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Mobile Africa

Discussions about eLearning (or rather, education in general) in Africa have really surprised me, in a good way.

The leaders of the education movement, it seems, are prepared to take bold steps by skipping a whole bunch of technology in their education agenda and jumping full-on into using what they've got: mobile phones.

Mobile phone use and ownership in Africa is huge. So why not use that accessible, ubiquitous technology to reach people?

From the eLearning Africa email blast a few days ago:

eLearning Africa: Will Africa Learn by Mobile Phone or by Computer?

Teachers and technologists gathering at the eLearning Africa 2010 conference in Zambia will be debating a billion dollar question, attempting to work out whether future African students will learn from the telephones in their pockets or from the laptops in their classrooms.

The African continent stunned the world by leapfrogging several stages of traditional telecommunications development and a third of all African citizens are now mobile phone subscribers. Some debaters at eLearning Africa 2010 will argue that the existence of these millions of mobile phones means it may no longer be cost-effective to use scarce resources to install laptop and desktop computers in schools. Despite some huge investments in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in most African states, the millions of mobile telephones now in private hands may provide the best gateway to learning for the school children, students, apprentices and technicians of the new Africa.

The eLearning Africa Debate will be held at the 2010 conference in Lusaka, Zambia, May 26 - 28.

See more at elearning-africa.com.

