Project Title	Western Cape Education Department ePortal
Institution/Department	Western Cape Education Department
Innovation	Through innovative technologies and methodologies, the ePortal is continuously transformed and enhanced to address current needs in responsible, responsive, and sustainable manners. The WCED exhibits an adaptive mindset and leapfrogs service delivery to address the needs of a Changing World by initiating a shift in work focus, delivery and communication to enhance learning in and beyond the classroom and accelerate virtual schooling. The ePortal represents a fundamental shift towards demand-driven governance, providing learners and teachers with educational resources. • Lesson resources, curriculum support and a virtual library have been developed and distributed to address everywhere learning. • Teachers and parents are empowered to facilitate learning with younger learners. • Self-directed learning is nurtured within older learners. • Improved utilization of digital spaces and platforms host an exponentially growing pool of resources to form innovative learning spaces in cyber. User-centric interventions are planned, scoped, developed and deployed on a need-driven basis. The Whole of Society Approach (WOSA) ropes all stakeholders together: curriculum teams, teachers, officials, NGOs, after-school programs, etc. The holistic approach incorporates best practices and focuses the combined strengths and energies of industry and thought leaders. Much of the collaboration happens in true 21st Century style in virtual environments with limited face-to-face interaction. The WCED has rescoped its communication and support channels to interconnect with its clients. • Interactive posters linked to lessons and revision packages on the ePortal are disseminated via WhatsApp and other social media platforms to ensure affordable accessibility. • Social media proves to be a popular, fast and cost-effective communication medium, potentially reaching millions of people and ensuring two-way communication with clients. • WhatsApp interest groups have been established to support various diverse needs. • Social Media Campaigns promote eLearning principles as well as curriculum resources and support material (curated on the ePortal) to a large audience.
Impact	A key ePortal outcome is to create a Digital Ecosystem that would provide one single entry point for citizens to access various WCED services through digital transformation. The ePortal remains true to its vision of Content for the People: supplying (more, other and better) quality, relevant and local educational eResources as per CAPS standards and requirements to assist learners and teachers with curriculum delivery and coverage. During school disruptions, classrooms may be empty, but schooling will continue; when schools are closed, learning remains open.

	The ePortal stood the words of Seymour Papert: "You cannot teach people everything they need to know. The best you can do is position them where they can find what they need to know when they need to know it." Irreversible change has been witnessed with the implementation of this project as witnessed in: Paradigm Shifts The innovation propelled the organisation in adopting new ways of doing, engaging, teaching and learning. Individuals' mind shifts were introduced by learning new things, seeing and doing new things, and teaching others new things. Education officials, teachers and learners are exposed to working, learning and living as 21st Century Citizens. Being empowered with 21st-century skill sets, officials explore innovative ways in supporting and transforming schools to perform against the backdrop of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, leapfrogging education outcomes and output by inventing ground-breaking avenues for learning, teaching and assessing. Increased awareness of digital platforms and tools has transformed the way people live, work and learn, leading to self-directed and life-long learning with remote learning as the enabler. Learners and teachers are comfortable with hybrid and blended learning models, leading to increased learner retention and throughput. The ePortal hosts content links to educational resources, apps, online courses, and other websites. 7 500 free resources were hosted on the ePortal in December 2019, mostly sourced from international sources as well as a handful of local developers. More than 24 000 resources had been developed and uploaded to the ePortal since March 2020. These resources had been tailor-made to address irregular school attendance and the need for quality, locally developed curriculum resources, and aligned to the latest Annual Teaching Plans (ATPs). Analytical data indicates that user behaviour on the ePortal has skyrocketed since school closure with approximately 600 000 visitors in August 2022 as opposed to 129 000 visitors in January 2020. During August 2022, 3 050 852 resources were accessed collectively as opposed to 301 637 resources in January 2020. The ePortal is an "open" site, accessible to everyone with internet connectivity. In the absence of such, the resources are downloadable and transportable or share-able through all electronic means. As a last resort, resources could be printed.
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