

Experiences in Distance Education for Life-Long Learners

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The rapid pace of advancement in all fields of engineering has generated large demands for continuous education in order for the practicing engineer to stay abreast of new developments. Distance education technology has matured sufficiently to allow for the ready development and delivery of a variety of educational and training courses for the practicing engineer and engineering manager. Using educational technology allows students to tailor their continuing education program to their needs, to their location and to schedule.

This paper describes the development and delivery of a short course on Water Utility Rate Management. The course is periodically delivered to practicing engineers live via the Internet 2, using its broadband capabilities to supply one way video and two way audio. The course is also available over the Internet using asynchronous learning technology. A synchronized streaming media presentation allows students to view a three-hour lecture version of the course on an anytime/anywhere basis. Along with a description of the course, we will also discuss the how the material and delivery style was customized to fit the two different delivery approaches - both of which are different than the traditional lecture. Details will be provided on the level of effort required to assemble the course and to adapt it to the network media. Information on the assessment of the effectiveness of the two different network delivery mechanisms will be presented.