offer a wide range of educational and leisure courses to Asian workers and corporations.

### ***Integrated disaggregated value chains***

Distance education and e-business, with its inherent tendency to divide work up and divisionalise into component subsystems, makes it possible for what has normally been regarded as an integrated process, the education of a student, to be disaggregated – broken up into its component parts. Thus curriculum development, content development, student enrolment, student support, assessment, and credentialling, can all be disaggregated rather than provided through a vertically integrated structure. An integrated e-education business may therefore bring together a range of partners – academic faculties, providers of software authoring tools (eCollege.com), software publishers, providers of learning environments (Lotus, Microsoft), online applications (CollegeEdge, IBM), teleconferencing companies, tutoring and testing centres (Sylvan, Kaplan Princeton), accrediting associations and licensing agencies, in a whole range of structural combinations that act as "value-nets" rather than "value chains" (see Oblinger 2001). Cenquist, an international alliance, brings together the Oregon Graduate Institute, University of Texas, University of Adelaide, and EC/Monterrey Tech (c.f. Oblinger, 2001).

One approach to the development of a global educational business is based on franchising arrangements. Although people would probably not describe it as a franchise, the Mexican Telescundaria system, which has operated since 1967 with considerable success in Mexico, has been adopted at national level by several of the governments in the region (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala and Panama, and with pilot projects in Bolivia and Colombia). A more recent example is the African Virtual University which has been funded by the World Bank to develop and buy in live and pre-recorded broadcast, and computer-based teaching materials including textbooks, that can then be made available to African universities via satellite. The one-way traffic in knowledge from rich to poor countries is underlined by Okuni (2000), who points out that the "participating universities in USA and Ireland will provide (pre)packaged academic programmes" to the African universities participating in the project. Generally franchising agreements restrict the ways in which the purchasing institution uses the materials they buy in, though some agreements allow the local institution to replace a proportion of the course materials with locally produced materials more reflective of the local culture. This kind of model underpins the operation of the UK Open University's Business School in the countries of Eastern Europe, where a limited proportion of the materials can be locally generated. However, the AVU for example plans to develop course materials within Africa for potential use by the whole system – making it less of a franchise-based organisation (as Perraton, 2000: 167 describes it), and more of a value-net organisation.

These new kinds of organisations throw up new challenges for planners and management, including the management of strategic alliances (still quite rare) and the provision of services around performance contracts that build in quality assurance processes and penalties. Indeed, in all of these cases one could argue that the real management problem is a service management problem – how to offer a consistent educational service globally.

### **An emphasis on service**

One of the problems facing distance education at this time is a concern that the new providers are more interested in profit than quality service. David Noble, a fierce critic of the commercialising tendencies of distance education, has pointed to the tendency of nineteenth and twentieth century commercial distance education to rely on drop-out money for profit – that is, the profit gained from fees paid upfront by students who drop-out before they have cost the service-provider anything – and their tendency to fail to support students because they were concerned with keeping costs down (Noble, 2000). Noble believes that the commercial element in distance education is even stronger now, and that many of the online programmes now on offer are ‘being delivered by poorly paid and overworked low-status instructors’ for commercial rather than educational ends. That there is an element of this is no doubt true, but there is another route: that education will come to see itself as a service industry, open to competition and to the demands of its customers for a quality, low cost product. A research study conducted by Arthur Levine (1993:4) found that in the US higher education is not the centre of most university students’ lives. Levine’s report said that students

"want education to be nearby and to operate during convenient hours – preferably round the clock. ... They want ... short lines, and polite and efficient personnel and services. They also want high high-quality products but are eager for low costs. They are willing to comparison shop – placing a premium on time and money. ... they want a stripped-down version of college without student affairs, extracurricular activity, residence life, varsity sport, campus chaplains .... All they want of higher education is simple procedures, good service, quality courses, and low costs. They are bringing to higher education exactly the same consumer expectations that they have for every other commercial enterprise with which they deal".

In this climate, successful operators will need to adopt service management approaches to deliver a quality product. Part of this will be achieved through the application of new technologies that favour the delivery of a customer focused service of consistent quality. The fact that many of these technologies will revolve around ICTs and the Web means that this development too will fit in with the globalising tendencies of distance education.

The use of new technologies will also favour innovations that create new roles, new social links, and new types of social behaviour within a service context. This is a form of social innovation. At one level this can involve greater *client participation* in the process of ‘production’ of the service. Self-help and self-service concepts have revolutionised banks, restaurants and petrol stations. Similarly, the provision of on-line services with access to information, advice and guidance, or to automatic enrolment and billing facilities, will enable students to do far more for themselves in the future. This hands them greater control of the relevant process by *enabling* the customer, and it also helps to reduce costs. It does however reduce the opportunities for proactive intervention in some of the processes – for example, opportunities to provide detailed advice on course choice at enrolment (Rumble, 2000).

Social innovation may also create new structures and roles. One of the problems often laid at the feet of distance education is that it involves a division of labour, with the result that some of the jobs in distance education industry (for example, that of correspondence tutor) are heavily circumscribed. Critics of Fordist distance education point to the resulting degradation of academic work, involving both deskilling and loss of power. But distance education, by exploiting the utilisation of "unfocused human energy" (Normann, 1991: 25) (that is, the ‘spare time’ of people who have jobs in other organisations, or are newly retired, and who want to work in an academic organisation), may create opportunities for people on a global basis – particularly as the use of ICTs will enable large numbers of home-based workers to participate as a network



of service providers.

Perhaps the key challenge in service organisations is to maintain quality. Normann (1991: 16) argues that "most services are the result of social acts which take place in direct contact between the customer and representatives of the service company". What happens during this interaction determines how the customer's perception of quality. This is what Normann refers to as "the moment of truth". In large service providers there may well be tens of thousands such moments of truth each day, hence the challenge if quality is to be consistent.

Well-designed service systems must be reproducible. Reproducibility depends on identifying the absolutely essential elements of the service and designing effective ways of controlling and reproducing those elements. These elements cannot be over-complex or unclear. Indeed, successful service systems seem to be simple and uncomplicated (Normann, 1991: 40, 45). Clear definition of the components of the service, and the management of student expectations, will be a key part of any successful educational service. Staff training will have a key role to play here. Normann (1991: 77) suggests that staff training needs to focus on providing the trainee with opportunities for personal growth and development; on modelling the desired behaviours and getting trainees to practice these; and on infusing the employee with the company's values. Although there are other approaches, Normann seems to prefer strategies that increase the discretion of contact staff. Such approaches rely on training to deliver consistency. Neither of the alternative strategies of removing as much of the power from the moment of truth, and putting it in the back office, nor of reducing the discretion of the contact staff, thus standardising their situation and behaviour, finds favour with him (*ibid.*: 72). Indeed, within an academic community, it is unlikely that these alternative approaches would work. The key must therefore be to define the core service in simple terms, while leaving staff considerable discretion as to how they deliver service within the values espoused by the institution. That way, one relies on their professionalism. Moreover, by acknowledging that professionalism, one enhances their self-esteem – yet another feature of the well-designed service system (*ibid.*: 43).

In many ways Normann's approach fits in well with the view that the new technologies may enable the emergence of a post-Fordist approach to education, that relies on the professionalism of staff to deliver a high quality academic service. How, then, does one build in an incentive for staff to give of their best? One way forward is to enable the customer to rank and publish on the net the quality of the service as they perceive it. Customer comments placed alongside the e-moderator/e-tutor's name, and customer rating of the course materials and of the value of the course, may help to provide assurance to others about the quality of the product and of the work of individual service providers. Coupled with procedures for the validation of courses, this would do much to reassure users that they were dealing with a globally recognised provider. In a globally accessible system, this could be a vital safeguard to stop the proliferation of shoddy providers.

## **Conclusions**

As Perraton (2000: 148) reminds us, the new ICTs raise all the familiar problems of access, student support, costs and culture. They also raise a range of management problems. Those planning a global distance education system will need to find solutions to these problems. The big ones seem to be:

- Designing an appropriate structure – whether vertically integrated, franchise-based, or value-net oriented, that will deliver products and services globally.
- Devising an appropriate technology strategy to underpin a global distance education programme.

(See Bates's 1995 ACTIONS model [Access – Costs – Teaching/Learning – Interactivity and user-friendliness – Organisational Issues – Novelty – and Speed] for the issues that ought to underpin the choice of technology, and Daniel, 1996, on the development of an institutional technology strategy within a higher education institution).

- Devising procedures and frameworks that will provide a satisfactory and consistent level of service to students anytime, anyplace (see Rumble, 2000 for a discussion of some of the issues that need to be considered).
- Devising an appropriate approach to enable distance education courses to be delivered globally across different cultures (an issue that affects content, pedagogy, and assessment).
- Designing attractive service roles that will support the service delivery model, rather than working against it (see Rumble, 2000, for comments on this aspect).
- Overcoming the logistical and organisational problems that arise when programmes are delivered transnationally.
- Managing intellectual property and copyright problems.
- Coping with the various and different legal frameworks that apply, including those affecting the transnational employment of staff.
- Coping with the problems posed by foreign exchange restrictions.

and, in my view,

- Retaining a commitment to meet the needs of disadvantaged sectors of society – a commitment that may actually argue against the use of some of the very technologies that make globalised ODL possible.

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