

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNET TECHNOLOGIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

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**Annotation:** This article discusses the integration of internet networks and educational platforms into the educational process, highlighting their advantages and challenges. It is projected that the traditional form of education will gradually transition into a new innovative model based on information and communication technologies. Additionally, the role and significance of the internet in this field, as well as the acceleration of the shift to online education due to the pandemic, are examined.

**Keywords:** Pandemic, distance education, internet, MOODLE, HEMIS, Kundalik.com, Ziyonet, online.

Although internet networks emerged in Uzbekistan in the 1990s, their integration into the educational process began in the 21st century. The introduction of modern information and communication technologies into education led to the creation of a new form of education—distance learning—alongside traditional teaching methods.

The widespread implementation of internet technologies in the education system primarily aims to address existing challenges. On January 9, 2018, a meeting chaired by President Sh. Mirziyoyev instructed officials to reduce internet prices, increase connection speeds at least fourfold by 2020, and bring them to the level of CIS countries[1]. These directives yielded results in subsequent years. On September 5, 2018, the President signed Decree PF-5538[2], "On Additional Measures to Improve the Management System of Public Education." This decree emphasized the widespread adoption of modern ICT in educational management, achieving transparent public oversight, ensuring connectivity for all institutions, creating accessible databases, and implementing an electronic rating system for performance evaluation. Today, 307 educational websites and 55 scientific websites are operational[3]. Internet integration into education accelerated significantly after March 2020 due to the pandemic. On March 15, 2020, quarantine measures were imposed nationwide. To prevent disruptions, remote learning mechanisms—including TV lessons, video lectures, and online classes—were launched starting March 30.

Distance technologies were introduced during the pandemic, enabling online education for 7 million students and 500,000 university students across 10,000+ institutions. This new mechanism ensured the continuity of learning during quarantine. Global experts acknowledge that strict pandemic measures created new opportunities for education, including higher education[4]. Specialists note both positive and negative impacts:

Positive Outcomes:

**Accelerated Development:** Online education advanced the system by at least 10 years. Notably, a 2018 THE (Times Higher Education) report predicted elite universities would transition online by 2030—a process expedited by COVID-19.

**Enhanced Digital Skills:** Educators of all ages developed or improved skills in using educational platforms and delivering distance education.

International Collaboration: Universities intensified partnerships with leading global institutions through online conferences and webinars. Platforms like Zoom provided unprecedented flexibility, equipping both teachers and students with new competencies.

Access to Learning Resources: Distance education facilitated foreign language learning and ICT courses. Most educational courses (97%) shifted online, reaching broader audiences.

Challenges:

Lack of Preparedness: The country was unprepared for the transition. Insufficient teacher training led to issues in quality, organization, and regional connectivity. Video lectures often fell short of the 80-minute standard due to low internet speeds and limited student data plans. Teachers needed to adapt content to 20–30-minute formats.

Connectivity Disparities: Students in remote areas faced unstable internet, reducing participation in Zoom sessions to 20–25% of attendees.

Device Shortages: Most families shared one device, requiring students to queue for access.

Reduced Interaction: The lack of face-to-face communication diminished engagement efficiency.

Prospects for Development:

Distance education can operate synchronously (real-time) or asynchronously. Both require reliable internet[5]. Future improvements depend on:

Enhancing platforms like Moodle with user-friendly features through collaboration between educators and IT specialists[15].

Integrating platforms with mobile networks to offer free/discounted data plans for students.

Current Platforms:

During the pandemic, universities used Moodle; now, all higher institutions use HEMIS under the credit-module system. Per the Minister of Public Education's Order No. 284 (September 6, 2021)[6], the Kundalik.com platform was rolled out in 6,028 secondary schools. It digitizes grading, ensures transparency, and reduces paperwork. However, parents can only view their child's grades (not compare them), and teachers in areas with poor internet face technical difficulties.

Platforms like HEMIS centralize resources (schedules, transcripts, contracts)[14] and streamline communication. Internet accessibility remains critical for their effectiveness. Integrating internet technologies into education elevates Uzbekistan's position in the global digital economy[7]. The traditional 20th-century education model is becoming obsolete in a knowledge-driven society.

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