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LEARNING 'OUT OF THE BOX'

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THE NATION

University studies are no longer limited to learning within the classroom "box". Students are encouraged to think "outside the box", and to study and access knowledge via new innovative technologies.

Students at the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce (UTCC), for example, are now able to pursue their studies through cloud computing, thanks to Microsoft (Thailand)'s provision of a Hybrid Learning 2.0 system in a cooperative deal with the university.

UTCC president Chiradet Ousawat said the system adopted Microsoft's cloud-computing technology (or software-plus-services) to build a digital-learning community. Microsoft and the university now plan to enhance educational standards and transform the classroom experience by making it easier than ever before for students and teachers to communicate through online communities.

He said that the university currently provided 334 courseware programs for e-learning over the Internet. It expects next year to lift this number to 500 e-learning courseware programs, or 80 per cent of UTCC's total courseware.

The university is also implementing a student-response system called My Choice Clicker. It will allow students to question or respond to their teachers via a My Choice Clicker tag, using radio-frequency identification technology

and a My Choice Clicker application installed on mobile computers.

A My Choice Clicker application is also being developed for mobile phones. This will enable students to communicate with their teachers via mobile phones equipped with wireless technology by the end of this year.

The next step will be to extend the My Choice Clicker application to recently-released iPad devices.

Microsoft (Thailand)'s managing director Patama Chantaruck said that under an agreement with UTCC, Microsoft was offering some of its online software applications and services to students and teachers free of charge, including Microsoft DreamSpark, Microsoft

BizSpark, Microsoft WebsiteSpark, Microsoft Imagine Cup and MSNDAA.

She said Microsoft had developed a fully digital approach to learning within an interactive learning

environment with cloud-based services, so that students could work efficiently from any location with a wireless Internet connection.

This means using the cloud to make it easier for students to both access and share the information they need with their peers and teachers via a three-screens concept, comprising PCs, internet browsers and mobile phones. Using any of these access points, students can obtain course materials and interact with teachers and classmates anywhere and anytime, she said. Course materials can also be downloaded with a teacher's personal guidelines for studying by themselves anytime they want.

