Appendix E
Father of Thai E-Learning
Prof. Dr. Srisakdi Charmonman: The Father of Thai E-Learning

1937. Born a son of H.E. Phraya Nitisasta Baisalya (Mr. Von Charmonman)
Former Deputy Secretary-General on Foreign Affairs to HM King Rama VII,
Former Minister of Justice, Former Acting Prime Minister, etc.

1964. The first Thai to earn a Ph.D. in Computer field (From Georgia Tech, USA).

1970. The first Thai to use the Internet (As Director of Graduate Studies in Computer
Science at the University of Missouri, USA.)

1973. The first Thai to do eLearning (As a full professor at the State U. of New York)

1981. Voted “Asian Computer Man of the Year” and appeared on the front cover of
Computer-Asia, published in Hong Kong

1988. The first Distinguished Professor of Engineering in Thailand (C 11, the highest
level in government services, one level higher than Provincial Governor)

1998. Called “The Father of Internet in Thailand” by Bangkok Post, Yuppy, GM,
Image, Smart Jobs, and Nation.

2002. Founder, Board Chairman and CEO, College of Internet Distance Education,
Assumption University of Thailand

2002. Drafted the first eLearning Law in Thailand, later published in the Royal
Gazette in October 2005.

2004. Assumption University constructed “Srisakdi Charmonman IT Center” as the
seat of eLearning (12 floors, 12,000 square meters, 17 million US$)

2006. Program Director of the first full-degree program in eLearning mode in
Thailand (Master of Science in Management)

2006. Named “Father of Thai E-Learning” by the International Biographical Centre,
Cambridge, UK.
Additional Information about Charmonman the Father of Thai eLearning

In 1992, Prof. Charmonman proposed that Assumption University of Thailand became a Founding Organizational Member, the only one from Southeast Asia, of the Internet Society (ISOC). He then established Thailand Chapter of ISOC and has been serving as the President. He is also the only Thai to be elected to ISOC Board of Trustees. In 1994, he became the Founder and Chairman of Internet KSC Group of Internet Service Provider which was the first and largest ISP in Thailand. In 1997 and again in 1998, he was elected to be a Director of the Asia Pacific Network Information Center (APNIC).

In August 2000, he was interviewed by the magazine “Corporate Thailand” that the next big thing he would do was eLearning which would be more profitable than eCommerce. On April 25, 2002, he proposed and got approval from the Board of Trustees of Assumption University to establish the first eLearning college in Thailand called the College of Internet Distance Education and announced that the College would eventually serve 100,000 students per year, making a net profit of about 4 billion Baht per year. In the same year, he met Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and proposed to him that Thailand legalize eLearning. The Prime Minister agreed and advised him to start the process. So, he sent a letter to the Minister of University Affairs as well as authoring the first draft of the first eLearning decree or Law in Thailand. The government established a committee to consider the law and he was invited to be a member.

Rev.Bro.Dr. Prathip Martin Komolmas who is the President Emeritus, Rev.Bro.Dr. Bancha Saenghirun who is the President, and Prof. Charmonman who is the College CEO went to see the Minister of University Affairs and tried to convince him to support eLearning. In his capacity as the Founder and Chairman of ABAC Poll, he ordered an eLearning survey in 2003 which found that 77% of the sample were interested in continuing their education through eLearning. On November 26, 2003, the Ministry of University Affairs organized an open hearing on the eLearning law. In his capacity as the President of the Computer Association of Thailand, Prof. Charmonman presented the draft law in the morning and chaired the open hearing in the afternoon. The results were used in modifying the law. Then the Government decided to merge the Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of Education resulting in delay in considering the eLearning law. Prof. Charmonman had to try to convince altogether 5 ministers, namely, HE. Suwat Liptapanlop, HE. Pongpol Adireksarn, HE. Adisai Bodharmik, HE. Chaturon Chaisang, and HE. Rung Keodang.

In August, 2004, Prof. Charmonman was elected Chairman of e-ASEAN Business Council. At that time, the Thai Government has not passed the eLearning decree. So, Prof. Charmonman tried to get help from ASEAN. He proposed to the ASEAN Ministers that eLearning be promoted by all ASEAN member countries and the Ministers agreed.

Prof. Charmonman sent many letters to the authorities. Dated 23 September 2002, he sent a letter to the Minister requesting permission for AU to offer eLearning. Dated 15 September 2003, he sent a letter to the Prime Minister to speed up the eLearning decree. Dated 14 March 2005, he sent another letter to the Prime Minister that Cambodia was ahead of Thailand on eLearning and Thailand should pass the eLearning decree as soon as possible to be ahead of Cambodia, similar to the case of the US trying and succeeding in being ahead of USSR after the sputnik incident.

After 3 years, 5 ministers, and many revisions of the eLearning law, it was published in the Royal Gazette in October 2005. AU became the first to offer a complete eLearning degree program in January 2006, i.e. Master of Science in Management and Prof. Charmonman was the Program Director. In May 2006, AU also offered 3 more eLearning degree programs, namely, M.Sc. in Information and Communication Technology, M.Sc. in eLearning Methodology, and Ph.D. in eLearning Methodology The Ph.D. program is the first such Ph.D. in the world. Then, in June 2006, the International Biographical Centre in Cambridge, UK, named Prof. Srisakdi Charmonman the Father of Thai E-Learning.