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**E-LEARNING ABOUT SELF-CAREER. AN ANALYSIS OF ROMANIAN  
E-COUNSELLING SERVICES**

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**Abstract:** *The challenges of living in a world of constant change and insecure environments, the stress of looking for a job and finding one that fits and motivates you is a stressful search for a student or a graduate. The online career counselling services offer a more attractive and facile manner of finding information about the world of careers and employment opportunities, a better way of knowing yourself, a easy manner of receiving a piece of advice – in fact a more pragmatic manner of learning about self and self-career using the internet. Learning mediated by internet, internet learning or e-learning how it is called today offer many possibilities for career counselling of students and graduate. In this paper we shall analyse the theoretical and practical challenges concerning this topic and we shall also present a research conducted to see the development of the Romanian e-counselling services offered to students and graduate.*

**Keywords:** *e-counselling, e-learning, self-career, career counselling services*

## **I. WHY WE NEED TO THINK DIFFERENTLY?**

The challenges of living in a world of constant change and insecure environments, the stress of looking for a job and finding one that fits and motivates you is a stressful search for a student or a graduate. Offering a helping hand to students and graduates through counselling services appears to be the best idea so far. According to the 5th key message of the Memorandum of Lifelong Learning (Brussels, 2002) – Rethinking guidance and counselling, a new approach is needed to make counselling a better, more accessible service. This message together with the need to offer help to students and graduates suggests that counselling services should use more accessible channels to youth, like Internet.

### **1.1. What is career counselling?**

„Career counselling refers to the services and the activities designed to assist individuals, regardless of age and at any point in their life to make educational, training or employment choices and to achieve their own career management”(OECD, 2004, pg.10).

Such services can be found in schools, universities, institutions conducting training, public employment services, job counselling, in voluntary or community sector, and in private sector. These activities can be individual or in groups, face to face or at distance (including telephone help lines or Web services). They may include providing information on career, self-assessment tools, interviews, programs (to help individuals to develop self-awareness, to recognize the career opportunities so that they become managers of their careers), testing programs (to analyze options before choosing) and programs for job searching.

## **1.2. Why Internet learning and counselling?**

The current technical changes, but also the changing needs and attitudes of the individuals in regard of career counselling require finding "new" ways of thinking career counselling.

Although issues such as career decisions, career planning, exploration of individual characteristics, personal marketing skills building are formed effectively by traditional modalities (individual counselling and group counselling), the number of people who use such services is quite little.

Also, many people feel better in a familiar environment (home, office) than in a forced / outside environment (counsellor's cabinet).

Many people want a more pragmatic perspective on career counselling, not a simple discussion but, doing, exploring and practicing the career option.

All these changes require new adaptations of career counselling services, and the Internet provides career counselling a support and a flexible platform. New counselling services include e-mail, online chat, videoconferencing, web blogs, and Internet phone.

Online counselling is very useful especially for isolated communities (but who have Internet access), for people with disabilities, but also for many users who prefer the privacy of your home browsing or the anonymity Internet provides. The large number of visits of sites that offer guidance and career counselling indicates that individuals often prefer online access against the direct access with a counsellor. The main advantage stems from immediate and easy access to information on a wide range of services more or less adapted to your needs.

Basically, sitting comfortably on the sofa in the middle of your house with a good Internet connection you can find and learn about yourself and your career, you can know yourself better and you can effectively plan your career development.

## **II. IN THEORY, BUT IN PRACTICE?**

In a larger work (PhD thesis-Richițeanu R. Năstase, unpublished), among other things, we wanted to study the modalities of making career counselling offered mainly to students, in terms of availability, accessibility and relevance of these online services. In other words, we attempted a diagnosis of career counselling services available in Romania.

In our research, we had a hypothesis, namely: students rarely resort to professional career counselling services because such career counselling services offered to students / graduates are poorly developed.

To investigate these services of career counselling offered to students / graduates we have started by using the method of online social document study (qualitative and quantitative data, numeric and nonnumeric, available online). From this point we built a database with the most important / visible / often used online career counselling services for students, seeking the following dimensions and indicators: type of organization, name of organization, specific activities, contact details and website, the site features (interface, provided data, online counselling opportunities, contact, update), mission, services offered, resources available for students (tests, guides, so on), used methods, beneficiaries (who they are), observed advantages and disadvantages, ways to promote their services.

For this study were selected guidance and counselling centres from universities, associations of students, NGOs, recruitment companies, labour offices and other organizations / sites offering career counselling. The collected data reveal a wealth of diagnostic material for career counselling services currently offered in Romania. Given the limited space we shall present some of the most interesting data. The full data can be found at this address:

[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?hl=en\\_US&hl=en\\_US&key=0AsQ\\_g1aEyiugdHBvZWkyVWptYVBuYWtkcS1pQ2Rranc&output=html](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/pub?hl=en_US&hl=en_US&key=0AsQ_g1aEyiugdHBvZWkyVWptYVBuYWtkcS1pQ2Rranc&output=html).

<b>Database of the services of career counselling</b>			
<b>Name of organization The activity specific, Contact data, Site</b>	<b>Features of the site</b>	<b>Services available free / extra charge</b>	<b>Observed advantages and disadvantages, Promotion methods</b>
Information, orientation and career counselling centre, University of Bucharest information, advice ciocp@yahoo.com http://ciocp.ro	unfriendly interface, there are no possibilities of online counselling, no contact, is not made an update of the site's	1.1. Tests (self testing) of interests, skills, personality, 1.2. Services of professional counselling; 1.3. Practical work in an NGO, 1.4. Placement and recruitment services Free for BU students	+ Virtual Tour of UB faculty, resources for students, the booklet "How to get a job easier" (fee), cv model, cover letter, - Excessive focus on information, accommodation procedures ++ Education Fair
Centre of information Training, Career Guidance and Placement Ioan Cuza University, Iasi counselling, recruitment Tel. 0232-201576 http://www.uaic.ro/uai c/bin/view/Students/C onsilieriInCariera	strictly presentation site, there is only the presentation of the center and its services, a link to the possibilities of practice	Career counselling: Assessing interests / values / skills, Psychological counselling: Educational counselling: Techniques for writing academic documents Recruitment and placement:	+ possibilities of practice, services and organizations, students guide - too simplistic site, information only, without specifying the location of this centre in the university ++ website university
Centre of psychological counselling and orientation, Univ. of Medicine and Pharmacy "Carol Davila", Bucharest counselling http://www.univermed-cdgm.ro/?pid=1750	site relatively attractive, clear information, does not provide online counselling possibilities	-adjustment problems in the academic environment; -interpersonal and relationship problems; - performance anxiety, intellectual, social and professional relationship; - psychological and career guidance.	+ areas of intervention clearly highlighted, contacts, location and program centre - lack of resources, there is the possibility of interaction via email
The centre for career guidance, Polytechnic University of Bucharest information, advice centru_consiliere@rectorat.pub.ro 021/402 83 02; http://ccoc.pub.ro/	attractive interface, empathic language, , resources and interesting external links	-providing guidance and advice in choosing informed of the academic offer proposed by UPB -career-psychological counselling	+ site clearly addresses students, useful resources, centre newsletter, volunteer opportunities or participation in projects and conferences, student kit - no possibility of online counselling, the proposed forum is not working ++ Open Day, Caravan UPB
ASE Marketing bureau, counselling and guidance http://www.ase.ro/site/despre/departamente/marketing.asp	formal interface, information about services provided, there are not possibilities online counselling	• Information about educational offer • Advice for careers • Tests of personality and psycho pedagogical counselling; • Offers of employment for students and graduates of	+ large group of beneficiaries, there is a work program of contacts and specifying the location of the centre - formal site, resources for students, there is only

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		ASE;	a site presentation
ASER information, non-formal education Adriana Gheara President Tel: 0755 070 080 www.aser.ro	attractive site with useful links, beautiful graphics, useful information	ASER Invest, Changemakers Dream BIG project, students will know various personalities, real models. Ben King	+ resources available online, emphatic language used, an economist student guide ++ Social networks, discussion groups yahoo, gmail, facebook, twitter
ASPSE information, non-formal education Mihai Dragos President Tel: 0746 259 430 http://www.aspse.ro/index.php?option=com_frontpage&Itemid=1	site quite attractive, relevant information on projects, there are no possibilities of online counseling	HR school - training relevant competencies for future employment and professional practice of students in the RU Training Mania 2.0 ASPSE days	+ useful information on projects undertaken, external links
Association journalism and communication students Mihaela Georgescu – mmihaela.georgescu@gmail.com Blog:www.mihaelageorgescu.wordpress.com http://asjc.wordpress.com/	attractive interface, predominantly external resources, there are contacts, are presented only completed projects	Many national and international projects: humanitarian Party, Stud-Life-magazine, ANOSR - Sex in bed with parents (Jul – Aug 2008), Start Internship, European Youth Media Days	+ external links, information about completed projects - There are ongoing projects, there is not an update of the site
CROS information, consultancy, non-formal education crisrina@cros.ro traian@cros.ro www.cros.ro	Attractive site with useful links, beautiful graphics, useful information, exists contacts	Let's Get Ready! Is a preparation program and training for the young professionals. New Media School. Coaching, Resources for ONGS	+ many projects developed empathic language, focusing on HR and their importance, useful links, - Sometimes it's hard to find some information ++ Promotion on different social networks: facebook, twitter, RSS
Junior Achievement Romania information, consultancy, support and deployment of programs projected office@jaromania.org http://www.jaromania.org/ http://www.startinternship.ro/http://www.e-aptitudini.ro/default.aspx	interactive site, complex, does not offer online counselling, permanent site update	-Programs: Economic Education, Entrepreneurship Education, Financial Education, Education for vocational guidance. Administration portal www.e-aptitudini.ro -Innovation Camp -Job Shadow Day Full-Fair graduates-platform (on-site and online)	+ multitude of projects and available resources, the extent of organization and its impact, useful links ++ promotion on different social networking / communication: facebook, twitter, RSS, Flickr, YouTube and media partners

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		- START Internship Administration of the program	
Advanced ManSolutions Recruitment firm -. +40.723.61.04.50 contact@ams-hr.ro http://www.advancedman.ro/despre.htm	simple site, information, data summary	- Recruitment and selection of staff - Career counselling - Retention consulting and employee motivation - Organizational diagnosis.	+ objective data -it is just an information site without too many details
Advice Human Resources Romania HR consulting http://www.advice-hr.ro/	attractive site, summary data	Recruitment and Selection HR Communication Training	+ site built in a professional manner, resources, resume forms - limited job offers
recruitment site Contact@eJobs.ro www.ejobs.ro	interface useful, attractive, data about jobs	selection, online recruitment	+ great range of jobs offers, informational resources and counselling, resume, letter of intent and recommendation, Career experts, Tips & Tricks Recommended Books, career games - data about site (who created it, what services they provide, which is its mission)
recruitment site http://www.bestjobs.ro /	attractive interface, data about jobs, courses and forums	selection, online recruitment	+ variety of jobs offer, informational resources and counselling, all about resume, interview, articles about salary, Jobscop, Lectures, Discussion forum
AMOFM București Information Centre and career counselling; information, advice 021.337.21.94, buc_consiliere@ajofm.anofm.ro http://www.bucuresti.anofm.ro/cc.htm	formal site	-Information Professional -Vocational guidance -Career counselling.	+ there is a counseling center, cv model, cover letter, information about the interview -formal site
HART Consulting career management consulting and HR office@hart.ro http://www.mapp.ro/re ad.php?name=sm_stud en http://www.hart.ro/	interactive site, less cumbersome to use relevant data and synthetic	-Ratings of managerial and leadership potential -Programs "On-Boarding" for mid-level managers -Programs "Outplacement" -employee opinion surveys -Customer satisfaction	+ focus on selection activities based on the career skills diagnostic - lack of resources, focus more on employers than candidates

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		-Seminars for managers	
Cognitrom LTD Research and development <a href="http://www.cognitrom.ro/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=42&amp;Itemid=40">http://www.cognitrom.ro/index.php?option=com_content&amp;task=view&amp;id=42&amp;Itemid=40</a>	attractive site, relatively difficult data for an inexperienced eye	CAS ++ system: individual psychological assessment and selection. CAREER PLANNER Platform Centre of Adult Psychological Assistance (CAPAonline)	+ availability of calibrated test for the Romanian population, multidisciplinary approach in creation of tests - Fees can be a disadvantage for a student
<a href="http://campusnews.ro/">http://campusnews.ro/</a>	* NEWS   Online Dating   Opinions   Your Article   Interview * JOBS & Internships Scholarships * Agenda * FINANCE & LEISURE SERVICES * FORUM * Business Ideas * MULTIMEDIA BLOGS		
<a href="http://www.postuniverstitar.ro/index.php">http://www.postuniverstitar.ro/index.php</a>	* Masters * M.B.A. * Degree * Courses, Training * Training Companies * Scholarships * Articles, news, links, offers scholarships, courses		
<a href="http://www.bizcampus.ro/despre-noi">http://www.bizcampus.ro/despre-noi</a>	* info * advice * top * companies * business *volunteer		
<a href="http://www.studentie.ro">www.studentie.ro</a>	* Library *Campus * Scholarships and student summer schools * License * Postgraduate * Career and University Admissions jobs * Bazar* Universities * Study Abroad * Tests * Contests * Travel * Video * Reports * Laboratories * Seminars * license works		
<a href="http://studentcv.onlinestudent.ro/">http://studentcv.onlinestudent.ro/</a>	Internship / Trainee My Resume My Profile internships Jobs saved my applications full time / part time Salary calculator My friends		
<a href="http://www.evenimentestudentesti.ro/">http://www.evenimentestudentesti.ro/</a>	* News * Epilogue * volunteer student		

Research data which have helped build the database, highlights the lack of career counselling services for students, their poor quality and lack of promotion through facile channels for students (complex sites, social networking sites, blogs sites, media partnerships, discussion groups), and confirms our research hypothesis, namely that the career counselling services offered to students / graduates are poorly developed.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

We consider the systems of career counselling available online should reconsider methods of action due to the rapid evolution of information and communication technologies, as well as the needs and quality standards for those who want such services.

All these actions will make possible a better and certain career decision of the individual and will raise the level of his employability.

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