## **Title: 5 Major Trends in Online Education to Watch Out For in 2022**

Make no mistake. We are at the 4th industrial revolution already. What is the 4th industrial revolution, you ask?

The 4th industrial revolution is a digital revolution that describes the fusion of the physical and the digital worlds.

Think of these the physical and the digital worlds as two different streams. Their paths are entirely different, yes?

Now, visualize these two streams converging and merging into a single stream and a powerful flow. That singular stream with a strong flow stripping those obstacles out of the way is the 4th industrial revolution.

The advancement of the Internet of Things (IoT), Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Augmented Reality, Virtual Reality, and other techs characterize the 4th industrial revolution. These techs have influenced different industries such as commerce, medicine, and agriculture.

Another sector that will benefit from the 4th industrial revolution is the online education sector. Imagine a situation where school doesn’t have to be within the traditional classroom. Picture being in your room with VR goggles on, learning. That’s one of the things tech can do for education.

### **5 Major Trends in Online Education to Watch Out For in 2022.**

Before we discuss these trends, it is essential to briefly discuss the catalyst that has made online education explode.

Covid 19 has been the spark that has tilted people towards online education. Don’t get us wrong, online education has always existed, but within the traditional classroom, some people don’t see the need.

The coronavirus pandemic forcibly changed the system, making schools switch to online education. This switch to online education comes with problems such as fatigue.

There is also the possibility of students losing concentration. A study by Microsoft has shown how much students’ attention span steadily declined. With this possibility of technology fatigue in mind, let’s discuss the trends.

**Extended Reality (ER)**

Extended Reality is AR, VR and Mixed Reality (MR) rolled into one. XR is the tech that modifies reality by bringing in some digital additions. An example of this is the Pokémon Go game, which allows players to interact with reality uniquely. Its Game elements rely heavily on real-life to work.

Essentially, ER is an extension of reality.

In a situation where students are getting distracted by online education and are exhausted, ER could be key. Online education sometimes comes with isolation, where students are away from their peers.

For the sake of learning, they have to stay out in a place with no noise. That silence itself can be distracting.

ER can improve this situation by bringing the classroom settings to the student. The student can feel like they are in a classroom with their friends.

Another way the ER can help is by using and creating avatars, just as the Metaverse does. Students will have a virtual form and will be able to interact with each other using the form. Some institutions have even developed their ER Edutech to the point that students perform dissections on virtual bodies.

ER could even be more impactful with the incorporation of educational simulations. These simulations would allow learners to display their knowledge and see the outcome in real-time. For instance, engineering, medicine, and aviation students could benefit from these simulations. They could make a design and run a real-time work of said design through simulations.

**Gamification coupled with Flexibility.**

Online education doesn’t have to feel lonely, and Gamification of the learning process could make it enjoyable. The prospect of a reward for learning is fun and interesting. Instead of feeling like online learning is sapping your life, you can have fun. Some students treat learning like they need to do to survive. They don’t genuinely enjoy it. This could change.

Gamification is not just for kids. Older students can also benefit from it and feel like a kid again. We admit that learning comes with pressures, with students feeling they either get what teachers are teaching or fail.

Gamification removes that pressure from learning by incorporating game elements into learning.

Already some platforms have adopted Gamification. One of the prominent ones is the Duolingo app, which is one reason why people enjoy the app. It makes learning fun for its users.

Another angle to Gamification is the prospect of flexibility that you can attach to it. Gamification is supposed to make learning fun, so cue personalized learning. Personalized learning is when you understand the students’ needs and adapt the learning process to fit the said students. The flexibility that comes with customized learning makes students eager to learn.

**Assisted Teaching with AI.**

AI is one of the leading technology of the 4th industrial revolution. Teachers can only do so much. In offline lectures, teachers find it challenging to pay attention to all the students, and there are always gaps. These gaps can impact the student’s understanding of the teacher’s teaching.

In online lectures, teachers have even less control over their students. In this situation, AI could be key to improving student understanding. For instance, AI could track if students are paying attention or not by focusing on their facial reactions during classes. Then, it would alert the teacher to the student seeming to struggle, and the teacher could resolve their challenges.

Another way AI could help is through the use of AI Chatbots. These chatbots can play the role of assistant teachers to answer questions for students. These chatbots will provide instant solutions for students. This way, teachers could become less burdened and prep better for classes.

Certain schools have used AI to improve the quality of their online education. Georgia Tech students have been used to AI Chatbots since 2016. Students have improved their understanding of what they were learning within a short period.

Big Data and Learning.

The inclusion of AI in online education means that there would be the need to gather data in bulk on students. For instance, using AI Chatbots means the school will collect the students’ data regarding their learning progress and experience.

With the data that the school gathers through their AI, the AI will function better and provide even more impactful aid to the students. Students will become more engaging, interact better and retain knowledge.

In addition, it could also help teachers themselves.

They would become better at teaching the students and be able to focus on the areas giving students difficulty. However, teachers shouldn’t feel like they have failed because students struggle with what they teach. Big Data and analytics are the teacher’s friends and it helps them focus their efforts instead of burning them.

**Multiple Learning Sources.**

Online learning has already demystified the necessity of the traditional classroom. Traditional learning usually presents the teacher and the textbooks as the only sources of information. Online education has broken that myth by relying on additional sources or information. These other sources, which people underrate, now aid learning.

As a student, after the classes, you could sign up for an additional course on what you are studying. That course would support you in what you want to learn. These other courses may be informal, and you determine your own pace.

Sometimes, you may not even sign up officially for more courses. Why? Podcasts.

Podcasts could serve as an additional resource for students and could even replace the formal process of studying. The podcast could be the lecture from your teacher or could be from another source. Imagine replacing music with podcasts of what you are learning. Students will be able to retain knowledge for a more extended period.

The online education community is expanding, which is good news as it means more resources. There are now communities on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. These communities could reinforce what students are learning and assist them with retention. It’s even better as these sources are informal, removing the stiffness of studying formally.

### **Advantages of Online Education**

**Lower Costs**

Currently, online education is cheaper, especially when you consider the costs of traditional education. Despite its cheapness, there are numerous financial aids these online education platforms provide for you. This is the same if you run an online education program from one of the most prestigious schools.

**Comfort**

Online education helps the student learn in comfort. Instead of sitting down for long hours in the traditional classroom, you could learn the way you want. You could eat your comfort food as you learn, lie down, or do whatever makes you comfortable. There are no extra costs of transportation or poor sleep because you want to get to school.

**Flexibility**

Online courses afford you the flexibility of learning. However, this depends on your platform. If you are using a school’s online education platform, you might need to stick to the school’s schedule. If you are using a platform like Udemy or Coursera, your schedule is in your hands, and you may determine the pace as you want.

#### **Disadvantage**

Ordinarily, online education has disadvantages like distraction, isolation, and boredom. The good news is that the 2022 online education trends have improved these issues.

However, there is the issue of cost.

As online education becomes more immersive, there is the chance that costs will also rise. However, this increased cost could happen briefly as these immersive techs become cheaper.