

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES: ASSISTING YOUTH IN MAKING PRODUCTIVE CAREER PREFERENCES

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Abstract: Information and communication technologies have dramatically changed the way we live, learn, and work, and even think about work. Information and communication technologies are transforming career information and guidance services, just as the way they are transforming service delivery in other sectors. ICT is used extensively in the delivery of career information and guidance services. Such career guidance services assists young people make informed and careful occupational, educational, training and employment decisions. Information delivered via ICT facilitates the clarification of self-knowledge or the knowledge of options for the person seeking assistance in solving problems and making decisions. The role of ICT in providing guidance services means that the potential of ICT as a change agent is now greater than ever before. The present paper examines the role of the information and communication technologies in providing career information and guidance services to the students. It starts by examining the aims of career education and guidance and the ways in which ICT is being used in the delivery of career information and guidance. The present discussion is also focused around the various websites, apps and softwares which helps the child in understanding their capabilities and interests and helps them to take decision and choose career accordingly.

Key Words: career preferences, career assessment, ICT, productive and assisting.

1. INTRODUCTION:

Information and communication technologies have dramatically changed the way we live, learn, and work, and even think about work. Information and communication technologies are transforming career information and guidance services, just as the way they are transforming service delivery in other sectors. ICT is used extensively in the delivery of career information and guidance. Prior to the Internet, most students' career information came via parents or teachers—an arguably less than adequate or reliable source of information in many cases (Jackson, 1998). However, with the advent of the Internet, ICT-based (Information and Communications Technology) career guidance has evolved to include a wide variety of informational services facilitating interaction with career guidance professionals and integrating various guidance services such as self-exploratory exercises, decision aids, training, work and labor market information retrieval systems, psychometric tests, career discussion forums and resume writing. Even generic counseling services have been developed to help students make effective use of ICT in career guidance (Vuorinen et al., 2011). Such career guidance services assist in helping young people make informed and careful occupational, educational, training and employment decisions (Vuorinen et al., 2011). As such, the Internet has proven to be an ideal medium for providing the young with real-time access to information when they need it—information previously unavailable or difficult or time consuming to access by prior means (Jackson, 1998). Consequently, the motivational aspect of the technology has allowed students to access vital information—students who may have been deterred by more conventional routes (Jackson, 1998). Thus ICT has provided expanded access to career guidance information. New forms of virtual tutoring and support, distribution of working life information, career planning and development resources are being developed (Vuorinen et al., 2011). As such, ICT is no longer acting simply as a tool but as a powerful change agent exemplifying the merger of education, employment and social policy (Vuorinen et al., 2011). The Internet has provided an open and interactive environment in which students can assert and explore their uniqueness while connecting with like-minded individuals (Chen & Tzeng, 2012), contributing to weblogs or creating e-portfolios as a means to explore their identities or reflect on personal development (Chen & Tzeng, 2012).

2. AIMS OF CAREER EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE (CEG):

Career education and guidance (CEG) covers a range of processes designed to enable individuals to make informed choices and transitions related to their learning and their work. In particular, guidance from the Department of Education and Skills (DES) identifies the aims of career education and guidance (CEG) as:

Self development: helping students to understand themselves and develop their capabilities.

Career exploration: helping students to investigate career opportunities and investigate the knowledge and skills people need at work.

Career management: using the results of self-assessment and developing effective strategies for making and implementing career decisions.

In schools and colleges, CEG and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) share a common interest in equipping students with essential life skills for the world of work. Career programmes provide an important context in which ICT skills and competence may be developed. CEG can help to explain the relevance of ICT capability as a core skill that will be increasingly in demand.

3. HOW CAN ICT SUPPORT CAREERS EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE?

ICT developments are providing access to new resources through the internet and new opportunities for guidance at a distance. The functions offered by ICT to support careers work are to:

- Store large amounts of information in a range of formats
- Search for and retrieve information quickly and accurately
- Match information to individual preferences
- Print out information in a personalized form which may help students think about the information gained and motivate them to engage in other careers-related activities
- Simulate work environments
- Update information quickly and easily
- Provide a mechanism for sharing and communicating information

The development of ICT and multimedia technology in the mid-1990s provided careers software with the potential for greater user interactivity and the ability to explore different employment opportunities through video, graphics and sound. ICT developments are providing access to new resources through the internet and new opportunities for guidance at a distance using electronic communications such as e-mail and video conferencing. We are only just beginning to appreciate the potential benefits and uses that these developments may bring to education and learning.

4. WHAT SOFTWARES ARE AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT CAREERS WORK?

Over the last ten years, a range of software has been developed to support careers and guidance work. Many titles are available on CD-ROM and developments in electronic publishing have resulted in the growth of new web based resources available via the internet. Much of the software and web sites falls into the following categories:

- **Information databases:** These might hold records relating to occupations, training, courses (including work-based training schemes), local training providers, labor market information and census data, vacancies or information about courses and student life at universities. There are many web sites that contain information about various career opportunities, sites of professional organizations, industrial bodies and trades unions. Other sites, such as higher education sites, have information about courses together with learning and training opportunities available through the many training organizations and further education colleges.
- **Self- evaluation aids,** including matching programs and job ideas generators. These present occupational, educational or training ideas based on client's personal criteria. You may be able to enter school subjects of interest, enabling the computer to match job ideas to specific requirement.
- **Decision-making aids:** These are usually one of three types: content -free programs, which allow the user to model decisions and compare and examine options; decision-making games, which develop decision-making skills by enabling the user to practice making decisions and see the effects; simulation programs, which work along similar lines.
- **Work simulations and games:** These allow the user to experience decision-making, problem-solving and team building aspects in a safe environment. Many of these packages are designed to be cross-curricular in approach and are not necessarily geared specifically towards career work.
- **Psychometric tests and checklists:** These measure ability, interest and personality. Staff requires appropriate training if results are to be interpreted effectively.
- **Self-presentation aids:** These are designed to help with job-seeking skills and transition learning, to enhance the user's interview skills, form filling, and the production of action plans, records of achievement and CVs.
- **Generic packages:** The potential of generic word processing, presentation software and data handling packages should not be overlooked. Apart from their use in careers administration and record keeping, they offer a range of possibilities for supporting career education programmes, including the production of CVs, digital portfolios, and work experience diaries. While specific career packages can be expensive, generic software packages are often provided through central funding in schools, as they are seen as standard ICT

tools to support the whole curriculum. Other curriculum areas may have software that can support the work-related curriculum.

5. WHAT WEBSITES AND APPS ARE AVAILABLE TO PROVIDE CAREER INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE?

There are some websites and apps for the online career assessment test with the help of which anyone can assess their interest and choose the career accordingly.

5.1 WEBSITES:

- **www.icscareeronline.com**: The institute for career studies provides students a platform for assessment tests. From the website one can see the results of their assessment test with interpretation which helps the students in choosing their career. The website also provides counseling services to the students.
- **www.assessment.com**: The MAPP (Measure of Academic Proficiency and Progress) career test is the first and most comprehensive career test online for consumers. More than 8 million people in nearly every country in the world have taken the MAPP test since its inception in 1995.
- The MAPP career assessment is perfect for students, graduates and working adults. Here you will get a wealth of information to find the right career that matches your unique assessment profile. The 22-minute MAPP test comprises 71 different questions regarding your 'likes' and 'dislikes', and should be taken rather quickly, since the 'reflexive' answer is preferable to the 'intellectual' answer.
- After completing the test, you can see your results immediately. But you won't want to stop there! A **MAPP Package** can uniquely help you find your ideal career. Your personal test results are scored against over 1000 jobs, and you can see what jobs are the best fit, along with the and you can see what jobs are the best fit, along with the education needed and career outlook.
- **www.mapmytalent.in**: MapMyTalent is an online career counseling website that offers scientifically developed aptitude test, personality test and abilities test for school and college students. These tests assess the aptitude and personality of a student and help them to choose from various career options, courses after 10th and 12th. MapMyTalent is one of the most sophisticated and innovative career path decision programs available worldwide. It uses a unique and scientifically developed and tested battery of instruments like **career aptitude assessment, career personality assessment and career interest assessment** to measure a comprehensive profile of a student's natural abilities, inborn talents and personality traits. The scientifically arrived at profile of the student is then mapped with several lucrative careers and the best fit careers are suggested to the student along with the *road-map* for those careers. When students understand their natural talents, they get a huge boost in confidence and develop very high Interest in the career paths that are shown to them.
- **www.funeducation.com**: The website provides career personality test, free I.Q test and kids I.Q test. It focused primarily on IQ tests, however, if you would like to take a **personality test** in addition to the online IQ test, doing so will give you additional insight into what specific traits you may excel in and what you can improve upon. Taking a **free personality test** online can greatly assist in making career choices and much more.

In addition to these testing options, it also offers you **career test** options as well. When you take a test or career quiz to determine which field you may do best in, you can start to make some of the tough decisions with hard data in front of you to decide what will be the best direction for your educational and career choices.

- **www.123test.com**: All tests at 123test.com are designed to help people find serious answers to their questions about IQ, personality, or career assessment. These tests are free, valid, and accurate. Although these tests are always fun to take but they are much more than *just for fun*. The site focuses on giving you scientifically valid results and reliable psychometrics that measure your personal preferences, mental traits, abilities, and processes.

5.2 APPS

- **Path source careers and school app**: Path source is a powerful career search and education tool for students and career changers that ask you all the right questions to match you with your ideal career and educational path. It empower to discover careers or schools and figure out what to do with your life, and then learn what it takes to get there.
- **Career guide app**: This application is for all students, teachers, parents, consultants. Career Guide helps you find a career by matching your interests, skills, and knowledge with the interest, skill, and knowledge characteristics of over 1000 different occupations. Start by taking an interests quiz that will classify your interests into distinct categories. Then identify your knowledge, skills, and other qualifications (such as your salary requirements) to see what career options are a best fit for you.

- **Career choice app career guidance-jp Gandhi app:** It help students to choose the right Career Path after +2. The app provides comprehensive information to enable students decide on the right Career Choices. It also provides detailed information for students choosing Engineering, Medicine, Law, Design, Arts and Management. The App allows students to stay in tune with current trends in the education field and also provide Career tips and Career options.

6. CONCLUSION:

In this digital world, opportunities are available like never before and it is all because of advancements in the field of ICT. Information and Communication Technologies have become one of the basic building blocks of modern society. Developments in ICTs have impacted almost all sectors of society, including the career education and guidance sector. Choosing the right career and course now has become much easier and accessible for all the students with the advent of online career guidance. The professional life of a student depends on the career choice and the course choice made by them during the transition years of their life. Online Career guidance is very important at this transition phase because it allows the students to take online assessment and its analysis and reports helps them in making their decisions with much more ease and after being well informed.

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