

# PIONEERING DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP ONLINE EDUCATION BEYOND NATIONAL BORDERS

By Konstantinos Fouskas, Head of Technology Transfer Office, the University of Macedonia

Forget the garage tinkering of yesteryear—the entrepreneurial spirit has gone digital. In today's hyper-connected world, aspiring innovators harness technology's power to turn their ideas into thriving online businesses. This is the exciting realm of digital entrepreneurship, and we had the chance to test it! The INFUSSE project stands as a pioneer, paving the way for aspiring individuals to transform their dreams into tangible realities. Through its comprehensive curriculum, immersive learning experience, and unique Virtual Incubation Program, INFUSSE equips participants with the tools, knowledge, and support they need to navigate the ever-evolving digital landscape, turn their ideas into ventures and launch them into the stratosphere.

Harnessing the transformative power of digital technology, the INFUSSE project is revolutionising online education for aspiring digital entrepreneurs. In today's rapidly evolving landscape, this initiative serves as a beacon, demonstrating the



Konstantinos Fouskas

vast potential of online learning to equip teachers and learners with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in the digital arena.

A cornerstone of INFUSSE's success lies in its comprehensive curriculum. Tailored specifically to the needs of professional learners, the program goes beyond mere factual presentation, offering practical, real-world applications that resonate deeply with participants. This commitment to high-quality, relevant content, as evidenced by the overwhelmingly positive feedback

from trained educators, underscores the importance of meeting learners' expectations and sparking their interest not only to engage in digital entrepreneurship but also to fuel their entrepreneurial ideas!

INFUSSE understands that learning is a dynamic process, and its rigorous multi-layered validation approach reflects this philosophy. Through educator feedback, quality reviews, participant evaluations and ongoing support, the program continuously evolves, ensuring its modules effectively address the needs of its audience. This

emphasis on feedback and review was a powerful reminder to us of the vital role teacher-student interaction plays in shaping successful online education initiatives.

However, we were focusing beyond content and delivery, introducing an immersive learning experience that seamlessly blended online and offline elements. Through a 25-hour experiential learning process, online collective coaching sessions, and online face-to-face meetings, participants gained a well-rounded understanding of the subject matter. This blended learning approach fosters interaction, collaboration and deeper engagement, solidifying knowledge, and propelling participants towards their entrepreneurial goals. Moreover, it is not limited to theoretical knowledge. It equips aspiring entrepreneurs with the tools and support needed to translate their ideas into tangible realities and supports the teachers through a step-by-step process. Here's where the INFUSSE Virtual Incubation Programme comes in, serving as the project's crown jewel.

“The resounding success of INFUSSE can serve as a valuable case study for educators and stakeholders seeking to leverage the power of online learning in the digital entrepreneurship domain

This unique program offered a simulated business environment where participants, forming trinational teams, co-developed and tested their business models under the guidance of experienced mentors and coaches. Over a short period of time, they learned to exchange ideas, collaborate with like-minded students from other countries and embark on an intensive journey, receiving:

- Expert mentoring from seasoned entrepreneurs and business professionals providing personalised guidance and



feedback, helping participants refine their ideas, overcome challenges, and navigate the intricacies of digital start-ups.

- **Interactive Workshops:** Practical workshops delved into essential topics like market research, financial planning, branding, and pitching, equipping participants with the necessary skills to get their ideas to the next stage.

- **Networking Opportunities:** The programme fostered connections with potential investors, collaborators, and other entrepreneurs, expanding participants' networks and opening doors to future opportunities beyond their country of origin and giving the potential to expand their idea nationally.

- **Pitching Competition:** The culmination of the programme was a live pitching competition held in Thessaloniki, Greece, where participants presented their developed business models to an open community. This high-stakes event provided a valuable experience, honed presentation skills, and offered the chance to win a prestigious recognition and jumpstart their ideas.

The resounding success of INFUSSE can serve as a valuable case study for educators and stakeholders seeking to leverage the power of online learning in the digital entrepreneurship domain. Its meticulous attention to detail, focus on quality content, interactive learning environments, and continuous improvement provides a roadmap for success in this ever-evolving field. As we move forward in the digital age, such initiatives will undoubtedly continue to shape the future of online education for digital entrepreneurship, empowering individuals and fostering impactful innovation across the globe, breaking geographical barriers using digital online collaboration tools and well-designed learning actions! Learn more about INFUSSE and become a part of its network at <https://www.infusse.uom.gr/>. **ET**