



**Learning
Light**

where knowledge makes a difference

Learning 2009

A report by:

**David Patterson
Gerard Lennox
Sean Gilligan
Nigel Goddard**

**Learning Light
Assessment 21
Webanywhere
UKTI**



Supported by





About Learning 2009 3

 The Delegates..... 3

 About the conference – choices choices choices..... 3

 The role of suppliers..... 4

The Key Notes:..... 5

Conference themes 6

 The missing themes.... 7

 What troubled and interested the delegates..... 7

Mobile Learning 9

 Tom King (Learning Innovator) Judy Brown (ADL immersive Learning Technologies Team)..... 9

gLearning at Google (Learning in the "Cloud"): Foundations of Leadership & Teamwork..... 10

 Joel Constable and Julie Clow of Google 10

Collaborative e-learning methodology: Design, develop and manage your projects 13

 Coley O'Brien, Wendy's..... 13

Looking for ROI? You're missing the IOB: Why Impact on Business is the new measure of Corporate Learning 14

 Tim Hill, Blackboard..... 14

e-migration: A strategy to get from here to there 15

 Richard Taylor – on behalf of Aptara Corporation 15

The evolving learning systems marketplace: What SHOULD Learning systems do? 17

 Cushing Anderson, IDC and Amy Womack Waste management (Learning consortium panellists)..... 17

Virtual Worlds: Knock Knock, is anyone out there? 18

 Bob Gerard, Accenture..... 18

Learning Virtually- Let's not forget the Learner 20

 Sarah Lindsell, Andrew Wolff and Helen Gibson PwC 20

SharePoint for social learning: 3 implementations at 3 companies..... 22

 Mark Wagner, Progressive Insurance 22

 Elin Soderholm, FM Global..... 22

 Kim Cook, General Mills 22

Immersive Game-Based Courses: Lessons Not Just for Kids 23

 Jennifer Whiting and Jeramy Gatza, Florida Virtual School..... 23

Reflections 24

 Clouds and Silver Linings..... 24

 The US perspective 24

 The role of the CLO 24

 Compliance 24

 ROI or IOB 25

 Technology Trends 25

 Should you go? 25





About Learning 2009

In conjunction with Learning Light, UK Trade & Investment was pleased to be able to both provide tailored support and advice for the companies that went out to Learning 2009, and to provide regional funding for the visit to the USA.

Each company worked with the UK Trade & Investment team in both Yorkshire and also the US commercial staff network to provide a tailored program, potential meetings and support during the visit.

The success of the visit will be measured in the next year as the companies that attended are able to leverage the knowledge and networks that they gained and translate this into top and bottom line improvements in the US.

“Learning” (2009) is one of the conferences held for the learning professional, held annually and organised by the Masie foundation, with the hugely charismatic and well networked Elliot Masie presiding over a plethora of activities.

This conference is for the Learning professional to come along and share experiences, meet their peers, and learn from the collective wisdom assembled by the Masie organisation.

The conference is large -1300 or so delegates, vibrant, fun, and a true learning experience, and was badged *Learning in uncertain times*. The majority of delegates were from North America, with just a small number from Europe and beyond. Delegates tended to be from the business world, with just a few from education.

The Delegates

The delegates typically came from corporate America, representing large companies – (companies of 40,000 employees are not that unusual), global accountancy practices were well represented, as was the range of US government agencies including the department of defence, the Veterans administration, the CIA and the IRS.

About the conference – choices choices choices.....

The conference is divided up into a range of “learning choices” classified as follows:

Key note speakers (usually by interview), - all 1300 delegates together in one room

And the one hour sessions through the day (4 in a full day), with a choice of about 25 learning choices each hour and coded as follows:

Thought leadership CLOs, Academics and industry thinkers – giving leadership!
Discussions, 60 minutes of structured discussion led by senior learning executives





Supplier Showcases - *Solutions, products and approaches + examples, delivered by the client of the supplier, not an overt selling opportunity!*

Learning stories – *The sharing of organisational success stories*

How –to sessions, - *Practical advice sessions*

Digital field trips, - *Sessions using a Video conference (or Skype) to deliver in part*

Panel perspectives – *Perspectives from a panel with Q and A sessions*

Ten ways – *Small groups of contributors sharing tips – facilitated presentations*

Learning trio – *up to you to meet two others and chat (there was a meeting point)*

Hot topic brainstorms – *Facilitated rapid fire sessions*

Roll your own sessions - *You can organise your own session (non commercial)*

Pecha Kucha - *(what? ed) unique show and tell – 20 slides with 20 seconds per slide*

Pre conference workshops - *3 hour deep dives into specific topics*

Not to forget the well stocked ASTD bookstore, the chance to train as a “pit-stop team” to change tyres in a replica pit-stop for a NASCAR, or visit the Farmers insurance “Catastrophe Bus” (a learning and support resource to help unfortunate individuals make insurance claims in difficult circumstances) and the Mobile one-stop career centre bus.

All this activity commencing at 1.00 on the Sunday and ending at 12 noon on the Wednesday, with the conference commencing at 8.00 and ending at 5.30 pm (though exercise sessions were available at 6.00 in the morning for the super keen!).

I calculated that there were about 225 individual sessions to choose from, over and above the general sessions with the key note speaker sessions of which there were 6, involving more than 20 speaker-interviewees.

In addition to all this – there were lunch time sessions including Lunch with Chief Learning Offices for example, a supplier buffet and reception was held on the Monday evening as well as a conference party night (including dancing with Chief Learning officers) on the Tuesday. The conference had already been treated to the unlikely abilities of Elliot Masie to dance on a Segway!

The role of suppliers

In addition there were very small exhibition stands from a range of about 34 e-learning vendors including Aptara, Blackboard, Forterra, Skillsoft, SAP, element k, Learn.com, Allen interactions and more.

It is important to note that naked selling is frowned upon, and vendors when speaking tended to make this point very quickly themselves. Indeed while they viewed this as a route to market, their modus operandi was very much about their customers showcasing them as “supplier showcases”.



The sponsorship of vendors is obviously important to the conference finances, but they are in no way allowed to over influence the theme of the event – that it is an event to learn and share for the learning professional, though in my view the conference would lack something without the presence of the e-learning vendors/suppliers.

The Key Notes:

Typically Elliot Masie would interview the “key noter”, rather than just allow a monologue. This formula, along with the use of Twitter to allow some degree of audience participation worked very well indeed and added significantly to the conference.

The key key noters (if we can call them that) were Capt Chesley “Sully” SullenbergerIII, Malcolm Gladwell, Betsy Myers and Laura Fitton.

In reverse order:

Laura Fitton is the author (and Twitter guru) of “Twitter for Dummies”, and banged the drum for Twitter.

Betsy Meyers, former Chief operating officer for the Obama campaign, former member of the Clinton administration. Myers puts forward the ideas of new forms of leadership and delivered a passionate piece about the value of people and how important it is for leaders to value people.

Malcolm Gladwell answered a wide and diverse range of questions from Elliot Masie in a quirky and self depreciating style. Gladwell struck me as a precious and fragile commodity, not afraid to admit to having been incorrect, but incredibly gifted in his ability to take in a diverse and breath taking amount of information and synthesise the materials to provide insightful analysis of situations. I really must read one of his books!

Capt Chesley “Sully” SullenbergerIII. This US Airways Captain gave one of the most memorable and insightful interviews I have ever heard (as a conference delegate or a TV viewer). I was so impressed that the first thing I did on return to the

UK was find the animation of the events of Flight 1524 as presented at the conference as way of introduction and replay them to my son, telling him who I had been so privileged to listen to.

Capt Sullenberger’s story is as remarkable as his demeanour when being interviewed. He is without doubt a hero for his skill in saving so many lives by piloting his plane that had struck a flock of Canada geese and lost power in both engines safely into an emergency landing on the Hudson river all in just three hundred seconds after take off.





In listening to “Sully” it became quickly apparent that this was no ordinary hero (if hero’s can ever be called ordinary!) who just reacted on instinct and sheer bravery to save lives, this was something much more.

While quick to praise his co-pilot and others involved in a remarkable event and rescue, it became very apparent that the real reason that a tragedy was averted was due to the skill and ability of “Sully” which he attributed to his desire and commitment to continued professional development and learning.

Captain Sullenberger was able to apply the knowledge and experience gained (along with his undoubted ability as a pilot) to the situation in a “brick by brick” manner, as he described it, to show that learning as well as bravery makes hero’s!

I have always been fond of the equation $Knowledge = (Skills \times Ability) \times Experience$, and this gives credence to the view that organisations must not forget the value of experience. And I would go on to argue that knowledge does not reside in software systems or applications, but in people. And secondly it is learning and training that delivers and supports the development of skills and ability, and that is what Capt Sully thinks to. So here is the call for continued learning and development and the need to never forget the value of experience!

This was more than “I was just doing my job”, more than “I was well trained to do my job”, but “I had taken personal responsibility for my training and development so I could do my job in the most demanding of circumstances.”

I will now read Capt Sullenberger’s book before anyone else’s book – sorry Malcolm!

Conference themes

Apps for the i-phone/smart phone, Twitter principally (and social networking) *Re-skilling*, and the question “*what learning would look like in 2019?*” There was a sub theme conference wide fascination with what Google is doing (or might do) with e-learning. The use of Video attracted considerable attention as well.

The use of video as a medium to put across learning messages was prevalent in a number of sessions. It could be seen in a variety of ways such as using commercial DVDs such as *Twelve Angry Men* for Negotiation training at Google, YouTube style home made clips for updating the workforce in of the of the USA’s largest chains of Pawnbrokers, or for creating immersive, TV Soap style situational training at KFC.

The main reason for this was that there seemed to be a move towards more social, informal learning where knowledge was gaining by “sharing stories” as much as formal learning practises. Perhaps this story telling approach is best epitomised by



Sun, who as part of training require their Sales teams to record a short piece of information on how they sold a new product (to the individual) for the first time. This built up a great library of how people achieved a first sale, rather than “best practise” from someone who is on their umpteenth product sale.

These were undoubtedly the themes put forward from the platform, and several activities were undertaken to reinforce these, with a group of students developing an i-phone learning App as the conference unfolded, and the embedded role of Twitter in the conference, and the question what learning will look like in 2019. However, I believe these were not the real issue and concerns of the majority of the delegates.

The missing themes....

The themes I felt that were missing included standards – with only limited attention to the role of SCORM and its future iterations –only one session. I felt learning design was under represented. Human Capital Management (a hot term at the 2006 event) seemed to have been forgotten as a key metric framework for people management, though interestingly Talent Management seemed to retain currency as a term.

Gaming and immersive learning scenarios had a much lower profile than I expected, but certainly hasn't gone away. E-assessment and e-portfolios likewise had quite low profiles.

I was surprised as to how little attention was given to e-books, given the undoubted interest in Kindle and other readers. I could not see any session offering insight into this quite exciting development.

Sadly, in my view there was little attention to the needs of Small and Medium enterprises, or new starts and entrepreneurs as I guess most of the delegates were from large organisation.

Finally, (but this is America), no mention from the stage or presentations I could see addressing the issues of the environment, and the impact of e-learning on an organisations carbon footprint. I think this is an area overlooked, as many of the initiatives are without doubt having impact on reducing “learning miles”.

What troubled and interested the delegates

The principle issue of the majority of delegates was to reiterate the key role learning and development could play in the present difficult economic circumstances. Much air time was given to the role of the CLO, but many of the delegates were not at the heady heights of CLOs, but were highly professional and committed individuals seeking to provide good learning and development for their colleagues in organisations buffeted by hard times.





Hard times historically mean the reduction in training budgets, and in this age of the “budgetary constraint environment” this was a key theme in the eyes of delegates. The need to maintain the value and currency of learning and development in the eyes of corporate decision makers was a common thread.

Masie chose the theme of re-skilling to address the wide issue of unemployment and economic re-alignment with the theme of re-skilling.

The conference “thought leadership” I observed did not really address the issues of many a troubled L&D professional wondering the worth of their role. However, many of the sessions certainly did, with a range of excellent learning stories and supplier showcases offering advice and ideas to the collective of worried practitioners.

Indeed sessions focused on ROI proved to be very popular, as was the interest in “virtual learning” – a recurring theme, and what has happened to virtual worlds. There was interest in achieving value from existing LMS’s, the need to find effective partnerships to deliver cost effective solutions, and inevitably how social networking can influence learning.

Gaming drew interest, but was hardly mentioned from the platform, - though many veteran attendees recalled this as being big in previous years. The same could be said about podcasts – the flavour of 2006 – getting hardly a mention. It is good to know that this faddishness is not confined to the UK.

e-learning remained the central hub of the conference from the supplier showcase perspective, but was subject to a piece in the programme from Elliot Masie advocating the dropping of the “e”, given the all pervasive role e-learning now plays, and the “e” should now be used for excellence in learning.

Masie argued that e-learning had evolved, and the future highlights were around the use of video in learning, the concept of falling forward – in that e-learning needs to get more challenging. A cry from Elliot for greater research into the pedagogy of learning to address learning styles, and (of course) a realisation that social networking will play a growing role – including the use of ratings, peer teaching, project based learning and structured competition/collaborative learning summed up the view of the future – will this be it for 2019? – I doubt it.

While it is hard to argue with these themes, discussions with the delegates and a number of practitioner sessions saw a more measured degree of enthusiasm toward social networking in the work place.





Mobile Learning

Tom King (Learning Innovator) Judy Brown (ADL immersive Learning Technologies Team)

Pre conference Session 3 hour deep dive

A session designed to slake the appetite of those keen to really understand the issues and opportunities afforded to learning by the use of mobile devices. We even sketched out our own APP.

The APPS business

What the drivers of mobile learning are was summarised as “support at the moment of need”, and went on to identify “Consuming, creating and supporting” as the key attributes of mobile learning – described as the “Mosaic of need”.

APPS economics

Frighteningly – for many aspiring developers, the average development cost of an APP was \$35,000, and the average income generated was \$12,000 per APP!

There are some 100,000 APPS in existence, generating £100,000,000 in sales.

Equally worryingly is that the average APP usage session is no more than 5 minutes.

I look forward to seeing the ROI models for APPS.

So, you still want to design and build an APP!

Advice in building an APP:

Start by knowing your user and the problem you are trying to solve on their behalf.

Build up to ten prototypes to ensure you design the correct solution and three pixel perfect iterations. This hopefully will lead to one successful product.

What about a strategy for your content and future development pathway

- 1) Do nothing till things come a bit easier and sort themselves out.
- 2) Develop “mobile tolerant” content in HTML and ensure you test it.
- 3) Become “mobile friendly” (easier said than done)
- 4) Develop targeted mobile APPS
- 5) Mobile publishing
- 6) Single source multiple clone for i-phone, android, blackberry etc...





The future trends for mobile Learning.

- The Sensor economy
- Ubiquitous computing
- Smart Cloud
- Mobile payment
- Instant translation
- Transparent devices
 - 2d barcodes
 - Augmented reality

Resources

- Mlearnopedia
- Mobisitegalore.com

gLearning at Google (Learning in the "Cloud"): Foundations of Leadership & Teamwork

Joel Constable and Julie Clow of Google

Learning story

This session was so over subscribed they had to re-run it later in the day in a bigger room. Everyone thought that this was going to be about using Google to find free learning content on the web. In fact it was about Google's first attempt at running a virtual leadership program in a distributed environment.

As you would expect from Google it was a well put together and comprehensive presentation. The gist of it was how they got a series of middle managers in different offices and countries to participate in a four week project to raise their awareness of leadership and teamwork.

They did this by using a variety of Google tools that encouraged group working and by being very careful about the time and effort commitment required from the participants and their managers.

Much of the content is available at <http://bit.ly/glearning> if you skip through the first 12 slides(which describe the Google work environment) you get to the meat of the session. Their challenge was to



“Build a rich, collaborative leadership program for thousands of early-career Googlers in global, dispersed offices”

“Oh!...and do it fast. ☺”

The species and culture of the “Googler”:

- Googlers hate eLearning.
 - Ok, maybe “hate” is a strong word...
- Googlers love social experiences.
 - They don’t each lunch alone.
- Googlers are too busy for all but the most compelling engagements.
 - Talks by Obama pass muster.
- Sales Googlers are from Venus, Engineers are from Vulcan.
 - Sites vs. Wiki – the debate continues on...
- We eat our own Dogfood.
 - Gmail, Calendar, Talk, Moderator, Sites,

The program was voluntary so they created a four week program built around a commitment of roughly 19 hours:

Self-paced work: ~ 3 hours/week for 4 weeks = **12 hours**

Debrief sessions: 2-hour launch

Three 1-hour weekly debrief sessions;

2-hour conclusion = **7 hours**

Total = 19 hours

The content was self paced ‘chunks’ of free and paid content hosted on Google applications. They created a community within the group (which was often dispersed) by running interactive community micro assignments (sent via email and SMS) the results of which were often visible to all in the group. This included using a game engine to create a leader board thus creating a sense of Social Accountability. They allowed participants to set the pace (up to a point) because automated emails with key words drove the next phase of the micro assignments. Finally they held regular debriefs using WebEx and video conferencing. The whole project was built and rolled out by three people in six elapsed weeks using about eighteen man days effort.

They used many techniques including games and on-line activities such as wordart.net, reading books (such as Strength Finder) and watching videos – especially those available at <http://www.youtube.com/atgoogletalks>. Participant’s comments and reflections were fed into what in effect was a team specific blog / website set up using their own tools. They used voting tools so that group members could rate others comments and things like personal value statements. All of this was managed by a group moderator who used Moodle to control the registrations and progress through the program.





Probably the most telling thing about the presentation was when they talked about re-using existing content. In practice they didn't get much of it from the Internet. Rather they used content that Google (like many other large US companies) was already subscribing to. This included things like the electronic journal service EBSCO and the Harvard Business Review and www.getabstract.com for business articles that were relevant to the program.

Where they did use information sourced from the web they 'linked' to it so as not to break anyone's copyright.

Lessons Learned

There were a number of points I came away with. First it was focused and relevant. By mixing self paced activities with what were in effect virtual group activities it made it interesting. The WebEx conferencing / debriefs helped build the team and were important to keeping the focus.

The moved fast and got good results and they were able to modify it in relation to the needs of the groups. Because they tended to use existing material they did not incur high set up costs or long lead times. However it was not free – but it was effective.

There was a great deal of interest in looking at how Google was adapting its training and learning for its own Googlers. The basic premise was to provide a system of training that would be appreciated by their typical media savvy, web based employees.

The resulting research and implementation saw Google "crowdsourcing" the content and creating breadcrumb trails of contents to deliver learning objectives. The main rally cry was why reinvent the wheel and rewrite course content that already exists.

The basic premise was that most of the learning content is already available, whether it is articles from Harvard Business Review, whitepapers from colleges, or commercial DVDs – the main aim for Google was to provide a learning system that stitched the breadcrumbs together in a series of small learning pieces that would create the desired learning result.

Around the breadcrumb trail they used tool to facilitate communication such as Google Sites, Video conference debriefings, forums, and feedback such as Leaderboards. The main purpose of this was for learners to "share stories" based on the micro assignments that were being set.





Collaborative e-learning methodology: Design, develop and manage your projects

Coley O'Brien, Wendy's

Learning Story

The story of Wendy's (a large hamburger and fast food outlet organisation with a large number of restaurants across the USA) is one of ambition and execution.

This was an organisation that had embarked upon using e-learning 2 years ago with the deployment of a Sum Total LMS, and now the L&D team was charged with developing 100 courses and rolling them out in 1 year.

Each course was to be about 20 minutes long, aimed at some 50,000 users.

This challenge was met by means of effective project management, and the close partnership of a developer.

It is these two intertwined approaches that allowed the L&D team at Wendy's to deliver on time and on budget.

The relationship with the vendor was crucial, and selection and willingness to integrate into the process was crucial.

Wendy's took the view that they would lead on project management, and built a series of simple but effective project management tools in excel.

This view came from a simple preconception that "creatives" are not good project managers. The developers were therefore to be project managed by the L&D team.

Simple but effective spread sheet designed checklists were developed and these flow into master portfolios in a folder structure. The Quality assurance application was built on an external web site.

The release cycle was quick fire, the development tools used – rapid!

The learning objects – built into articulate proved to be engaging and achieved high levels of usage in the company – some 2250 users per day, 200,000 users to date, and the 100 courses are not yet all completely launched!





Lessons Learned

Selecting the right vendor with whom a real partnership can be developed, having the right processes in place to manage a rapid development and rapid fire launch schedule into which the partner is fully part of, is key.

There is no doubt that the real benefits of rapid tools to develop content are not just about the speed of development, but about the speed of deployment. However, the tools are not enough in themselves, it is the project management framework that will allow a rapid build and deploy programme to succeed.

Looking for ROI? You're missing the IOB: Why Impact on Business is the new measure of Corporate Learning

Tim Hill, Blackboard

Supplier Showcase

This presentation sought to help the L& world in what was described as the “struggle for budget” by presenting a new and alternative approach to the perennial problem of ROI –that of Impact on Business (IoB).

The focus was on the internal client and the need of L&D to be close to the client to ensure that the learning and training offer was **aligned** with clients business plans, that **impact** could be measured in two ways – **cost reduction** and **increased effectiveness** – **this measure is the nub of IoB.**

The mapping of learning outcomes to business metrics is seen as key. The Impact on the Business (IoB) is more about benefits and less about cost reduction.

The four steps to effective IoB are as follows:

1. Understand your customers or internal clients
2. Re-engineer your learning strategy to address their needs
3. Create continuous and informal learning environment to support staff beyond the formal training environment – adding this value is seen as crucial in becoming aligned, given that 80% of learning is by informal means – but only gets 20% of the budget! – referenced to Jay Cross's work “Informal Learning.”
4. Measure the results in a way that illustrates the benefits to your customer/client.





I (and I am afraid) Blackboard were unable to get around the fundamental challenge (in a way I understood anyway) that what happens when organisational sales slide despite increased levels of training! The ROI model has some problems in this area and so will, surely loB.

Lessons Learned

There is no doubt that the industry wishes to move away from the simplistic ROI models, when e-learning was seen as a way of saving money and toward a better set of metrics reflecting the value of the offer.

It was interesting to note the recognition of the role of informal learning and the need to capture that component to deliver loB.

Blackboard, like the L&D professionals sought to win the battle for budget and convince organisations of the need to keep on training ready for the upturn – they are to be commended for that. However, I am not sure in present circumstances with falling revenues that loB will quite deliver on that, and the cruder cost cutting models of Rol may prove to be the tool to win the argument at the moment.

Learn more:

http://www.blackboard.com/resources/proed/Whitepaper_Impact_on_Business.pdf

e-migration: A strategy to get from here to there

Richard Taylor – on behalf of Aptara Corporation

Supplier Showcase

I am not quite sure why I picked this session, but was very glad I did as I felt that this was the most interesting and valuable seminar session I attended.

I am not quite sure why the title was e-migration as this was really about building a business case for the entire learning structure of an organisation for the next 3 years. Surely this is more than migration!

Richard Taylor addressed the driving imperatives for doing this: Globalisation, requiring a faster time to market, dealing with more complex organisations, new modes of communication, delivering cost savings.

Taylor has developed an excellent set of tools to deliver a strategy of migration including a *decision support matrix*, a *balance score card metric set*, a *long term strategic planning framework* with types of learning to move delivery from classroom to virtual classroom and e-learning. These were classified as *Early Stage* –





Fundamental content and information transfer, to Mezzanine Targets – Processes and Methods to Pinnacle Targets – Interactive and Real-time.

Taylor put forward a series of measures regarding the cost per hour used of e-learning and its average re-use ratios. Taylor highlighted the Caterpillar University study which highlighted that e-learning offers a saving of 40—80% over instructor led training.

Taylor argued that unlike traditional training, e-learning gets cheaper and it is quite possible to drive down the average cost per hour.

The metric measurement framework was based around the principles of efficiency, speed, productivity, use of resources and the valuing of employees, with a series of potential inputs to measure and outputs to measure.

Taylor also addresses the cost savings that off-shoring e-learning content development can deliver, and it gets quite quite scary! He expounds the example of a 80% saving and adds the impact of off-shoring the development to add yet more savings.

Finally, in drawing together the savings, the strategy and the overall migration – some very pertinent observations are made as to why it can go wrong, or not deliver as well it might. Taylor says it is imperative to “kill the classroom version”. It is important to invest in quality instructional design – and force this on-line.

In deciding on choice between classroom and e-learning a series of decisions must be taken about Volume, Reach and type of content: Content can vary in its attributes – it may be stable and subject to little change and can be viewed (and procured) as a commodity. Content may need to be standardised, content may have a compliance focus.

It was highlighted that it is important to think long term, and alignment to the organisational strategy was key.

Lessons Learned

This was the most useful and informative session, providing a set of tools for use beyond just the ROI model for a single procurement of an e-learning course to address a single issue. This was a coherent strategy for a business seeking to move its overall L&D forward. However the tools provided offered both a decision making framework and the tools to measure the impact, and should be hugely welcomed by the L&D world. These tools and techniques will give the under pressure L&D professional the required ammunition to demonstrate a true “more for less” model



The evolving learning systems marketplace: What SHOULD Learning systems do?

Cushing Anderson, IDC and Amy Womack Waste management (Learning consortium panellists)

Panel Perspective sessions

Cushing Anderson and Amy Womack moderated a discussion of delegates putting forward ideas for LMS vendors to adopt.

Womack and another presenter (name not provided in the conference handbook) were both L&D Professionals and responsible for LMS management on behalf of their organisations. Anderson is a widely respected consultant in this world. The audience were L&D practitioners using LMS's.

The background for the discussion was around the future and evolving needs required by the practitioners from their LMS's.

LMS's were reviewed as to their evolution, -from catalogue offering with tracking and scheduling, adding learning resources and finally e-learning content.

An interesting concept of the "authorised learner" was introduced, and discussion centred on "How much does the system know about you – the learner?" – what recommendations can it make and what learning prescriptions should it offer.

Requirements around capabilities, talent and succession were all raised. And a key requirement of the future was one of connectors to other solutions. SaaS was seen as key to the future.

This was seen as a fundamental issue – many companies would have to stop seeing themselves "as special". The LMS development model of continual added functionality for all (usually as a result of a specific tailored request from one user – customisation for all!) would have to come to an end. The future of customisation would be how the user seeks to integrate with the plethora of new applications in talent management, competencies tools etc etc....

Mobile LMS drew mixed feedback, but the requirement to integrate with Web2.0 and social networking was (not unsurprisingly) given prominence).

My particular requirement for the LMS Learning Light operates is ease of use for the learner to take greater and greater responsibility themselves to maintain their learning record.

- this was generally considered in the discussion of transcripts (your portfolio of courses taken) and e-portfolio, and seemed to get a little lost in translation.





Lessons Learned

This was a useful session, well moderated, but a little like herding cats given the diversity of users. It is from a UK perspective important to realise the size of the LMS market in North America – it is huge. Many large companies have quite complex learning architectures and hugely complex needs (and overheads) in managing a series of disparate HR and L&D systems. This session was really a plea for integration.

I was surprised not to hear the Moodle word.

Virtual Worlds: Knock Knock, is anyone out there?

Bob Gerard, Accenture

Learning story

No surprises for guessing what this was all about.

Bob Gerard outlined Accenture's interest in virtual worlds and the hype of 2006, and asked the question, what actually has happened in these environments and specifically Second Life.

His view (and that of Linden Labs) is that Virtual Worlds are now coming out of the "Trough of Dis-illusion" stabilising with a "new enlightenment" emerging.

However, in the intervening years Accenture flirted briefly with Second Life, but decided to develop its own Virtual World to replicate a classroom experience, using photo realistic avatars.

Accenture already used Saba Centra to deliver e-learning and virtual meetings.

The Business case was framed in terms of **Level of Interaction** and **Ease of Access** and **cost**.

Quite obviously face to face learning had high levels of interaction, but given the global nature of the company a lower level of ease of access (and the highest price per learner). The Centra application exhibited the lowest cost and interaction, but the highest ease of access.

Accordingly, the virtual world environment sat between the two, but not quite able to deliver 1 click to content and match Centra for ease of access.





The aim was to build a virtual world to replicate not just the classroom per-se, but the experience of the classroom.

This called for the use of avatars to replicate participants with photo realism, to allow the use of gestures over and above just speech. The avatars had lip synch, avatar posture, the ability to make gestures, view control by the user, and the availability to Teleport from one learning environment to another!

The virtual classrooms were designed to reflect the existing Accenture facilities, to a high level of detail.

Courses were provided to learners to allow them to gain control of how to use and interact with Avatars – taking about 20 minutes.

The materials delivered were still the standard PowerPoints used by the organisation, plus videos. The optimum numbers for a course to be delivered in the virtual environment was felt to be 15-20, though up to 50 could be catered for. The majority of courses delivered to 8-10 delegates.

Research into the effectiveness

Accenture's research indicated overall positive feedback. It was felt very important to train the trainers to deliver in such environments.

Feedback from the train the trainer course indicated that the environment came close to replicating a real classroom based course, no age issues were reported.

The company also made significant savings in travel costs.

Gerard provided a set of hints and tips for those considering this option:

- Keep a tight focus
- Start small and expand
- Adopt a cautious and deliberate approach
- Remember this is one channel among many
- Provide for the beginner and the expert user
- Take a classroom course and map it to the virtual world, not a new course
- Manage learners pro-actively - (provide log ins, user guides, step by step instructions, set up test connections)
- Use and encourage exploration of the orientation garden to allow learners to get the feel for the environment and the avatar.
- - This will deliver 90% readiness for the session
- Use and Ice breaker to get going
- Have a learning interaction every 5 minutes to prevent "drift off"





Lessons Learned

Virtual learning worlds will grow, there is no doubt. Many will however remain firmly within the corporate firewall.

The recession has driven the appetite to adopt this form of learning environment. The cost savings and learner feedback illustrate the effectiveness levels that can be achieved with a well managed and designed approach.

This approach has not designed out the traditional role of the trainer, nor has it really taken the development of learning content forward. Instead it has magnified the reach of the trainer and created a new environment in which learner and trainer can interact, and learner and learner can interact as well – a key requirement of any such approach.

It will be interesting to see how Accenture add social networking applications to this environment to allow much greater interaction.

Learning Virtually- Let's not forget the Learner

Sarah Lindsell, Andrew Wolff and Helen Gibson PwC

How – to session

I think I was on a bit of a theme now, second accountancy organisation, the virtual word again....

PwC had elected to deliver 80% of its learning and training by virtual delivery. No prizes for guessing why: The economic downturn again a huge driver for seeking savings.

This meant to the PwC team delivering 1.5 million hours of e-learning, having 70,000 virtual classroom participants, replicating 7000 events and delivering 4 huge virtual conferences.

The 4 large events would have 4000 people attending, and the challenge was to reduce cost by 30-40%.

The PwC uptake of e-learning as a delivery method is now at 80%. PwC recognise that this was born out of economic necessity, and is probably too high a percentage. Though interestingly an ROI case is now required by the business for courses being delivered in a non virtual/e-learning environment.





PwC realise that soft skills are not as easily addressed in this manner, and the loss of networking opportunities is significant, and this level of uptake is likely to drift downward as the economy recovers, though this drift down will definitely not go back to the 70-80% classroom based delivery previously.

PwC was a Centra user, and this was to form the basis of the delivery platform.

One cannot help being impressed with such a transformation of an organisations L&D delivery, and yet another result of the economic crisis stimulating the development and deployment of learning technologies.

The real focus of the seminar is how PwC addressed and delivered the transformation. Economic necessity being the mother of invention or innovation anyway, it still required a hugely impressive effort by the PwC learning technologies teams to make the difference, and as the title suggests, not to forget the learner.

A toolkit was built including videos to extol the benefits of the new learning role out. Learners were encouraged (required) to take personal responsibility for their learning – obviously a cultural challenge given the nature of the organisation.

The organisation had to adapt and adopt to a new way of delivery and this required the co-operation of the learner if the delivery was to be successful.

Key issues included ensuring the learner was prepared for the delivery of the e-learning, - scheduling, virtual conduct and focusing. PwC prepared a series of amusing videos outlining the requirements for learners, encouraging them to block out the time, switch off mobile phones and telephones and e-mail.

The importance of not being on Twitter was refreshing in a conference obsessed with Twitter, and recognising the distractive nature of ICT (e-mail, Twitter, social networking etc....) was felt to be crucial in achieving meaningful learning outcomes.

While the learning delivery has had some successes in migrating to e-learning, the loss of face to face networking at conferences has not been as well dealt with, and virtual conference tools appear to be less acceptable.

Lessons Learned

Wow, this was an amazing achievement and again illustrates the impact the economic downturn has, and the ability of an L&D team to react and use an approach to maintain skills levels in very challenging circumstances. This truly illustrates the ROI impact that e-learning can have.

PwC have not developed as Accenture did in building a virtual world to support the much missed networking, and recognises the drift back to face to face will happen, but for an organisation to reverse the 80-20 rule is impressive.



SharePoint for social learning: 3 implementations at 3 companies

Mark Wagner, Progressive Insurance

Elin Soderholm, FM Global

Kim Cook, General Mills

Learning Story

This was a case study delivered by three different companies each with a different level of maturity for their respective use of SharePoint. The session was absolutely full – reflecting the huge interest in social networking among delegates.

In fact the Social networking usage was quite limited. FM Global were using SharePoint principally for collaboration, project management and document management. General Mills used SharePoint for document management and publishing via web sites – really no more than as an intranet.

It was left to Progressive to outline a more evolved use of SharePoint, and here the company had mandated the use of FaceBook to allow future users to prepare to use the SharePoint environment! Facebook as a experimental learning environment!

Employees would then transfer their FaceBook skills to build and maintain their own “MySite” - (a searchable profile) in the corporate SharePoint environment.

The corporate SharePoint was built with templates, e-mail, RSS, mynews, newswire, stock ticker etc....with now 1200 people having a MySite and it was noted that the IT department led the charge.

Legal issues were highlighted as a major issue in the development of this project, especially around archiving and retrieval and document retention. Anonymity and the danger of the unregulated blogger were also issues

Lessons Learned

I felt the title of this session was slightly misleading – yes there were SharePoint deployments, but to badge them as somehow aimed at supporting social networking was to stretch the point. SharePoint is seeking to add functionality over and above its collaboration and document sharing usage. However, I did not really feel the usages were that imaginative to be marketed as a new usage phenomena for SharePoint.





There is no doubt that the deployments were solid and well executed, meeting defined corporate needs, but nothing really beyond what a well designed corporate intranet and document management system has been able to do.

Immersive Game-Based Courses: Lessons Not Just for Kids

Jennifer Whiting and Jeramy Gatza, Florida Virtual School

Learning Story

The Florida Virtual school was one of the few education focused organisations at the event.

This being an education establishment used an interesting way of eliciting discussion from the audience, by beginning with asking the audience what they wished to know...this was done very effectively by good moderation and use of PreziDesktop <http://prezi.com/> - really good..

This made for a hugely interactive session, but also very difficult to keep detailed notes about.

The scope of the project – to deliver 130 hours of game based learning designed to build knowledge of the history of the USA - ambitious, and by what we saw quite successful. By the way the story of the US is couched in the terms of the game which is titled “the Conspiracy Code”

<http://www.flvs.net/areas/flvscourses/ConspiracyCode/Pages/default.aspx>

In terms of conspiracy I make no further mention of the Boston tea party – a tax avoidance conspiracy obviously!

This project was developed jointly with a developer on a 50-50 cost basis and has cost over \$1 million. Future revenues for sales outside the state of Florida will be split on a 50-50 basis as both parties hope to recover some of their development costs.

While the project has not been fully evaluated, its success is in my view pretty well guaranteed, given the quality of the learning environment.

Principle issues highlighted have been around the interface with LMS's and how learners are tracked.





Reflections

Clouds and Silver Linings

This has been an interesting conference, given the economic background it is reassuring to see how from an e-learning and learning technologies vendor standpoint the economic downturn is having a major positive impact. – Clouds and Silver linings!

The US perspective

In the USA they have much bigger problems, the distance, the number of staff, the number of locations. They also have a clear distinction between the home market and abroad. They are only just beginning to grapple with the problem of language due to the large Hispanic population.

The role of the CLO

Chief Learning Officers are now common and the best come from a business not training background. CLO's are usually not part of HR and are instrumental in aligning training with the organisations short and long term goals. CLO's more than HR are looking at managing the growth of people within the organisation.

Compliance

There was considerable emphasis on compliance training which is much more widespread than just financial sector. The need for absolute transparency in business practice means that the actions of people well down the hierarchy can have an personal impact on those at the top, so all have to know about best business practice.

As always when something personally affects the people at the top things get done lower down the hierarchy, hence the growth in compliance related training to minimise the possibility of senior executives being hauled in front of the courts.



ROI or IOB

I feel that is ROI that is in the ascendancy at present in the minds of decision makers – full blooded cost cutting is where it is at in many organisations. However, this is not to say that IOB is not now forming part of the overall picture, and more and more L&D departments will be aligning their activities evermore closely to internal clients and the organisations overall strategy.

It may be possible to state that as far as ROI is concerned e-learning v. classroom, its e-learning 1, Classroom 0 – certainly this is the view of the worlds major accountancy practices, and they know how to count beans.

Technology Trends

Short in-house shot video is growing as a medium for sharing knowledge compared with sophisticated e-learning content.

Apps for smart phones will become more and more prevalent – though how successful remains to be seen!

Social Networking and Twitter and how they are used for Learning and Development will continue to exercise many minds – but used they will , as informal learning based approaches continue to gain currency.

Virtual worlds will steadily increase in usage – now the hype is passed, and the enterprise version of Second Life will prove interesting (once again) but this time for real.

Just in Time training seems to be even more important, and the speed of deployment of learning is now becoming a major factor its rapid rapid.

Webinars to deliver training remotely are growing in popularity.

One final thought provoking comment:

There was much talk of leadership development, mainly because there is a shortage of real leaders who can make decisions as the American companies become used to flatter organisation structures and the traditional command and control approach is breaking down.

Should you go? – Nigel commented:

“Having attended the Learning 2009 event and coupled with the knowledge of my UK Trade & Investment colleagues on the ground in the US, there are definite opportunities for companies form the UK to penetrate the US market. To do so will





Learning
Light

where knowledge makes a difference

require capital to establish a basic presence in the US and patience to grow this, the scale of opportunities and the challenge of a more developed and adept learning market in the US versus the UK will provide an excellent challenge for any serious UK company looking to grow internationally.”





About UKTI

UK Trade & Investment is the government organisation that helps UK-based companies succeed in the global economy and assists overseas companies to bring their high quality investment to the UK. For further information please visit www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk

About Learning Light

Learning Light, a company limited by guarantee, which occupies a unique position in the e-learning space and is able to provide expert, impartial advice and guidance on the strategic and innovative use of e-learning in business.

Sheffield-based Learning Light is supported by Yorkshire Forward, the regional development agency for Yorkshire and the Humber.

www.learninglight.com

About Assessment 21

Assessment21 is a leading supplier of assessment systems that deal with complex forms of assessments such as reasoning and analytical thinking that are difficult to measure using just simple multiple choice questions. Born out of academia and addressing the the need to speed the marking and feedback process within universities Assessment21 offers great cost savings and higher quality assessments to Professional Bodies as well as Higher, Further and Secondary education groups who want written answers with out the paper and with the minimum of marking effort. Contact us at www.assessment21.com

About Webanywhere

WebAnywhere Ltd has been established for over seven years and provides innovative website and multimedia solutions to schools in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. As a leading edge technology focused company, we are always up to date with the latest Internet trends and developments. We are well placed to deliver the full range of ICT, including full training for your staff.

Since 2002, we have dealt with primary, secondary, nursery and special educational needs establishments. As well as web design and content management services, we offer a wide range of additional products, such as surveys, pupil eRegistration and Google Analytics, plus fun, interactive technology, such as radio podcasting and video – 'vodcasting'.

<http://www.webanywhere.co.uk>

