Sweeping changes in capabilities associated with learning from a distance, investments in this area, and new players in the market are causing many educators to re-examine how teaching is accomplished, and probably more importantly, how students learn.

As long as we have been able to communicate beyond being physically present, at least some form of distance education has been possible. The invention of the printing press, photos, records, radio, and television all were evolutionary steps in distance learning. But for the most part, through each of those developments, most education continued to be delivered the way it always had been—with learners materially gathered together with an educator or educators. Gaining knowledge about soils and crops seems especially tied to being physically present, as so much depends on the site and its context. Now, the additional functionality of what the internet offers seems to be poised to drive a revolution. Just as many technologies are invented long before they are widely adopted and used for a purpose (i.e., computers, automobiles, and even hybrid corn), the internet—now two decades in existence—appears poised to fundamentally change education.

Successful Features of ASA and SSSA Distance Education

One of the most difficult tasks when evaluating any innovation is to try to separate fad from trend—fad being something widely adopted but not lasting compared with a trend that causes an actual, lasting change in use or behavior.

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Successful Features of ASA and SSSA Distance Education

The distance educational offerings of ASA and SSSA aim to tap into the vast experience and expertise of members to deliver science-based education to a variety of learners. At present, webinar technology is used to deliver PowerPoint-based presentations to students all over the world. While this form of instruction isn’t new, its delivery to hundreds of students worldwide is.

Some of the features that have been successful include: