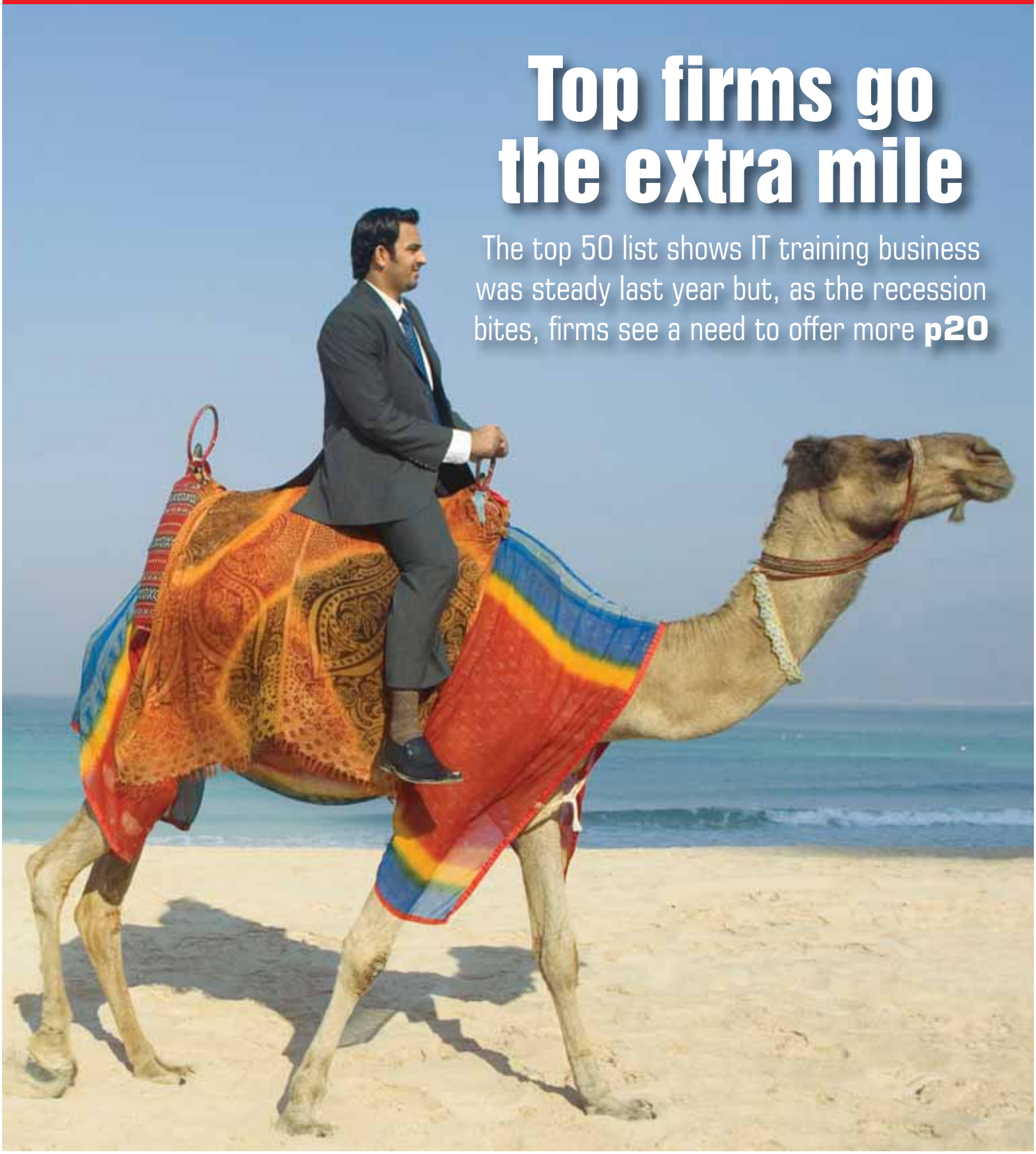
ITtraining

CASE STUDY: Heathrow rings the changes **12**
TOOLS Can serious games be used to learn IT skills? **14**
STRATEGY Cloud computing offers L&D new options **18**
COMMENT Clive Shepherd fears the end of free web services **34**

Summer 2009 www.bcs.org/ittraining

Top firms go the extra mile

The top 50 list shows IT training business was steady last year but, as the recession bites, firms see a need to offer more **p20**



Are you in the know...



...or out of touch?

Stay in the know with BCS membership

BCS is the leading industry body for IT and communications. We represent today's most dynamic and fast moving industry.

With over 66,000 members in more than 100 countries, BCS is recognised throughout the world.

BCS membership gives you immediate access to:

- A huge online IT and communications library
- BCSrecruit.com jobsite and career services
- National and international networking
- Professional recognition with industry leading post nominal letters MBCS & FBCS
- The route to the industry 'gold standard' Chartered IT Professional (CITP)

Join BCS today to extend your professional contacts and access a wealth of knowledge and expertise

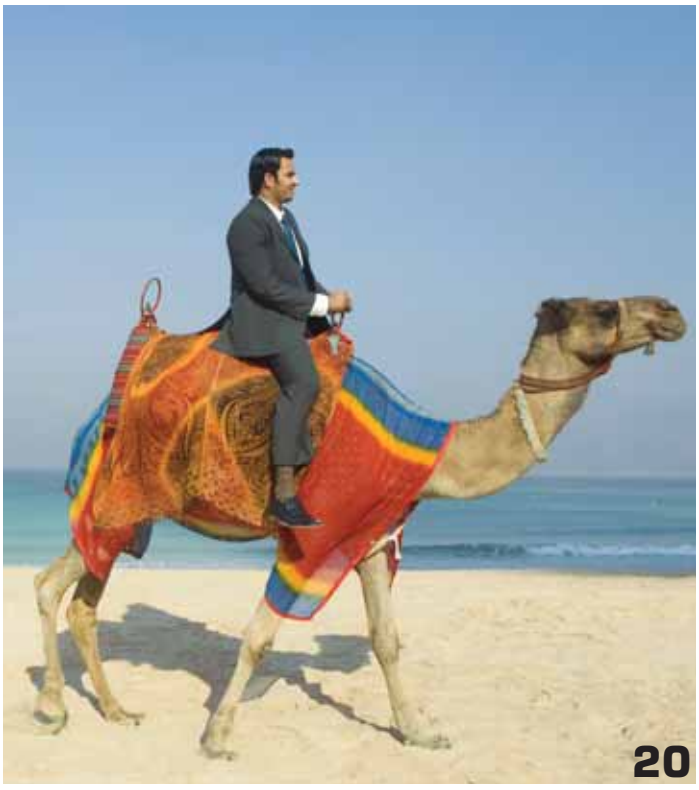
with BCS membership you're in

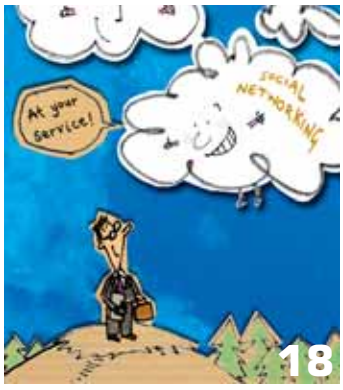
Visit **www.bcs.org** or call us on **01793 417 424**

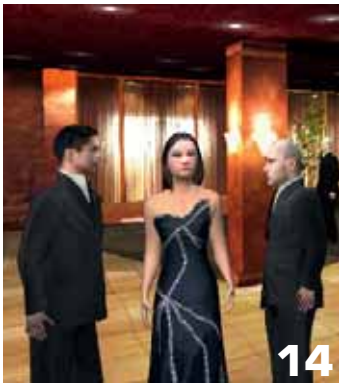
BCS IS A REGISTERED CHARITY: NO. 292786

Contents











News

06 **Update**
STEM shortages Two-thirds of employers have problems recruiting science, technology, engineering and maths graduates.

07 **Supplier briefs**
New Horizons 'closed' New Horizons' English and Scottish operations have gone into liquidation, but a London centre will re-open shortly.

Redtray takes over AI Redtray has expanded in e-learning by merging with Academy Internet.

32 **Institute of IT Training**
IITT conference 2009 Bob Mosher will deliver the keynote.

08 **BCS I&TTSG**
Remote training At the latest online meeting, participants were reminded of the principles of human learning and how we process information.

Features

12 **Heathrow moves to IPT**
When BAA set out to install IP telephony in Heathrow, it needed a training programme that took into account the complex environment and diverse communities.

14 **IT skills become a game**
Harnessing the techniques, approaches and formats of computer games to make e-learning more appealing is the idea behind serious gaming, but can it be applied to IT skills?

18 **On cloud nine**
Cloud computing could give you as an L&D professional a number of options that may have previously appeared to be beyond your reach.

20 **Top firms go extra mile**
The top 50 list of IT training companies shows the market grew in 2008, but, as business now contracts, firms are offering customers more.

Podcasting

09 **E-learning, PM, downturn**
Recent podcasts cover effective e-learning; recession-tackling actions; and project management.

Trainer-to-trainer

11 **Gen Y and lively delivery**
How to enliven certification courses and engage Generation Y.

Self study

30 **Book reviews**
Wikis, interaction programming, project management, security, and capacity planning.

Comment

08 **Alan Bellinger: influencing**
Six persuasion principles to try out in the L&D environment.

34 **Clive Shepherd: e-learning**
Free content and web 2.0 service may not continue indefinitely.

Editor's intro

One man's trash is another's prize



Did you ever think rubbish bins could be used to motivate your staff? Read on to find out about this recession-busting idea to create a new staff incentive.

Suppliers these days have to be very attentive to customers' needs. Businesses that are being squeezed by their customers generally have suppliers who they in turn put under price pressure.

So, while, as an L&D manager your budget may be being cut, you'll no doubt have suppliers who are offering you more bang for your bucks. When I was talking to IT training companies for this year's Top 50 article, they were quite aware of the need to be extra specially nice to customers. So some IT training companies are offering extras, such as free webinars, and most have some tips to customers on how they can save money – see our article starting on p20.

Another area where savings – or at least different solutions – may be available for L&D managers is via cloud applications. It's still a relatively new term and Alan Bellinger gives a good summary in this issue (p18) of the various areas in which L&D managers could consider using cloud applications.

But coming back to the supplier-customer relationship – as IT training companies' revenues and profits come under pressure, they are trying to reduce costs from their suppliers. One company has implemented some green strategies to help it be more environmentally friendly and save money. One of these is to remove individual bins, which it says has halved rubbish and reduced its waste removal costs.

Staff apparently, however, have not been over impressed by this move, missing their own bit of plastic to fill with rubbish. So the company has seized the opportunity to offer the prize of a personal waste bin for x period of time as a performance reward. Who needs bottles of champagne?

The bin idea brings me on to mention Alan Bellinger's column in this issue (p8) about persuasion tactics. He draws on six persuasion principles set out by Robert Cialdini and Alan explains how L&D managers can use these to influence both learners and sponsors. Of course, these tactics can be applied to other situations too, and could perhaps help generate ideas for incentives other than waste bins.

Email helen.wilcox@hq.bcs.org.uk

IT training

Editor **Helen Wilcox**
Managing Editor **Brian Runciman**
Art Editor **Marc Arbuckle**
Graphics Assistant **David Williams**
Advertising **Kevin Cavilla**

The British Computer Society
First Floor, Block D, North Star House,
North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FA
Registered Charity No 292786
Editorial telephone +44 (0) 1793 417 417
Editorial email: helen.wilcox@hq.bcs.org.uk
Advertising telephone +44 (0) 20 7306 0300 Ext 201
Advertising email: ittraining@mongoosemedia.com
Subscriptions: **www.bcs.org/ittraining/subs**

IT Training is published under licence from Haymarket Specialist.
www.haymarket.com
Tim Bulley, licensing director.
Telephone +44 (0) 20 8267 5078
Email: tim.bulley@haymarket.com

IT Training magazine is published quarterly.
The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of The British Computer Society or the organisations employing the authors. © 2009 The British Computer Society.

Copying: Permission to copy for educational purposes only without fee all or part of this material is granted provided that: the copies are not made or distributed for direct commercial advantage; the BCS copyright notice and the title of the publication and its date appear; and notice is given that copying is by permission of The British Computer Society. To copy otherwise, or to republish, requires specific permission and may require a fee.

Printed in Great Britain by St Ives, Andover.
www.bcs.org/ittraining

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

haymarket

Institute of IT Training

BCS



TRAINING MANAGERS

Would you like to be able to assess and monitor the performance and quality of your trainers' delivery?

THE INSTITUTE OF IT TRAINING'S NEW SERVICE TRAINER PERFORMANCE MONITORING & ASSESSMENT WILL ENABLE YOU TO DO EXACTLY THAT.

Call us now on **0845 006 8858**

Institute of IT Training

BCS

Update

A round-up of the latest news and developments for IT training professionals

IT spending is experiencing a sharp slowdown globally across hardware, IT services and telecommunications, according to Gartner. It forecasts worldwide IT spending will be $3.2 trillion in 2009, a 3.8 per cent decline from 2008. Only spending on software is expected to remain positive.

Until global financial markets stabilise, global GDP growth, including IT spending, is unlikely to strengthen, according to Gartner.

To achieve the greatest returns and emerge from the downturn in good shape, most firms (51 per cent) are looking to target their **training spend** more effectively, according to the CBI/Nord Anglia education and skills survey 2009. The survey also found that 66 per cent of employers continue to have difficulties recruiting staff with science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) skills at varying levels.

At the time of the survey in November 2008, very few employers were planning training cuts and remained committed to training to improve the performance of their business, with nine out of ten having a training and development plan.

Fifty-seven per cent of the 581 employers surveyed (collectively employing over 2.5 million people or 8 per cent of the total UK workforce) lack confidence in there being **sufficient people to fill high-skilled jobs** in the future. However, the CBI points out that employers are facing very tough conditions, and it is not possible to accurately predict what will happen to training during the current recession.

STEM skills are in demand, but few undergraduates study those subjects. Forty per cent of businesses prefer STEM degrees when recruiting graduates. Businesses from all sectors want STEM skills – 92 per cent of firms employ STEM skilled people, valuing their analytical capabilities and problem solving skills.

Forty-two per cent of businesses do not have a subject preference when it comes to graduate degrees .

The desire for STEM-skilled individuals is greater than most in technical, innovative and technological areas – 92 per cent of innovative companies in science, hi-tech and IT prefer STEM degrees, with demand strong among utilities companies, manufacturing and construction – where 64 per cent prefer STEM graduates.

Businesses in STEM sectors are more likely than others to require a specific degree discipline, reflecting the technical and specialised nature of the work undertaken. Sixty-five per cent of graduate jobs in science, hi-tech and IT businesses require a specific degree. Professional services companies have a high proportion of graduate jobs requiring a particular degree subject and a strong preference for STEM degrees.

Joined up: SkillSoft maps to public sector frameworks



SkillSoft, a provider of e-learning and performance support solutions, is mapping its learning resources directly against the Cabinet Office's Professional Skills for Government (PSG) framework, and the Skills for the Information Age (SFIA) framework.

However, only 13 per cent of university students are studying the core STEM disciplines of physics, biology, chemistry, maths, engineering and technology, despite scientists having an average starting salary of £22,000 – higher than HR or marketing roles.

Also, 64 per cent of science, hi-tech and IT employers found the content of STEM degrees was not meeting business needs. Eighty-six per cent of larger firms are recruiting from the EU15 or EU27.

Similarly, research by IMC (UK) Learning, an e-learning provider, found that between what employers require and job applicants offer, there is a **skills gap** of 21 per cent in IT.

The survey measured the gap as 67 per cent in management skills, 58 per cent in finance, 41 per cent in numeracy, 35 per cent in literacy, and 32 per cent in trades.

Over 100 business leaders and HR professionals were surveyed to establish their views on the perceived skills gap between school-leavers, graduates and business. Over four in five respondents stated that many new graduates and school leavers lack the basic skills necessary for work.

Fifty-four per cent of respondents thought that the standard of education in the UK has deteriorated in the last five to ten years.

The CBI Higher Education Task Force is exploring what more universities and businesses can do to increase take-up of STEM subjects at universities. The task force is examining the funding system to ensure government is providing the support these resource-intensive subjects need.

Supplier briefs

New Horizons centres closed

New Horizons Worldwide has terminated the franchise agreements for Thunder Bay and its associated companies, which were running the New Horizons operations in England and Scotland. Around a week later, the Thunder Bay group filed to the courts for liquidation.

The seven New Horizons training centres are now temporarily closed. New Horizons Worldwide has said it will re-open a London training centre in the UK within 60 days (of 20 April), which will be directly owned and operated by itself, rather than a local franchise to save time identifying a local partner. Thunder Bay was also the guarantor in the UK for ECS's purchase of Parity Training – see below.

Parity Training 'sold'

The sale of Parity Training to Dubai-registered ECS for a price of up to £3 million was approved by Parity shareholders and completed on 27 February. Parity had previously conditionally agreed to sell its training arm for £4.775 million to Xpertise but the deal fell through.

Thunder Bay, which has now filed for liquidation, was the guarantor in the UK for ECS's purchase of Parity Training, and ECS was due to pay the first of its instalments to Parity in April. The consequences were not clear as *IT Training* went to print.

Prince2:2009 exams to start in June

The Prince2: 2009 exams, based on the refresh of the Prince2 methodology, will be available from June 2009, according to accreditation body APMG.

APMG stressed Prince2:2009 is an evolution of the method and will not result in sweeping changes. The changeover will have no effect on current certificates; when due for re-registration, practitioners will take the 2009 version.

Both the foundation and practitioner examinations will be based on the new 'Managing Projects' manual and will not include material from the 'Directing Projects' book, which is new for Prince2:2009. The examination board has yet to agree the crossover exams period for the 2005 or 2009 versions but it says this will be a minimum of three months after the launch.

Redtray takes over Academy Internet

Redtray has expanded its e-learning capabilities through a merger with Academy Internet, the custom e-learning content development division of AI Digital. The Academy Internet team will continue to operate from Brighton.

New ISEB architecture certificates

ISEB has replaced its existing IT Architecture Certificate with two new Intermediate and Practitioner Certificates. The primary aims are to give enterprise and solution architects a broad framework that covers the range of architecture work that precedes and steers system development, and to focus attention on areas where the architect is responsible for effective design and risk management.

A secondary aim is to provide architects with generally applicable knowledge and training, independently of any specific framework.

Matrix FortyTwo accredited for ICTP

Matrix FortyTwo has been accredited as an Institute of IT Training (IITT) Authorised Qualification and Assessment Centre. It can therefore offer both assessment and training for the new IITT/BCS Institute Certified Training Professional Certificate.

Kaplan unveils authoring tool

Kaplan IT Learning has released a new authoring tool and delivery platform, PerformIT, that will allow technology companies to author and deliver emulation-based training and testing scenarios.

Global Knowledge offers Citrix training

Global Knowledge (UK and Ireland) has become a Citrix Authorised Learning Centre. The company will be offering Citrix courses leading to certifications in CCA (CCAA), CCEA (CCEE) and CCIA.

PPi team ups on ITIL and desktop apps

PPi has linked up with Purple Griffon to market and deliver service management training and consultancy solutions in the UK.

PPi Learning has also signed a one-year rolling contract with 2e2 Training for the delivery of its nationwide desktop applications public schedule and associated training requirements.



Alan Bellinger

Leaner and meaner

Persuading learners and sponsors of the importance of a learning intervention can sometimes be an uphill struggle. You can find help, however, by using the six principles of persuasion identified in Robert Cialdini's book 'Influence: Science and Practice'. The principles are: reciprocation; commitment and consistency; social proof; authority; liking; and scarcity.

Try them out next time you find yourself needing to persuade someone about a course of action.

Reciprocation – it's an amazing fact of human nature that people feel compelled to return a favour. In training, we typically refer to this as the 'What's in it for me' and it's the driver behind any training intervention – 'Give me this amount of time and I'll enable you to save this amount of time in the future.'

Commitment and Consistency – people will stick to a decision once it's made – even when it's shown to be bad. In fact, Cialdini shows that people will honour the original commitment even when the original incentive is removed. This is a great tool to use when learners argue they're too busy.

Social proof – this is the principle that people will follow a behaviour if they see others already following that behaviour. This is the rationale behind getting key stakeholders on board first so that the desirable behaviour is spawned by osmosis.

Authority – this doesn't just refer to hierarchical authority, rather it relates to specialist abilities and professionalism. People will regularly defer decisions to individuals recognised as legitimate authorities and experts – and, as L&D professionals, we are the authority on both the skills needed and the best way to transfer those skills.

Liking – it's well recognised that people are more likely to comply with requests from people they like; but being liked in a business environment is more about building trust and respect than being a friendly extrovert. Creating appropriate metaphors is one way of building empathy – and handling a problem before it is recognised will build trust.

Scarcity – opportunities become more valuable as they become less available – the principle behind phrases such as 'for a limited time only'. From an L&D perspective this is really an issue of highlighting scarcity issues rather than being devious and creating them. But comments such as 'I have a tight window here as I'm going to be tied up on xyz project next month' is a perfectly legitimate way to engineer some focus.

Who to persuade – you won't have the time or the energy to focus this activity on everyone, so a degree of selection will be critical. But don't focus everything on the top echelons – learners need persuading as well as sponsors.

BCS Information & Technology Training Specialist Group

The art and skills of remote training

On 5 March, IBM UK led a two-hour event on behalf of the BCS Information & Technology Training Specialist Group (I&TTSG) on 'The Art and Skill of Remote Training'. The session was delivered remotely as an instructor-led online (ILO) event.

Approximately 70 participants attended – a mixture of IBM professionals in learning-related job roles and BCS members from the UK and globally.

The event was divided into two sessions. In the first hour, Julian Cable, an accredited learning specialist at IBM UK, explored the principles of using an ILO medium for IT training delivery as an alternative to face-to-face delivery, and covered suggested practices for designing and developing content for ILO delivery.

He shared IBM's experiences of ILO delivery to date, with special focus on the capabilities of Centra, IBM's preferred ILO technology. Then, Paul Jagger, Business Area Manager for Learning Development at IBM UK, explored the features of the Lotus Sametime Unyte technology, which was used to deliver this session. Attendees participated in interactive surveys and asked questions using a text chat facility, followed up in a Q&A session.

In the second hour, Mike Morrison of RapidBI.com provided a session on the principles of human learning and how we process information. He highlighted some of the factors that provide potential barriers to learning using not just online instructor-led training (ILT) but e-learning in general.

The session explored the logical and emotional factors that enable and inhibit the learning practice and reminded participants that to be effective all learning needs to stimulate learners at a range of levels, emotionally and cognitively. Morrison also emphasised the importance of keeping participants engaged through regular interactions.

www.bcs.org/ittsg

IBM's relationship with the BCS and its training specialist group

IBM encourages membership of relevant professional bodies, such as the BCS, IET and IITT. Membership of and contribution to the BCS I&TTSG is a valuable way of raising not only the profile of the individual professional, but also IBM's contribution and commitment to raising standards throughout the industry. IBM UK has a deep and long standing commitment to the BCS, demonstrated by the fact that over 1,200 IBM employees are members of the BCS, 753 of which have achieved chartered status (BCS figures at 2 April 2009). IBM is represented across many of the BCS specialist groups, including the IT&TSG.



Hear it on the podcast

The latest IT Training Podcasts have covered: actions for training departments and skills in demand in a recession; project management qualifications in the world of work and the Prince2 refresh; and creating effective e-learning materials.

Training managers ought to revisit training plans more regularly to keep up with the businesses' changing needs in times of a recession, according to Richard Chappell, MD of Learning Tree UK, speaking in IT Training Podcast 7. He suggested: 'Rather than annual training requirements, they need to do a training plan twice a year, or more often if personnel are changing. You have to add value.

'There will be fewer people doing the same thing. Those remaining in the workplace have to be absolutely on top of their game.'

David Pardo, MD of consultancy Pardo Fox, said: 'The skills in demand will be for investments to save money, such as virtualisation or storage, and techniques that apply methods such as ITIL.'

In episode 8, Eddie Kilkelly, MD of ILX, said Prince2 has become a de facto standard because it can be applied to any project of any type, irrespective of what business sector, plus, because it's in the public domain, there is no licence fee.

James Poxon, Delivery Director at BT, added: 'Using Prince2 on which to build our standard project management processes... means that all projects can be delivered to the same consistent levels of quality and within time and cost constraints… For our project managers, Prince2 is now a mandatory requirement.'

When Prince2 is refreshed in June, the qualifications will pretty much stay the same, according to Kilkelly.

In episode 9, Clive Shepherd, an independent e-learning consultant and Chair of The eLearning Network, said: 'Gen Y is a lot less tolerant of sitting patiently pretending to learn vast quantities. We are now seeing materials and classroom programmes that are much more compact and delivered at the point of need.'

Paul Stevens, MD of Assima UK, said: 'Where e-learning really scores is that it's there for a long time as reference materials. There's never going to be something that will completely replace face-to-face training but that doesn't mean that you shouldn't use e-learning as well.'

www.bcs.org/podcasts/

ITtraining podcast

View e-learning video debate

The future of e-learning, and how it rates against classroom training, was the topic of a recent BCS video debate by five experts in various areas of the field. Jutta Mackwell of BCS reports on some of the arguments discussed.

While e-learning certainly seems a good way to cut down on expenses, using it to completely replace classroom training is sometimes seen as cutting corners at the wrong end. Rather, learning should be about using the right blend of tools to achieve the best results.

'Bad training is bad training, it doesn't matter what the delivery method is', says Jooli Atkins of Matrix FortyTwo and Chair of the BCS Information and Technology Training Specialist Group. 'Cost-savings need to be made by targeting the learning rather than necessarily the platform.'

Samantha Kinstrey of 2e2 Training argues that nothing could ever replace the dynamism of a classroom, but suggests that 'e-learning is valuable for delivering training in certain environments'.

E-learning is also more easily adaptable to the way we learn, according to Lars Hyland of Brightwave: 'How we learn occurs over multiple events over a period of time. Now we are in a network world, we can practise skills potentially at any time at the optimal moments, and that changes fundamentally the way in which you can supply learning'.

Classroom training is likely to reduce, for example in the US it has dropped from 90 to 60 per cent already, as Clive Shepherd, Chair of the e-Learning Network, points out. He also says that it is hard to produce really good e-learning.

While the dynamism of training gurus may not be easily replicable in e-learning, technology such as videos can help blend classroom-based and e-learning and get the best of both worlds. Laura Overton of Towards Maturity says: 'I'm really looking forward to the time when there aren't the barriers there between



classroom training and e-learning. Then we're going to see a real shift because a service that combines all of these things can be much more responsive to business needs.'

www.bcs.org/debates/e-learning

Subscribe to Human Resources

SAVE 15%*



Human Resources evolves and changes with the industry. To stay well-informed on all aspects of HR, and in tune with what the best people and companies are doing – subscribe today.

- 12 issues of *Human Resources* per year
- In-depth articles exploring the cutting edge of HR thinking
- Invaluable insights via new and exclusive research
- Best practice from HR strategists at the world's top companies
- Regular interviews with top names in business and people management
- PLUS excellent regulars such as Lessons from Hollywood, People on the Move and Hot Topic

SUBSCRIBE TODAY: 12 ISSUES ONLY £19* PER QUARTER

Start your subscription now:

☎ **08451 55 73 55 and quote HRMAG08**

@ **subscriptions@haymarket.com**

HR Human Resources

**Direct Debit payment option – £76. £19 per quarter via Direct Debit (saving 15%) on the annual cover price of £89.*

Don't miss this chance. Please complete and return immediately

☑ I would like to pay by Direct Debit at £19 per quarter

Bank/Building Society account number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Branch Sort Code ☐☐☐☐☐☐

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager

Bank/Building Society

Address

Reference Number – For office use only ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Instructions to your Bank or Building Society to pay by Direct Debit

Originator's Identification Number 756025. Please pay Haymarket Media Group Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with Haymarket Media Group and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account. Only available from UK bank accounts.

From time to time, Haymarket Media Group will allow carefully selected third parties to contact you about their products and services. Please indicate your preferences below.
☐ **Yes!** I would like to receive carefully screened and work-related emails from third parties. ☐ Please tick here if you do not want to receive work-related direct mail from carefully selected third parties.
☐ Please tick here if you do not want to receive relevant work-related information by telephone from carefully selected third parties. Please allow up to 4 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

DIRECT Debit

Applicable to all. Please complete the following details:

Name

Job Title

Email

Company Name

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Fax

Signature

Date

Return to:
HAYMARKET SUBSCRIPTIONS, FREEPOST SEA10115,
SOUTHALL, UB1 2WH, UK

or fax back to **020 8606 7503**



On the ground

What advice would you give fellow trainers to enliven a course where you must cover reams of material to prepare students for certification examinations?



We have found the key to making any course interesting, lively and rewarding is to diversify the content and delivery mechanisms. No one has an effective attention span of more than 20 minutes on a single topic or type of delivery whatever the course.

Most people will work towards an objective for one of two reasons: to solve a problem, or to enhance their experience. For example 'I need to get this certificate because otherwise I will not be qualified to perform my role, and therefore may face the consequences at work', or 'I want to take this course because it will give me a skill and/or certificate that I want to use to progress at work.'

The trick in any course is to get people to move away from the former in their mindset and occupy the mindset of the latter, changing, 'I have to' to 'I get to'. This simple flip can make all of the difference.

So, how do we do this when you have 20 hours to take a room full of delegates to a certificate exam? Ways to approach this include: practical activities, blending the learning delivery, pop quizzes, prizes, online research, practical applications, real life case studies, and highlighting the impact that the journey will have on the individuals and their work environment.

Our core belief is that every course should concentrate on the solution or the end point. If we simply teach people to pass an exam, as important as that is, it is transitory and will be forgotten, unless the solution is applied. Whatever the delivery mechanism, it is not only the subject matter we are communicating, but the solution, the application, and so on.

Rob Brine, Verridian

Next issue

What should you do when some learners aren't keeping up with the group.

Breaking developments

How can trainers make sure Generation Y (generally defined as those born between 1982 and 2000 and who have grown up using the web and so on) is engaged by learning?



Play to their strengths. Firstly, Gen Y loves technology. Use this to your advantage by using technology as much as possible: instant messaging (IM); texting; discussion groups; blogs; forums; websites; Twitter; and SharePoints.

For example, I have texted students before the training with some 'teaser' information, used IM during the training (undoubtedly a disturbing influence for classroom training) and used SharePoints for pre- and post-course discussion. Like all learners, Gen Y-ers benefit from repetition and bite-sized chunks of information. Use technology to present small bits of information several times in different ways and via different means.

Gen Y also likes to collaborate: during classroom training this can be achieved simply enough by using group projects. Make sure the projects are realistic: Gen Y likes to see a practical application. For non-classroom learning, collaboration can be by online group projects, IM, forums and discussion groups. These can be used for students to log how they have applied their learning, and for trainer feedback. Gen Y expects positive feedback and likes having a mentor.

In classroom IT training I have occasionally found that Gen Y-ers can appear to have an attitude of 'What am I doing here? I know all this.' Play to their strengths by carefully coaxing out of them what they know and get them to contribute to the group.

We must innovate.

Stephen Simons, pctamers.eu

More advice and tips at:
www.bcs.org/ittraining

Trainers: this is your page – please send in your views for the next issue, or any comments about this week's advice, to the editor:
helen.wilcox@hq.bcs.org.uk

Advisers: Jooli Atkins, Matrix FortyTwo and Dave Britt, BCS Trainer of the Year 2006.

Next issue

Can Twitter become an effective tool for learning IT skills?



Heathrow rings the changes

A multitude of subcontractors helps BAA operate Heathrow, the world's busiest international airport. When BAA set out to install IP telephony, it needed to devise a training programme that took into account the complex environment and diverse communities, as Helen Wilcox reports.

Baggage handlers, check-in staff, shop workers, security guards, airline staff, passport control and immigration police are among the many communities who work at Heathrow.

Although these communities operate independently, BAA supplies a telephony system to many of them. Last year, it began to upgrade the system from analogue to IP telephony, which included making sure users knew how to use the new handsets.

'Moving to IP telephony is part of a sizeable investment to upgrade BAA's voice and data networks, which was mostly about cost-saving,' explained Andy Clarke, Project Manager at BAA Networks. 'The legacy estate was also at the end of its life. It was costly to maintain, inflexible, and due for investment. Investing in IP telephony will reduce telephony costs by a third, thereby more than paying for the cost of the change project.'

The data side of the project is already complete, and BAA has moved over to Cisco platforms, which included installing over 800 network switches in Heathrow. BAA is now half way through the main deployment of IP telephony, which began in September 2008 and is on schedule to finish in September 2009.

BAA has already installed over 2,000 new IP telephony handsets in Heathrow out of an estimated 7,000. The training programme for users is running alongside the equipment roll-out with 2e2 contracted to deliver communications, training, and the first phase of support.

BAA put out an invitation to tender for the contract via the Official Journal of the EU. 'We were looking for a supplier who was a Cisco gold partner and who had experience of large-scale deployments and complex environments,' said Clarke. '2e2 came top of the selection process. We put a lot of effort in to get the right partner and I'm glad to say that has paid off.'

BAA worked on the initial strategy and definition of how to carry out the training. It ran workshops with 2e2 where BAA brought knowledge of the community and 2e2 added its training expertise and onsite experience gained from a previous deployment project with British Airways

In devising the training strategy, BAA had to accommodate the particular circumstances of its users.Clarke said: 'The first thing to consider was the scale of Heathrow, it covers 11 square miles. It's like a town.'

The BAA phone system covers the whole campus, although some companies do supply their own telephone systems. BAA's systems are typically used by smaller airlines and shops as a cost effective option.

'The customer base is also special,' pointed out Clarke. 'BAA has a fairly small number of permanent staff. Most are managers of outsourced contracts. There are 70,000 people on site at Heathrow. As most are outsourced, BAA cannot force them to do the training, nor tell them when to do it. We can only offer them the training and encourage them to take it up. We also have to ask permission to go into their locations.

'The user base is also made up of some transient workers, and the airport is a 24/7 operation. There's therefore a lot of shift working, which means training needs to be spread over a long day. Training also had to cover the year-long deployment.

'Only 1 per cent of staff at Heathrow is office based, but



The legacy from the project will be the e-learning, as well as the key users in each area

Samantha Kinstrey, 2e2 Training

everyone needs to know about the new IP telephony. Most people just need to know what is different about the new phones and don't necessarily need classroom training.'

The training programme therefore had to run for a year, be flexible, be available across the whole site and offer different levels of training. Once BAA had signed off the initial strategy, 2e2 took charge of running the programme.

'We are using a sort of train-the-trainer scenario,' explained Emma Henry, Project Manager for Training at 2e2. 'We try and target expert users with ILT – airline supervisors and people who rely on telephony all the time or people who others naturally gravitate to for help. The expert users then cascade their learning down to others. We also offer an e-Help solution and floorwalking, giving us three prongs of attack.'

Training detail

2e2 runs two-hour ILT sessions for super users with up to 10 people, as close to the deployment date of the handsets as possible – usually within a week – so that users don't forget the training before putting it into practice.

'One of the challenges is that to train on the phones they need to be connected into the IPT network, which often isn't in the location before roll-out,' said Henry. 'So we've created a mobile training kit – with switch, laptop, back-end software, and 12 handsets. We can wheel it round in a flight case to where the training is being held.'

Clarke said: 'It's not a controlled project environment, so deployment dates can move. With 2e2's approach we have the flexibility to meet changing deadlines.'

The aim of the second prong, the e-Help solution, is to help cover the thousands of workers who use phones but don't need in-depth knowledge. The solution is a customised version of 2e2's own e-learning package.



Only 1 per cent of staff at Heathrow is office based, but everyone needs to know about the new IP telephony

Andy Clarke, BAA

Samantha Kinstrey, Managing Director at 2e2 Training, said: 'A few years ago we set out to make e-learning more interactive and engaging for users. Our software can be adapted to reflect the phone set-up, which wouldn't be the case if an off-the-shelf e-learning package was used.' The e-Help offers modular and task-based e-learning. On the BAA intranet or extranet, the user chooses their phone model (one of two), and is presented with a list of activities. They can do all of them, or pick one task, such as learning about conference calls, or simply refer to it for help when needed.

As many Heathrow workers don't have continual access to a PC, BAA provides PCs in kiosks in staff canteens, so staff can then use their breaks to do some training on the e-Help.

'The 2e2 product has been customised to have a BAA look and feel. It's been well received,' said Clarke.

'The legacy from the project will be the e-learning, as well as the key users in each area. The e-Help can also be adapted for any additions to the system,' said Kinstrey.

The third element of the training programme is floorwalking. Trainers are available in communities going live on handset roll-out days from 5am-11pm. They offer familiarisation sessions, as well as advice at workstations.

'It's both a training and PR activity – making sure that everyone is happy with the system,' said Clarke. 'The handsets have usually gone in overnight. The floor walker is the shop window of the project for the users. It's been very successful and adds lots of value.'

Floorwalking and training is delivered by 2e2 associate trainers, who have freelanced for the company for a long time. 'Most of them are ex-switchboard operators, so understand the issues in context,' said Henry.

To date, 160 super users have been through ILT, and floorwalkers have given 450 familiarisation sessions. The programme will continue in this format until September. From 2e2's point of view, several elements help the training go smoothly. Kinstrey said: 'Having a dedicated project manager on training for the deployment has been key to its success.'

Henry is based down in BAA's project office once a week. Plus she meets once a week with the remainder of the project team incorporating communications, support and deployment.

Henry also stressed the importance of ensuring the quality of the training.

'2e2 is accredited to gold standard by the Institute of IT Training,' she said. 'Although we typically train for the PC environment, we were keen to incorporate those standards too in the IP telephony environment. The challenge is that this training is not a full day, and, for instance, reiterating objectives is quite a challenge in the space of two hours. We therefore involved 2e2's Training Manager in course design, who fed information to our lead trainer.'

The training's success is measured via questionnaires after ILT sessions, plus Clarke conducts a more general survey about satisfaction with handset deployment – on service and quality. Overall the new services are scoring an average of 4 (where 5 is excellent from 1-5) with the training element also averaging 4.

Other success measures of the BAA project as a whole include cost savings, technical completeness and quality of how it's done, covering handsets, infrastructure, power, firewall, and the telephony network.

How important is training to the project's overall success? 'Having seen other IT projects, I'd say you can't underestimate the importance of training to a project,' said Clarke. 'Training is absolutely fundamental to our project's success.'





Games to increase learning's appeal

Harnessing the techniques, approaches and formats of computer games to make e-learning more appealing is the idea behind serious gaming. The idea is increasing in popularity in a number of disciplines and is even now being used for teaching certain IT skills, as Gary Flood explains.

A September 2008 US survey found 99 per cent of boys and 94 per cent of girls across the socio-economic spectrum play some kind of computer or video game. And if you think they are only playing games like 'Guitar Hero' or 'Halo 3,' you'd be wrong; a hugely popular online game is 'Darfur is Dying,' where youngsters have to grapple with real life issues around war and poverty.

Games are allegedly 'bigger than Hollywood' – and it's not hard to see why when you sample today's offerings: the Wii platform's 'Endless Ocean,' the online PlayStation 3 game 'Little Big Planet'; or alien blasting with the Nintendo DS. It's a long way from 'Space Invaders.'

Fast forward a few years to when these kids are in your company. Will a paper manual or even today's e-learning material work for them as a way to learn?

'E-learning is so static – it's tell and test, over and over again,' says Chris Hillman, serious games veteran and Chief Executive of Corporate Gameplay, a firm that's worked with companies such as Daimler-Chrysler, Shell and IBM. 'It's such an uninspiring way of teaching. Games are so much better for anyone under 30.'

Welcome to the world of serious gaming: the idea that we should be using the techniques, approaches and formats of the entertainment media our children have grown up with to make the most impact when delivering learning and education.

Think about it: you 'learn' something in every computer game you ever play – even if it's only how to kill the big boss at the end of the level.

You may have spent many more hours doing that than working through the e-learning health and safety model.

Games have some great ways of drawing you in and then, in effect, solving problem after problem

Jude Ower, Digital 2.0

'Games have some great ways of drawing you in and then, in effect, solving problem after problem,' adds Jude Ower, MD of serious games consultancy Digital 2.0. 'A computer game can easily result in 200 to 300 hours of commitment to master.'

Kevin Corti, CEO of learning technology specialist, PIXELearning, adds: 'The Doom sort of shoot 'em up isn't appropriate for the corporate environment, but similar immersive techniques are, very much. You are propelling the learner into places they haven't "been" before and see how they cope. It's also a way to make you practice, not regurgitate – not "what is sales?" but "let's see you sell".'

Granted, this is very early days. But there are clear signs that this could be 'e-learning 2.0', in the sense of the next big thing in learning and development. Many in learning and

development have worried for some time how much lasting impact taking an e-learning course actually has – or even if it gets completed.

A form of teaching that forces people to solve a puzzle before continuing may be the answer. Certainly, the US military is said to be putting time and money into seeing how a game scenario can help make better soldiers out of recruits, among other applications of this notion.

But will it be for all of us and all sorts of skills? The work so far is clearly more in the context of soft skills work, not hard/practical skills. In the former, we are already starting to see serious games being used in the corporate environment as a way to teach things like better data security techniques, understanding of compliance and many other examples.

'The corporate world, especially in the US, sees value in this as a way to get people to work through business processes,' says David Burden of Daden, a virtual worlds consultancy.

'This is where the environment gives no hints as to the answer and the player has to go through the role, such as being a customer care representative.'

Take The Micro-Enterprise Acceleration Institute, an international, not-for-profit organisation sponsored by HP that encourages access and knowledge of IT and basic business skills to entrepreneurs in the developing world.

'A serious game provides a very safe environment for beginners to try things out that would be quite risky if it was their own real businesses,' says its Swiss-based CEO Jelena Godjevac. 'It also presents them with a choice of many different scenarios for the students to test themselves in.'

Corporate Gameplay is a firm that has worked with financial services clients in the US where getting an 80 per cent score in an online game entitled them to say they were certificated in a particular bit of compliance, says Hillman, who has also worked with corporates on ways of using games to manage cultural change and recruitment.



When you watch people play the game it's clear they are usually having fun as well as genuinely starting to do decimal-binary conversion

Jerry Bush, Cisco Group

What is a serious game and when use one?

A 'serious game' (other terms you may hear include 'immersive learning' and 'simulation') means the use of computer game technologies and approaches for primarily non-entertainment purposes. The environment can be either a kind of virtual 'Second Life' style world one moves around in with an avatar to a more role player game (RPG) context to something much more '2D'. If you think of games like 'Grand Theft Auto' (Rockstar Games), Flight Simulator (Microsoft) and the Nintendo DS Brain Age puzzle game, you're in the right ball park.

Serious games practitioners say there are three main reasons their form of training may be appropriate:

1. If the consequences of 'failure' are high if a learner gets something wrong in the real world (e.g. we'd prefer a pilot to mess up on a flight simulator rather than over the Atlantic).

2. The training material that needs to be delivered is dull. Presenting say compliance or regulatory information this way may be more fun and stimulating and thus get a better response. A good example here is PlayGen's 'Floodsim' game – which is basically 500 pages of disaster handling policy in an online game format. Which would you prefer to tackle first?

3. Generation Y (the 16-25 year old age group) who have grown up with technology are very comfortable with this sort of approach and may increasingly come to expect this is the way they will get information – even in the workplace.

Relevant for IT skills?

Which is all great – but is this stuff relevant as yet for the IT professional and the teaching of IT skills? There are some suggestive straws in the wind that there's no reason we couldn't use things like serious games to do at least some of this training – but it's not a technique that will work in every context.

The probable IT industry leader in terms of taking serious games, well, seriously, is Cisco. Its Cisco Learning Network has a games arcade where delegates for the Cisco Certified Network Associate and Cisco Certified Entry Networking Technician certifications can play games to learn about topics such as subnet troubleshooting, unified communications and how to build a storage area network through gaming. All this started with a simple – and genuinely informative – maths game to teach you how to start thinking in binary, written by Jerry Bush, Programme Manager at the technology company's Learning At Cisco Group.

'When you watch people play the game it's clear they are usually both having fun as well as genuinely starting to do decimal-binary conversion,' he says. 'You're seeing cognitive skill development and 50 problems being solved in five minutes.'

Cisco is convinced it can use a games approach to make a good chunk of its certification curriculum more accessible to learners – Bush thinks, perhaps astonishingly, around 50 per cent already is (see box for links to its Mindshare game, in particular).

The Cisco example is at the moment a relative rarity in the IT

pedagogy field, though you can also develop your ITIL skills through an interactive game based on the Apollo 13 spacecraft disaster (see box), and PlayGen offers a data security game, which illustrates the consequences of failing to keep data secure. The hands-on simulation includes going undercover to assess a company's security arrangements and detect poor practices.

'Teaching someone how to program better this way would be quite convoluted,' worries Burden. 'What would you make 3D and visible? A data structure you'd walk through or something? It's a possible application, sure, but not one that's been really tried yet.'

Mary Beth Haggerty is a senior industry manager in the games unit of 3D software and visualisation specialist Autodesk, which has a range of products used to make both regular computer games and virtual worlds/serious games more believable.

Safe mistakes

'I don't know of any serious examples yet of using a game to help you be a better programmer, and a lot of the current focus is on allowing people to make mistakes "safely" and of "experiencing it before it's real".

'But if the aim of the training is to engage, make the material more fun, stimulate the learner, then there's absolutely no reason this stuff couldn't be applied there and there's also already interest in K through 12 [primary and secondary school] applications in the US, for instance for maths. There are all sorts of ways to learn and this is a very promising addition.'

The message seems clear, though, that there's no inherent reason why at least some of the computer science curriculum couldn't be made more fun for students and learners using this approach. And this may one day end up changing the way we deliver IT training itself, potentially. The mainstream IT training market is aware of serious games – but it's obviously a long way, for the reasons above, from there to people being trained to be better Java programmers in this fashion just yet.

'Games are an innovative addition to the IT training market; they can make learning fun and sometimes IT needs a bit of fun.' says Karen Whittaker, Marketing Director of Fast Lane.

'People learn in different ways – some by doing, some by reading, some by listening to others – and using combinations of these methods can give the best results. Games can incorporate all these methods to enable the player to have fun whilst gaining knowledge.'

So to sum up, what is the intelligent way to think about serious gaming? Jill Wade is Director of Learning Services at The Consulting Consortium, a specialist City regulatory compliance consultancy that's been using serious games to train internal staff on data security issues and which plans to start offering similar products to its own clients.

For Wade, the writing is on the wall; the training community needs to wake up and smell the coffee here and start 'playing' with the concept – which she is convinced is for all of us, not just teens or Generation Y.

'E-learning hasn't been delivering what it needed to do for us,' she says. 'Serious gaming and immersive learning is a great way to make serious but possibly dull things we need to train people in really exciting and engaging. Bringing the art of play into the world of learning is a great move, I think, and I also think it isn't just teenagers who are on social networking sites or bang up to speed with technology, so this could work for many of us.

'We can't stand still in training and I am convinced this approach should be our next big area of focus as an industry.'

Which leaves us to say – have fun!







A lot of the current focus is on allowing people to make mistakes safely and of experiencing it before it's real

Mary Beth Haggarty, Autodesk

Serious about gaming?

A number of the companies mentioned in the article have demo sections on their sites where you can do some serious gaming:

www.itilsurvival.com/Apollo13ITIL.html
www.playgen.co.uk
www.corporategameplay.com
www.daden.co.uk
www.digital2point0.com
www.pixelearning.com
www.knowledge-city.net
www.get-it-city.net
https://cisco.hosted.jivesoftware.com/docs/DOC-2608
http://forums.cisco.com/CertCom/game/binary_game_page.htm

Other sites worth looking at for a more high-level view of the field include:

www.seriousgamesinstitute.co.uk
http://seriousgamessource.com
http://www.learnevents.com/serious-games-village.php
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serious_game

WELCOME TO THE TOP



Every month, mt gives more than 100,000 business leaders the inspiration they need to get to the top – and stay there.

From boardroom success stories to unique insights, **mt**'s mix of interviews, surveys, special features and reports can give you the edge you need to compete effectively at the highest level.

So that's more than 25,000 words of business wisdom every month for less than the price of a decent lunch. Subscribe today.

Three easy ways to subscribe:

Subscribe for 12 issues at £54

Subscribe for 24 issues at £97 (saving 10%)

1 Call **020 8606 7500**

2 Visit **www.haysubs.com/mtitt07**

3 Email **subscriptions@haymarket.com** (quoting ref: **MTITT07**)

management today **not just business as usual**

Don't miss this chance. Please complete and return immediately

Order details

☐ **Yes, I would like a subscription for (please tick)**

	1 year	2 year
UK	☐ £54	☐ £97
Europe	☐ €122	☐ €220
ROW	☐ $249	☐ $448

This is your special code. Please quote in all correspondence: MTITT07.

Your details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Initials: Surname:

Job Title: Company:

Address:

Tel:

Fax:

Email:

Method of payment

☐ Please invoice me.
☐ **Cheque**: If paying by cheque, please make payable to Haymarket Publishing Ltd.
☐ **Credit / Debit card**: If making a card payment, please complete the section below.

Please charge my ☐ **Amex** ☐ **Visa** ☐ **Master** ☐ **Diners** ☐ **Switch** ☐ **Delta**

Card number: ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐ ☐☐☐☐

Card expiry: ☐☐ / ☐☐ Issue number: ☐☐ (Switch only)

Signed: Date:

How to order your subscription

+44 (0) 20 8606 7500

+44 (0) 20 8606 7301

subscriptions@haymarket.com

Haymarket Subscriptions, WDIS, 12-13 Cranleigh Gardens Industrial Estate, Southall, UB1 2DB, UK

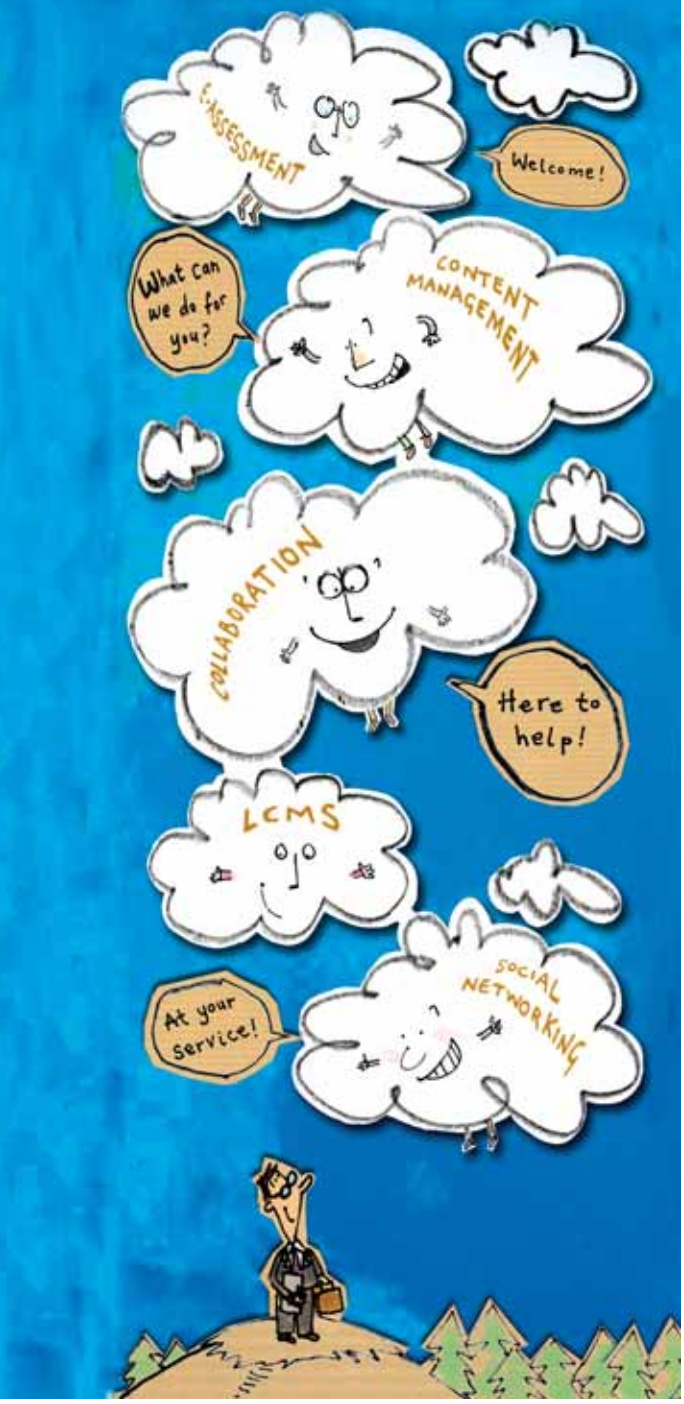
By signing up for a subscription, Haymarket Publishing will automatically provide you with information relating to your subscription and other Haymarket-related products or services via email, direct mail or telephone. Please help us to communicate with you by providing your current business email address in the space provided. *Open to UK subscribers only, offer closes 31/12/2007

From time to time, Haymarket Publishing, will allow carefully selected third parties to contact you about their products and services. Please indicate your preferences below.

☐ **Yes I would like to receive carefully screened and work-related emails from third parties**
☐ Please tick here if you do not want to receive work-related direct mail from carefully selected third parties
☐ Please tick here if you do not want to receive relevant work-related information by telephone from carefully selected third parties

On cloud nine

The concept of cloud computing is a hot topic in your IT department – and, as an L&D professional, it could give you a number of options that may have previously appeared to be beyond your reach, says Alan Bellinger.



Being on cloud nine is described as a state of happiness, elation or bliss, and that's exactly how you should react to the notion of cloud computing. There's an abundance of technical terms doing the rounds right now – along with cloud computing, phrases like software-as-a-service (SaaS), shared services and network computing are all used as current IT buzz-words. So it's important not to get lost in the clouds.

The Gartner Group refers to cloud computing as 'a style of computing where massively scalable, IT-enabled capabilities are delivered as a service to external customers using internet technologies'. That's a very broad and technical definition, so let's break it down. The first concept that comes from this is 'off premises' – whether it's the data, the application, or the resources to run either or both.

Another critical concept is that of 'external hosting'. Now hosting implies rather less sharing than is the case with off premises; typically, in a hosted environment, resources are allocated exclusively to a user and are not shared. Web hosting is a good example.

But in pure cloud computing, off-premises resources are allocated dynamically in what is often referred to as just-in-time elasticity. To fulfil such a requirement, the provider must have resources that are substantially greater than are needed to meet the use patterns of the average user.

Before the firewall

It's a sobering thought that, in many ways, the HR department was the pioneer of 'off-premises computing'; payroll operations, for example, have typically been run off-premises since the 1960s. In other words, HR applications were located outside the firewall before the firewall existed.

In addition to payroll, the HR department typically hosts applications such as recruitment, expenses, benefits, succession planning and performance management off-premises. And the suppliers of these applications will wax lyrical about the availability of their solutions 'in the cloud'.

The archetypical 'in the cloud' service (and therefore a useful role model for us to consider as we look at cloud applications) is the salesforce.com offering – a leading provider of sales management/ customer relationship management (CRM) software.

L&D applications

There are three essential elements, all of which usually need to be present, to make a case for potential cloud applications. The first is to have a real need for the application functionality that exists in the cloud. The second is that there are barriers (either real or political) to setting up the functionality or the resources on premises. And finally, that there are no real or perceived security issues by promoting a cloud-based approach.

One of the best examples of a potential cloud-based application is the approach you take to learner management, a high visibility area that has enormous challenges and pitfalls in terms of implementation. Another good opportunity, and one that is a hot subject among leading L&D practitioners, is social networking; to a significant extent, this is an application that's looking for a solution – and it's largely up to us to find it.

Another hot area is that of collaboration. As L&D professionals we typically operate in a cross-function capacity, and since the primary benefits of collaboration are cross-function, we're in the ideal position to leverage this approach. Similarly, content management is an area in which we are typically getting involved – and this is an application that is changing rapidly as the barriers to entry are dramatically reduced. Finally, consider the whole area of e-assessment – whether it's skills assessment, needs analysis or

performance management.

This list highlights one of the key aspects of cloud computing applications – they mostly involve the delivery of new L&D services rather than the replacement of existing services.

Learner management

We've gone from systems that were designed to assist administration, to systems that manage delivery, to systems that manage content, and on to systems that have become learner-centric. And although most readers will have an LMS/LCMS/CLS, there is often an issue of its popularity.

'We couldn't do our job without it' is a frequent claim of the L&D department, or from anyone involved in compliance. But ask what the learners think and I bet you'll get a different answer.

The real problem is that LMSs grew up when there was a focus on formal learning, and they typically lack functionality that fully supports informal learning and collaboration. The other issue is that, once you have all your data on the system, it's hard to get it off. And so, even if there's a generation gap between your system and current offerings, it'll be difficult to switch, especially in the current climate.

But if you're rolling out a new initiative, and your current LMS would be an inhibiter to the project, there's an excellent case to look at some of the latest offerings in the cloud.

Social networking

Although this term typically refers to applications such as Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace, the Learning & Skills Group has shown over 1,000 members what can be achieved by using Ning (http://learningandskillsgroup.ning.com/). In addition, those who have tried Twitter will have marvelled at the ingenuity of its frequent users.

Social networking relies on the ability of the participants to derive value through a mix of content and communication. In the business context that is typically customers, recruits, sales prospects, and business partners. But from an L&D perspective it involves two other areas – peers to enable sharing of experiences, and learners for ongoing collaboration.

The neat part of social networking is that you can dip in and out as you prefer, and if the network is becoming dormant there are many ways of waking it up.

Collaboration

The extensive collaboration features in MS Office 2007 and the integration of Office and SharePoint are typical of the application functionality needed for collaboration; IBM, Oracle, Novell and others also operate in the collaboration space, along with a plethora of niche players. But it's not unusual to find that collaboration and unfulfilled expectations go hand-in-hand. That's largely because there are a number of social and cultural issues that need to be resolved in order to make collaboration effective.

But cloud computing has had a significant effect on collaboration opportunities; new applications using SaaS models, the widespread availability of scalable hosted solutions, and the impact of web 2.0 has opened many opportunities. If you're sceptical about that claim, just try setting up a wiki using one of the many open source tools.

Content management

A few years ago, setting up a content management system was a major undertaking – not least in terms of the capital outlay. MS SharePoint changed that, and the wealth of open source tools (Joomla is a great example) have further reduced the barriers to entry.

Creating the content for critical business applications and initiatives has become a great opportunity for L&D departments to increase visibility within the organisation. It's an excellent stakeholder engagement methodology, it's a relatively simple means of cloning best practice, it supports learners, and it makes substantial inroads into the challenge of playing a greater role in informal learning. If you haven't started on this route already, then find a project you can use to demonstrate to management just what you can do with content management; this is one of those classic low hanging fruits.



Assessment is one of the great cloud applications that are well worth considering

Alan Bellinger

e-assessment

e-assessment is one of the great cloud applications that are well worth considering. Assessment can take one of three forms: first, it can be a skills assessment – what skills do we need in order to perform this role effectively? Second, it can be a training needs assessment – we've established this skills profile for this role, so let's size the skills gap. And finally, there's the skills measurement piece – we identified this skills gap and you participated in this skills intervention – did that resolve it? There's a positive and a negative driver for assessment. The positive driver is part of performance management and is a critical element of the more for less driver we're all facing. And the negative driver is for compliance – by providing evidence that critical individuals have the required skills.

Google it

For the techies, cloud computing might be a fascinating new technology; but for us, it's not the technology that's exciting but the way in which we can deploy it to make the skills development process even more core to the business. And if you're wondering just where to start, it's simple. From these five application areas, pick the one that you think you can use to make the biggest impact in the shortest space of time – and Google it. You'll be amazed what a difference you can make.

Top firms go the extra mile

The latest top 50 list of IT training companies shows the market was growing in 2008. However, as recession bites and business contracts this year, firms are going the extra mile to keep their customers happy and retain their patronage.



With the UK economy now set on a downward trend, it's easy to forget how much has changed in the last year. Having compiled the annual list of the top 50 companies in IT training by revenue for last year, consultancy Pardo Fox estimated the growth of the IT training market as a whole at 6.5 per cent for the calendar year ending in 2008.

'Our quarterly survey on market conditions showed that growth of the IT training market in Q3 2008 had dropped to a low level, and by Q4 it had turned slightly negative,' says David Pardo, MD of Pardo Fox. '2007's growth rate of 11 per cent was probably maintained in the early part of 2008, though it had turned (slightly) negative by Q4, so 2008 as a whole showed steady growth.'

This year is looking less bright and the market overall is set for a downturn in fortunes. 'The market this year could contract possibly by as much as 10 per cent,' says Pardo. 'I think an upturn is a long way off. That said, there is still a lot of training going on because implementation and training is carrying on for systems that were commissioned a few years previously.'



At the end of 2008, there was a slowing down in the market, but ... it fell more significantly in Q1 2009

William MacPherson, CEO of QA

William MacPherson, CEO of QA, echoes these thoughts: 'At the end of 2008, there was a slowing down in the market, but not so significant. It fell more significantly in Q1 2009. People are buying in smaller volumes and are reluctant to commit far ahead. Training for projects is slower to get off the ground. Quite a few customers have cut travel budgets. And business from clients in the financial sector has dropped.'

Global Knowledge also reported that course bookings were being made later generally, as companies were deciding to put people through courses at times where there was no opportunity for them to generate revenue.

Several companies mentioned a trend towards more in-house bookings, as some clients' travel and expense budgets have been cut more than their training allowance.

Not all is doom and gloom though. Pearson Vue's EMEA Commercial Director Suzanna Lopes says: 'We have seen no drop-off in demand or in numbers of candidates sitting IT tests at our UK test centres, and our IT clients are in fact optimistic about the coming year. It seems to be generally anticipated that, as the economy suffers, both IT professionals and those who use IT in their day-to-day work are placing increased emphasis on gaining meaningful qualifications, to gain a competitive edge in a tougher employment market.'

Mixed fortunes

QA: Transforming performance through learning

QA provides an unrivalled range of **training programmes** and **learning solutions** to help you enhance the skills and capabilities of your people and deliver real business benefits.

You may know us for the quality of our IT training, but did you know that we also offer a wide range of Business Applications, Professional Best Practice and Management & Personal Development courses and a Managed Learning Service amongst the top 20 worldwide?



Find your route to learning by visiting **www.qa.com** or calling **0845 757 3888**

www.qa.com

Looking at the revenues of IT training companies for the year just gone, there was a mixed bag of fortunes, with the majority seeing various levels of growth in revenue, while only a dozen saw a fall. Success is attributed to a range of sometimes opposing factors.

Pearson Vue has noted a move towards diversification into blended learning offerings. 'IT training clients and channel partners are mitigating the general squeeze on trainer-led training by developing their e-learning portfolios, and they have high hopes of selling certification and training in the same package, as their clients at large corporations continue to place value on certifying their staff,' says Lopes.

Paul Stevens, MD of Assima UK, believes that wider diversification into more blended and e-learning in addition to traditional classroom training, plus some big projects and clients, has helped his company achieve increased profits and revenue in 2008.

'We launched new versions of our three e-learning tools in 2008, and therefore have more to offer clients,' he says. 'Rapid e-learning is the biggest seller – it's in vogue. Clients are often trying it out.'

Global Knowledge is also embracing blended offerings, having just launched what it calls 'collaborative learning solutions'. It says these differ from traditional e-learning solutions because of their more structured and collaborative nature. The aim is to encourage peer-to-peer learning – using web 2.0, podcasts, portals, meeting sessions, virtual classrooms, and so on.

A technical course, for example, would have two instead of five days in the classroom, with the rest made up of pre-course learning, e-learning, white papers, and other material. Janet Way, Sales and Marketing Director, points out: 'You have to manage the learner. E-learning used to rely on students' own discipline. Most people need cajoling, and to have set milestones and time to talk.'

However, Melanie Franklin, CEO of Maven Training, says that its customers no longer seem keen to have conversations about e-learning and blended learning.

'Our surveys and conversations with customers are showing that customers want expertise and knowledge. They want advice from people who have done it. There's an atmosphere of fear and unease – they have got to be able to get hold

The slowly changing landscape

The tale of mergers in the Top 50 continues. QA consolidated its lead at the top of the revenue league through its purchase of Xpertise last year, making it now almost four times the size of its nearest competitor.

QA-IQ's purchase of Xpertise put paid to a proposed deal by Xpertise to buy Parity Training, which was awaiting shareholder approval when QA-IQ swooped in with its counter-offer.

Parity continued to seek a buyer for its training arm and in February this year completed its sale to a Dubai-registered company, ECS.

That tale, however, is perhaps not yet ended. As we go to press, the Parity deal has a question mark over it as Thunder Bay, which was the guarantor in the UK for ECS's purchase of Parity Training, has filed to the courts for liquidation. ECS was due to pay one of its instalments to Parity at the end of April.

Thunder Bay's file for liquidation came shortly after its franchises were terminated for the operation of the New Horizons centres in England and Scotland. The seven New Horizons centres are temporarily closed, but New Horizons Worldwide has said it will re-open the London office in mid-June, which it will run itself in order to save time finding a new franchise partner.

Also shortly before we went to press, Oracle bought Sun Microsystems, which will bring two vendors with large training arms under the same umbrella.

Will consolidation continue this year? There seem to be two schools of thoughts – those who think it inevitable while others believe tight purse strings will make it more difficult.

'The degree of consolidation in the market has constantly fallen short of expectations, whether the market has been going up or down,' says Pardo. 'It's possible that there will be more acquisitions, but it's not immediately evident that there are significant opportunities.'

One opportunity that will probably present itself in the short term is to pick up some parts of Thunder Bay's businesses.

Parity Training is one company that has expressed an interest in buying part of the former New Horizons operations if sold off by the administrator, depending on how the liquidation plays out.

Assima is always interested in acquisitions, according to Stevens, who 'definitely' expects more consolidation in the industry.

So does MacPherson: 'Consolidation will continue,' he says. 'There's still an oversupply of training. We're not actively looking to buy, but would certainly consider it if the right company was on offer.'

Franklin is more sceptical: 'I think some smaller companies will pack up. I'm not sure about buy-outs. There isn't the funding and people are going to be picky about acquisitions.'

Pryor-Jones thinks it will be larger firms that struggle: 'I wouldn't be surprised if some relatively large players go out of the market,' he says. 'There is too much supply and not enough demand.'

of new concepts, and they need to know the practical steps to take for a project. 'We've had a good growth in revenue but slight price pressure. We've responded and seen a huge number of new delegates as some other companies have not taken price action. We still have the highest quality materials and trainers. Our prices don't match the value of our courses, but delegates want lower costs. We have cut costs where we can on the administration of courses, in training centres, and we are careful with marketing spend. We match price decreases with costs, so our bottom line is fairly stable.'

Richard Pryor-Jones, President of Global Knowledge EMEA, is one person who disagrees with Franklin on cutting prices. 'We don't think the answer is dropping prices – customers understand they need to pay for experts,' he says. 'We have to retain a profitable operation without cutting prices.'

Global Knowledge's ways of keeping a lid on its costs include lean management structure and some innovative green approaches. Neither staff nor delegates have their own bin, which it says has resulted in a 50 per cent reduction in waste and its removal costs. The company has also invested in biodryers, recyclable cups, and lighting systems that switch off when not in use.



IT training clients and channel partners are mitigating the general squeeze on trainer-led training by developing their e-learning portfolios

Suzanna Lopes, Pearson Vue

QA has been able to cut its costs through synergies created by the merger with Xpertise, according to MacPherson, but the deal has also helped Global Knowledge, according to Pryor-Jones. 'After the QA-Xpertise merger, a huge number of customers and vendor partners were concerned about one large provider in the market and customers have approached us so they don't have all eggs in one basket,' he says. 'On 1 April we signed a new Citrix relationship – they wished to have enough routes to market after the consolidation activity.'

Training for specific IT projects has also helped bolster certain IT companies' bottom lines. One company that showed the gains to be made from landing training contracts on large projects is Verridian, which, having increased its revenue by 200 per cent last year, entered the Top 50 charts at number 27.

Rob Brine, Training and Development Director at Verridian, says: 'Up until last year we had one major client in the technology field, which was a manufacturer [Nokia]. We wanted to be less reliant on one customer.

So when he heard that CarPhone Warehouse wanted to broaden its range to offer other wireless goods with mobile broadband, Verridian bid for and won the contract to retrain CarPhone Warehouse's entire estate on laptops – 7,500 people at 64 events. Then, due to O2's close relationship with CarPhone Warehouse, Verridian landed

EVERYTHING YOU NEED

The elements of successful Project and Programme Management

PROJECT & PROGRAMME | RISK | CHANGE | INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



We will work alongside you to increase your potential through knowledge.

MAVEN TRAINING | *Essential*

+ 44 (0) 207 403 7100 | www.maventraining.co.uk

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE · APM GROUP · apm · PRINCE2 · MSP · change management · M_o_R · ITIL

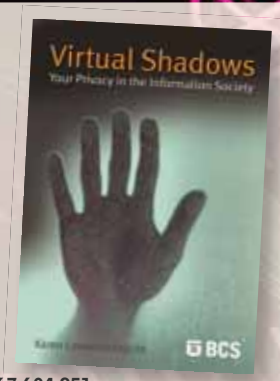
PRINCE2® is a Registered Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce in the United Kingdom and other countries. MSP™ is a Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce. The PRINCE2 Cityscape logo™ is a Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce in the United Kingdom and other countries. The Swirl logo™ is a Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce. M_o_R® is a Registered Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce in the United Kingdom and other countries. ITIL® is a Registered Trade Mark of the Office of Government Commerce in the United Kingdom and other countries. PMI®, is a registered mark of Project Management Institute, Inc.

PRIVACY, SAFETY AND RISK ONLINE

VIRTUAL SHADOWS

Karen Lawrence Öqvist

A fascinating glimpse into the world of Web 2.0 and beyond. By revealing how our movements and communications can be monitored, and our personal data exploited, the author highlights concerns about the state of our privacy and security in the information society.



Order from Turpin distribution tel: 01767 604 951
Also available in all good bookshops and online.

Published: Jan 2009
ISBN: 978-1-906124-09-0

£14.95 140pp

BOOKS08
www.bcs.org/books

BCS

another contract to train O2's 1,500 staff on laptops.

'That meant last year we had a good portfolio with one manufacturer, one retail seller and one operator,' says Brine. 'We also got work from Digital Marketing services, as well as our regular training contracts.'

In terms of more regular schedules, subject areas that have helped shore up training suppliers' fortunes are often around those technologies or processes that can help companies in a recession.

'There is more pressure on people to be accountable,' says Pryor-Jones. 'Training needs to match business benefits a lot more. Therefore virtualisation is a hot topic because it's driving down ownership costs. Also there's a push from vendors around data centres.'

MacPherson also says virtualisation was huge for QA last year, plus it had 'very good growth' in best practice areas, ITIL and project management, more interest in Managing Successful Programmes (MSP), and a rise in its managed service offering.

'Programme management courses increased by 40 per cent for us last year – there is definitely significant interest in it at board level – and it stimulated new growth for project management,' says Franklin. 'Project management has been widening out from IT. The percentage of people with non-IT backgrounds on our project management courses has been growing for a period of time, and now stands at about 70 per cent.

'MOR [Management of Risk] also had suddenly huge growth, albeit from low levels. MSP will dwarf MOR, but organisations have become more interested in governance.'



The downturn will last at least another 18 months or two years, so we are focusing on the basics

Richar Pryor-Jones, Global Knowledge

Keeping afloat this year

There seems little doubt that the market is contracting this year, and training companies are lining up their strategies to keep afloat, from cost cutting to treating customers like kings.

'The downturn will last at least another 18 months or two years, so we are concentrating on the basics – trying innovative solutions, giving the best possible delegate experience, treating delegates like kings, and only spending where needed,' says Pryor-Jones.

'If I could have something it would be a silver bullet so we can move quicker than everyone else. I don't see us widening our portfolio much more in the next 12-18 months. The next 12 months will be a difficult time to speculate in. It's not the time to take risks, but we cannot be too risk-adverse.'

Maven Training is taking some similar approaches. Franklin says: 'You do still need to spend in certain areas, but we're not profligate – we walk, take trains and not taxis. We don't take clients to expensive restaurants, we just have coffee with them in the office. We're not spending ostentatiously.

'Off-the-shelf courses are no longer good enough. You have to go the extra mile at the moment – research clients' challenges and fully engage with their environment and how to solve their problems. You have to do a lot of tailoring of courses.'

Other ways that companies are offering more to clients include Global Knowledge's virtual Fridays where they run something for clients for free – a webinar, a forum, a testing day, or a product overview.

Brine says that Verridian tries to add value by being involved in strategic planning with customers to help demonstrate that it is aligned to their challenges and not just out to make a quick buck.

'In a recession a reaction is to cut costs and not look at the bigger picture,' he says. 'We are using the benefits of last year – a good year – to get aligned to the customer, ready for when times are good again. We need to be flexible and supportive.

'We are investing in training for our team, growing the team, and making sure people are in place for when we recover.'

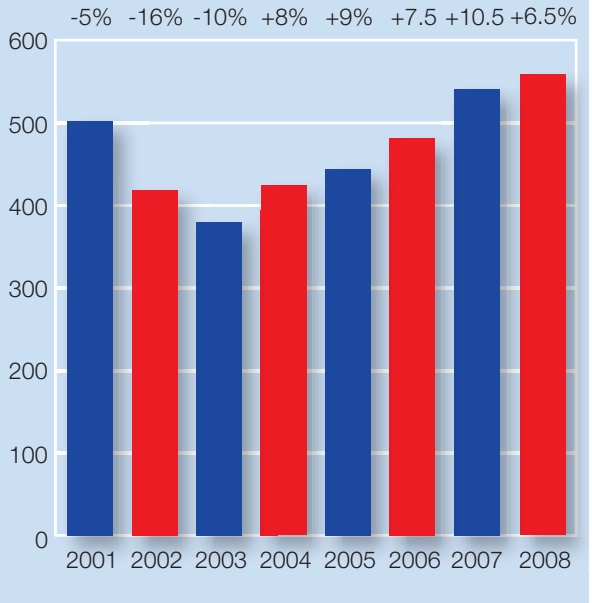
Most training companies have recognised the importance of investing in their people while times are tough.

Franklin says: 'It's important to keep staff motivated and engaged. We're still talking to customers, doing marketing, and developing new products, and therefore the staff are engaged. We are also training staff to cover more subjects and running train-the-trainer events.'

Global Knowledge is also cross-skilling its trainers, for example so they can train on Microsoft, VMWare and Cisco products, to keep up with its clients' moves to unified communications. Way says: 'People are not buying one platform, so customers are needing the breadth of trainers' skills. Cross-skilling means we can send one trainer to a customer to train on several platforms.'

Which subjects are likely to help sustain training companies' fortunes? Pardo suggests that, in a recession, buyers are looking to be more professional and are less likely to cut corners, so subjects like

UK IT Training market size (£m)





globaltech SOLUTIONS

The Specialists in Bespoke Learning

Globaltech Solutions enviable track record in delivering high quality, bespoke learning solutions to industry leaders in the accounting, legal, media, healthcare, property and government sectors remains unchallenged.

Globaltech's pedigree includes assistance with key business critical software applications and project support focusing on the following key areas:

- **Applications Training including; Microsoft, Adobe, Lotus Notes, Corel Draw**
- **CRM, ERP, Databases and bespoke – SAP and Oracle**
- **Practice/Document Management and Billing Systems**
- **Change Management and Business Transformation Programmes**
- **Managed Learning Services including Administrative support**
- **Blended learning approach including Virtual, Online and Classroom**

Whether you require a learning solution to support a major migration or simply to cover a business as usual training commitment in the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia Pacific or the US contact Globaltech Solutions now on +44 207072 8450 or email info@gts-uk.com. Please feel free to visit our website www.gts-uk.com for further information on our services.

Institute of IT Training
Gold Standard
Accredited Training Provider

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

All Trademarks are acknowledged

t: +44 207072 8450 | e: info@gts-uk.com | w: www.gts-uk.com

project management and service management retain their popularity.

Franklin says: 'The structure and certainty of effective programme management is needed right now. Organisations cannot afford to fail, run over budget etc … and you need to know what the benefits are going to be. Benefits management training is likely to be a growth area.'

Franklin says she senses an urgency to get programme training under way now – in the private sector to run programmes to make money, and in the public sector while there is still money this year. 'Next year there is a risk of changing government, and also there may be more financial pressure as public budgets may be cut,' she says.

MacPherson feels that popular subjects will be the perennials of core technical knowledge, plus virtualisation, security, managerial topics and project management.

Plus, he backs green IT qualifications, which can help make savings as well as embracing the environmental agenda.

Stevens believes that training companies need a broader-based offering than classroom-based training, and should move more into blended learning. He sees electronic performance support as a growth area.

In terms of training related to projects, there is a likelihood of a decrease in demand as projects and programmes will be slower to get off the ground.

Pryor-Jones says: 'This year, projects have been more difficult to close and projects are slipping... but not cancelled yet. Where people are spending money it is aligned to business goals. People are prepared to spend when putting in a new system, but there's not so much money available for business-as-usual and nice-to-have training.'

Similarly, Brine says: 'For next year, I know of one programme that is already being scaled down considerably. I think there will be less project-based work. Any organisation is naïve if they think that they are so good it won't affect them. Training departments are being asked to be sure they get value for money.'

Recession-busting tips for customers

One argument training departments can use as to why continue training in a recession, suggests Franklin, is for staff motivation.

'Maybe a company can't give bonuses this year, but training is tax-deductable and still a reward, and will have a tremendously positive effect,' she says. 'Individuals feel important because a company is investing in them. Plus it could be used for team-building if a company is looking at a new way of running projects or working together.

'If you cannot raise the training flag nor afford tea-bags it sends the wrong signals to staff. If training is happening it gives out a powerful message that the company is looking to the future.'

Pryor-Jones echoes her views: 'At the end of the last dotcom boom, companies couldn't pick up quickly enough. I'd urge customers to think twice about budgetary constraints before not training. They should think how they can do training differently, rather than not at all, which could have a negative impact in the medium-term.'

That said, Pettman sounds a note of caution about making sure the company is on the right course before diving into training. 'I'd say rather than companies changing methodologies, for example to Prince2, think about why you are doing it and focus on ensuring you deliver the key benfits. Rather than sheep dip, think about the process and what success looks like for your organisation. Organisations who sheep dip are often training but not delivering – for example with project management, consider your company ability with risk and benefits management – if you are not doing things like that correctly, then a change in methodology will not see any material improvement.'



Maybe a company can't give bonuses this year, but training is tax-deductable and still a reward

Melanie Franklin, Maven Training

New entrants to top 50

- **Verridian**
- **Brightwave**
- **Quanta**
- **Globaltech Solutions**
- **Assist Knowledge Development**

Customers should also be careful not to waste money, points out Global Knowledge, for instance by planning ahead when they have to train their people in order to retain something such as Cisco Gold Partner status, and thus avoiding paying a last minute premium for the training. Global Knowledge has introduced a portal to alert customers when their staff need to re-take certification courses.

Stevens suggests that ,if you are investing in training, try and evaluate and monitor how effective it's been. 'Try and gauge how much you've achieved your objectives,' he says. 'It's amazing how much of a demonstrable effect it can have.'

The IT training companies urge customers to get in touch if budgets are tight, so that they can look at innovative ways of running courses, for instance an in-house course may work out cheaper than a public schedule. Steven suggests considering a train-the-trainer approach as sometimes people in an organisation can make very good trainers. Plus, he advocates looking at technology to see if it can help make cost savings.

Clients could also make savings by taking advantage of offerings such as Verridian's tiered pricing model for trainers where customers pick trainers in a certain price band, according to their experience.

To sum up, think before you act and make sure that you are getting value for that hard won budget.

Global Knowledge

www.globalknowlege.co.uk

Global Knowledge is the worldwide leader in IT and business training. We deliver via training centers, private facilities, and the Internet, enabling our customers to choose when, where, and how they want to receive their training programmes. Our extensive course portfolio includes Cisco, Microsoft, VMware, Citrix, Nortel, ITIL, PRINCE2.

info@globalknowledge.co.uk 01189 123456

Computer Links

www.computerlinks-training.co.uk

COMPUTERLINKS Training, an Accredited Training Provider as awarded by the Institute of IT Training, offers a comprehensive range of Internet and Security courses to meet all levels of knowledge. With focus on quality, the training experience is based upon skilled pre-sales support, certified trainer delivery and constructive end-of-course evaluation and feedback.

training@computerlinks.co.uk 0870 443 9099

Pink Elephant

www.pinkelephant.com

Pink Elephant is a global professional services organisation and world leader in IT management best practices. Through delivery of Education, Consulting and Conferences the company exists to optimise IT Services, through application of best practice frameworks, such as ITIL. Contact us for any information relating to ITIL courses or consulting.

Info.europe@pinkelephant.com T:+44(0)118 903 6824 F:+44(0)118 903 6282

IRM UK

www.irmuk.co.uk

IRM UK are one of Europe's leading providers of strategic IT training offering top IT management professionals in blue chip organizations world-wide seminars and conferences in the following areas: Enterprise Architecture, SOA, Enterprise Design, IT Strategy, Business Process, Business Analysis, Business Rules, Requirements Process, DW/BI, Data Governance, Master Data Management, Information Quality, Data Modelling, Financial and Consulting Skills for IT Management.

customerservice@irmuk.co.uk +44 (0)20 8866 8366

Matrix Forty Two

www.matrix42.co.uk

The first IITT Authorised Qualification and Assessment Centre offering routes to IITT accreditation across the UK with open and in-house workshops. Specialists in IT-enabled business change; helping embed new systems and processes through supported change programmes, including IT training development and delivery, project management, trainer training and team role profiling.

hello@matrix42.co.uk +44 (0)1759 304321



Top 50 The full list

Rank 2009	Rank 2008	Company	Revenue £m	Change %	Website
1	1	QA	86.0	0.2	www.qa.com
2	5	IBM Training	24.5e	26	www.ibm.com/services/learning/uk/
3	2	Learning Tree International	24.1	5	www.learningtree.co.uk
4	4	SAP	22.4e	4	www.sap.com/uk/education
5	6	Logica	21.5e	12	www.logica.co.uk
6	9	SkillSoft	18.0e	9	www.skillsoft.com
7	8	Parity Training	16.4	-12	www.paritytraining.com
8	10	Oracle University	15.9e	3	www.oracle.com/uk/education
9	14	ILX Group	15.3e	23	www.ilxgroup.com
10	7	Global Knowledge	14.3e	0	www.globalknowledge.co.uk
11	15	Assima	14.1	21	www.assima.net
12	16	ThirdForce	11.3	-6	www.thirdforceplc.com
13	17	Remarc Group	10.5	9	www.remarc.co.uk
14	12	RWD Technologies	10.3e	-18	www.rwd.com
15	22	Firebrand Training	8.1	5	www.firebrandtraining.co.uk
16	20	Training Synergy	8.1	-2	www.trainingsynergy.com
17	19	HP Education Services	8.0e	6	www.hp.com/uk/education
18	18	Sun Microsystems	7.8e	-8	http://uk.sun.com/training
19	24	PPi Learning Services	7.7e	35	www.ppilearning.com
20	13	New Horizons	7.5e	-21	www.nhtraining.com
21	43	FDM Group	7.3	24	www.fdmgroup.com
22	28	Redtray	7.1	13	www.redtray.co.uk
23	25	Fast Lane	6.4	16	www.flane.co.uk
24	39	DNS Arrow	5.7	90	www.dnsarrow.co.uk
25	35	EMC	5.2	67	www.emc.com
26	23	Steria Learning Services	5.2e	-32	www.steria.co.uk
27	–	Verridian	4.8e	200	www.verridiangroup.co.uk
28	26	BT Training Solutions (NI)	4.8	4	www.trainingsolutions.bt.com
29	36	PremierIT	4.6	29	www.premierit.com
30	44	Ideal Training	4.5e	80	www.idealts.co.uk
31	37	Bray Leino BroadSkill	4.5e	40	www.brayleinobroadskill.co.uk
32	29	Symantec Education Services	4.4e	12	www.symantec.com
33	31	Red Hat	4.2e	8	www.redhat.com
34	33	iTrain	4.1	11	www.itraineducation.co.uk
35	32	Sage	4.0e	10	www.sage.com
36	–	Brightwave	3.8e	27	www.brightwave.co.uk
37	38	SAS Software	3.3	9	www.sas.com/uk
38	42	Maven Training	3.2	14	www.maventraining.co.uk
39	30	Afiniti	3.2	-7	www.afiniti.co.uk
40	34	WDR	3.0e	0	www.wdr.co.uk
41	–	Quanta	2.7e	25	www.quanta.co.uk
42	–	Globaltech Solutions	2.6	53	www.gts-uk.com
43	40	WWP Training	2.5	-6	www.wwp.co.uk
44	47	Happy Computers	2.5e	19	www.happy.co.uk
45	49	StayAhead Training	2.5	5	www.stayahead.com
46	50	Host Computers	2.5e	1	www.hostcomputers.co.uk
47	48	Interskill Learning	2.3	-3	www.interskill.co.uk
48	46	NorthgateArinso	2.2e	-10	www.northgate-is.com
49	41	Kaleidoscope Training	2.1	-25	www.kcct.co.uk
50	–	Assist Knowledge Development	2.0	65	www.assistkd.co.uk

How the top 50 was compiled

This table of the top 50 training companies in revenue terms was researched and compiled by Pardo Fox. The revenues shown in the table are for each company's financial year ending in 2008 or cover the calendar year 2008, and relate to IT training delivered in the UK. Eligibility is open to companies with revenues derived principally from the sale of training to employers for their staff, excluding colleges, universities and firms selling to private individuals or delivering publicly funded training.

For companies whose results are on public record, the actual turnover from their accounts has been used. For those with no published turnover, an estimate has been made based on available data, shown by an 'e'. Some revenues given in last year's table have been restated, and growth relates to the updated figure.

This information has been carefully researched, but we cannot guarantee its accuracy or completeness, and will not accept liability for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from its use.

For further information, visit www.pardofox.com.

Footnotes to Top 50

QA-IQ acquired **Xpertise Training** in September 2008, and the combined business now trades as **QA**. The revenue figure quoted is the notional total revenue of the constituent parts in 2008.

Parity Training was acquired by **ECS** in February 2009. **PPi Learning Services** bought **The Projects Group** in March 2008. **New Horizons**' centres in England and Scotland entered administration in April 2009 but the worldwide parent company plans to re-open the London office.

PremierIT acquired **Major Training** in October 2008. **Broadskill** became part of **Bray Leino Group** in March 2008.

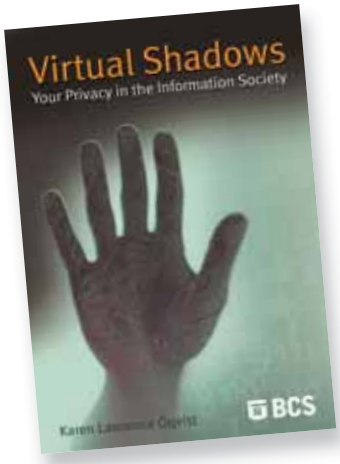
Oracle bought **Sun Microsystems**, and **Redtray** acquired **Academy Internet** in April 2009.



IBM, the IBM logo and ibm.com are trademarks or registered trademarks of IBM Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both. © Copyright IBM Corporation 2009. All rights reserved.

Book reviews

Our IT experts review a selection of recently published books covering an array of subject areas. For more reviews, see www.bcs.org/bookreviews



Virtual Shadows

Karen Lawrence Oqvist, 224pp

BCS, £14.95

ISBN: 978-1-906124-09-0

Rating ★★★★☆

This book is as suitable for a general audience as it is for information security or web professionals and is written in a very readable style. We are introduced to the concepts behind social networking and web 2.0 and their impact on our privacy and everyday lives. In this respect the author is as concerned with social science as much as computer science.

We start with an explanation of social networking, blogs and web 2.0. This reflects the author's main interests, devoting most of the pages to blogging, rather than social networking sites.

The book then moves on to the connections between an individual's online life and physical life, discussing the impact that blog and social network postings can have on career and reputation both now and many years from now.

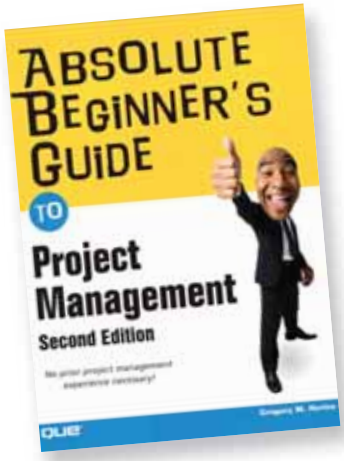
We are reminded that once we place information in the public domain it remains there permanently. As it's possible for someone's opinions as a 15-year-old to have drastically changed by the time they reach adulthood, the presence of a permanent reminder on the web can cause embarrassment in later life, or even have potentially serious effects on an individual's employment prospects.

Good advice is given on maintaining some separation between work colleagues, online friends and real-life friends, and limiting information available to different types of Facebook friends. There is a discussion of children's activities online with sound advice on how to avoid and deal with cyber-bullying although it's debatable how many older children would be prepared to share their passwords and browsing history with their parents.

The final section is a sobering discussion of recent trends in information gathering and usage which highlights both the potential risks and possible advantages in the amount and type of information being gathered and used by governments and private entities.

In general the book is very readable and provides a balanced view of the issues. The discussions of how and why we willingly share our data and the way it gets used are well informed and interesting.

Reviewed by Nick Dunn



Absolute Beginners Guide to Project Management, 2nd edition

Gregory M. Horine, 408pp

Que Publishing, £14.99

ISBN: 978-98973-821-9

Rating ★★★★★

Despite the title, this book is also useful to those who have some experience in project management but have never had any formal training and those with more experience but wanting to take a refresher course. However, the primary market will be for those new to project management.

The author (an American with an IT background) makes use of the Project Management Institute's Project Management Body of Knowledge approach to project management.

The book is neatly divided into five parts and a total of 25 chapters: an introduction, project planning, project control, project execution, and some miscellaneous items.

The only criticisms I can make of this book are that there is no real coverage of the different types of project lifecycles and also the different types of project team organisation. Both would be extremely useful to a person new to project management.

The book is littered with very useful notes, tips and cautions, appearing on average on every other page. Here is an example of each to do with the WBS.

Note – 'WBS is a logical, hierarchical, organised task list developed with the team.'

Tip – 'A well-done WBS can become a template for similar, future projects.'

Caution – 'Any work not defined in the WBS is considered to be outside the project scope.'

The other thing I really like about this book is the way each chapter is rounded off with a section summarising what you should have learned or understood and a detailed mind map of the key points for that chapter.

You don't necessarily have to read the book from cover to cover either. I found myself dipping into various chapters and sections, in effect using it as a reference book. The book is well served by a 7-page contents list and a 45-page index allowing readers to quickly find information and relevant sections. There is even a free 45-day subscription to an online version of the book.

I was very impressed by this book. It covers the subject matter fairly well, is well laid out, is easy to read and only costs £14.99.

Reviewed by Kawal Banga MBCS



Media Wiki

Daniel J Barrett, 374pp

O'Reilly, £28.50

ISBN: 978-0-59651-979-7

Rating ★★★★☆

In 2001, Wikipedia changed the world by proving that thousands of strangers could collaborate to produce a valuable information resource. Encyclopaedia publishers shuddered. Sceptics scoffed. And, in the meantime, users around the world have produced millions of Wikipedia articles.

Wikipedia was not the first wiki, but it's clearly the most successful, largely due to its powerful software, Media Wiki.

The strength of this book is that it is about making Media Wiki work for the reader, whether they plan to read wikis, write and edit articles, or install and run their own Media Wiki site.

This book is really useful, as its serves four audiences: wiki readers, wiki authors, wiki system operators, and wiki administrators.

Part 1 of the book is dedicated to wiki readers, explaining how to navigate a Media Wiki site effectively.

Part II focuses on authors, and discusses how to write and edit wiki articles, beginning with the basics and moving to more complex tasks

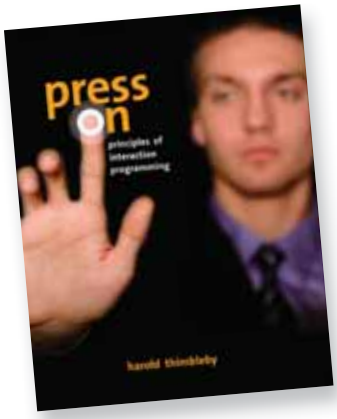
Part III is for administrators and programmers, covering how to configure its many settings, and how to program your own features, called Media Wiki extensions.

The author gives his permission for readers to use the code in the book in their programs and documentation. Writing a program that uses several chunks of code does not require permission, but reproducing a significant portion of the code does.

The author and publishers offer a generous 'fair use' policy, and can be contacted by email for clarification.

This is a comprehensive book of some 350 pages, with a wide appeal to all, from a wiki reader to a wiki expert, and all points inbetween.

Reviewed by George Williams MBCS CITP



Press On: Principles of Interaction Programming

Harold Thimbleby, 464pp

MIT Press, £29.95

ISBN: 978-0-262-20170-4

Rating ★★★★☆

This book lays down the foundation of interaction programming – the new mantra for a rigorous and analytical approach to designing interactive systems. It is a monumental effort by Thimbleby to convince the readers of a radical rethink on user interface design.

The book is organised in three parts. Part I delves into a history of technology design, from calculators to cars, and presents a case for designing better interaction. This part of the book is the most enjoyable and presents fascinating insights into this relationship between users and technology.

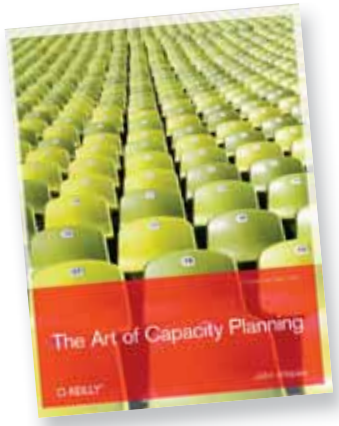
Part II of the book presents a formal framework to analyse the interactivity of systems. Readers are introduced to finite state machines, statecharts and graphs to undertake a variety of analyses. The ultimate aim is to make designers aware and help them build interfaces that by and large exhibit affordance, cater for error recovery, and are suitably permissive and customisable.

The numerous examples given throughout the book demonstrate these principles in considerable depth.

Part III presents an attempt by the author to inspire his readers to put all this 'knowledge into action'. Some of the design principles introduced earlier are revisited and examined in the context of real systems.

This book, written in a detailed yet accessible language, is for any and all working with interactive systems, be it developers or researchers, working in academia or industry. It is an extensive treatment of the subject, not all parts of which would be of interest to readers new to the field however. The accompanying website is very useful for those who wish to use the book for teaching.

Reviewed by Siraj A. Shaikh MBCS



The Art of Capacity Planning

John Allspaw, 152pp

O'Reilly, £34.50

ISBN: 978-05-96518-578

Rating ★★★★☆

The book offers solid guidelines for measuring, planning and managing growth for web applications regardless of the underlying technologies, based on the author's experience at Flickr.com. The author has taken an adaptive approach to discuss various case studies. His mantra is to measure continuously as capacity planning is a revolving cycle.

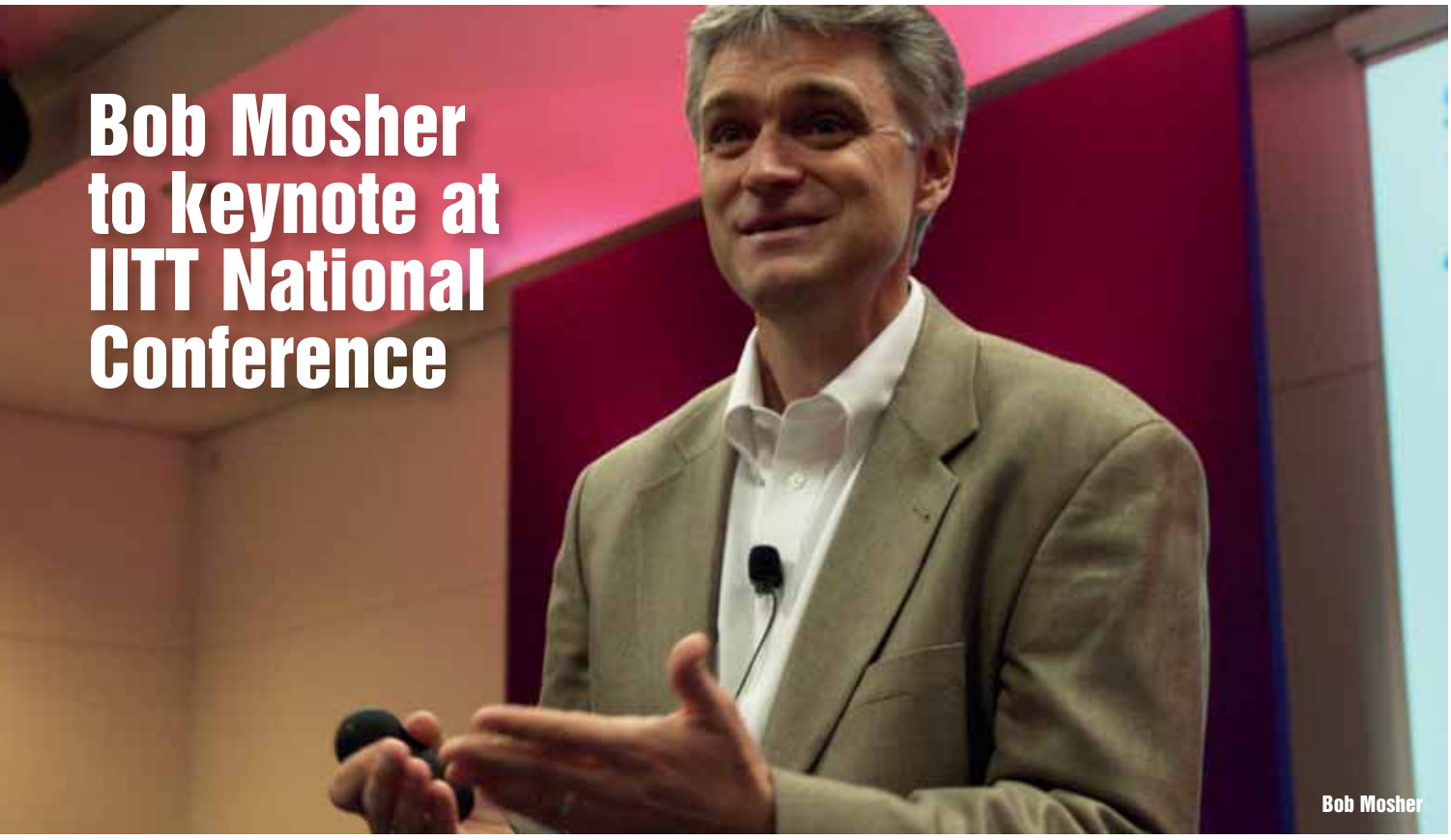
The book is well structured and compact consisting of only five chapters and three appendices. It is relatively short and straight to the point. I highly recommend the appendix on tools available. The sample stats, graphs and tables complement the flow and readability of the book.

The book is up-to-date with a section on virtualisation and cloud computing.

Reviewed by Uma Kanagaratnam MBCS

For further information on these books please contact the sales team at C.B.Learning.
Tel: 0121 702 2828
Fax: 0121 606 0478
info@cblearning.com

Bob Mosher to keynote at IITT National Conference


Bob Mosher

The Institute of IT Training (IITT) has announced that learning and development thought leader Bob Mosher is to fly in from the US to give the keynote address at this year's IITT National Training Conference 2009. The only event of its type in Europe, the conference and exhibition is for all learning professionals and their managers looking to grow their skills and keep up-to-date with the latest developments in the field.

Event Director Donald Taylor explained that the IITT is delighted that its keynote address is from one of the world's top training and development gurus Bob Mosher. 'We are delighted to be presenting the audience with such a world class thought leader in training and development and I hope that no IITT member misses this great opportunity to hear from a leading practitioner as we do not often get chance to do so.'

'Bob Mosher was a huge success when he last provided the keynote session in 2005,' said Colin Steed, Chief Executive of the IITT, 'and we are really grateful to him that he has agreed to spare time in his busy schedule to fly from the US especially for our event. I know that he holds the Institute in very high regard.

'After consulting last year's delegates, we have decided to move to London to a venue that can accommodate the conference, exhibition and provide in-house accommodation for delegates.'

The IITT National Training Conference 2009 takes place on 24 September, with the welcome reception the evening before.

Steed said the IITT is currently finalising the conference sessions, under the chairmanship of Don Taylor, and will announce full details of the venue and delegate fee shortly. As an IITT or BCS Member you will still save £100 on your conference booking compared to the non-members' fee.

Exhibitor space available

The IITT's Training 2009 Exhibition is an excellent opportunity for companies to demonstrate new products and services to a specific target audience and can lead to valuable new contacts and business. There are some exhibitor spaces still available for exhibitors, with packages starting at £1,500. Contact the IITT sales team for further information on 0845 006 8858.

These pages are produced by the Institute of IT Training
Westwood House, Westwood Business Park, Coventry, CV 8HS, United Kingdom
Tel 0845 0068858 **Fax** 0845 0068871
Email info@iitt.org.uk **Web** www.iitt.org.uk

Prepare for training awards

With six months to go before the deadline date, it's time to be thinking about your entries for the IT training industry's most prestigious awards event, the IT Training Awards 2010, sponsored by BCS.

The awards are now in their 14th year and are firmly established as the benchmark for excellence in the IT training industry, recognising and celebrating outstanding examples of high standards, best practice, innovation and excellence.

The IT Training Awards 2010 will take place in a glittering ceremony at the Dorchester Hotel in London on 4 February 2010 and will be attended by the most influential industry figures.

An IT Training Award is an accolade that is celebrated and respected throughout the IT training industry and can often prove to be the differentiating factor in a purchasing decision in a competitive marketplace.

Please note the closing date for entries has been brought forward this year to 30 September 2009.

Order a Book of the Night by contacting the IITT on 0845 006 8858.

Virtual classroom software

The IITT, in conjunction with Adobe, is pleased to announce a special offer for Adobe Acrobat Connect Pro, plus Adobe Presenter, with a saving of over £1,000 when purchased via IITT.

With Connect Pro software, you can create interactive web meetings and virtual classroom experiences. Running on the Adobe Flash Player software, already installed on more than 98 per cent of internet-enabled desktops, Connect Pro enables easy access to live sessions with no software downloads.

The Connect Pro plug-in Adobe Presenter gives anyone the ability to create interactive Flash-based training courses using Microsoft PowerPoint.

Using Adobe Presenter and Acrobat Connect Pro, you can deliver content to learners anywhere, anytime, on any device with a web browser and free Adobe Flash Player. The IITT will provide free training for those that sign up to the licence service.

Further information from Justine Chadwick, Kelly Turrall or Chris Nearkhous at the IITT on 0845 006 8858.

Comptia event discounts

IITT members can receive a discount for attending the CompTIA EMEA Members Conference this year.

The event brings together more that 200 industry executives to a targeted, informational and fun event at Ascot Racecourse on 21-22 October 2009.

The event provides an environment for attendees to learn new ways to grow their business, gain insight into the latest trends and form new partnerships. The fee for IITT members is £69, a saving of £30 on the normal delegate price.
www.comptia.org

IITT events

IITT monthly webcasts

We are about to announce our programme of IITT online seminars for the next six months. Currently scheduled are webcasts on MindMapping, how to become an online learning facilitator, regular TPMA clinics and discussions, challenges to delivering hands-on classes over the internet, and Adobe Connect Pro.

Would you like to present an IITT webcast?

We are looking for more presenters for webcasts. If you have any suggestions for webcast topics or if you would like to present a session for us, please contact Debbie Shepherd.

North West Regional Group

Elaine Giles and Mike Thomas have announced an excellent programme of events for the IITT North West Regional Group. The flyers for each upcoming event are available from:
http://nwiitt.org.uk/apps/pressoffice/

Group for south west?

Elaine Walton from PTT is interested in helping to set up an IITT regional group in the south west. She is looking for members in the area to help her. If you are interested, contact Elaine on 07515 285687 or email her at elaine@ptt.co.uk

New IITT discussion forum – have you joined yet?

We have set up an online discussion forum for all IITT members. The IITT Members Collaboration Forum can be found at:
www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=87989&trk=hb_side_g.



Clive Shepherd

No such thing as a free lunch

It seems that Silicon Valley is entering its second 'nuclear winter' of the 21st century. Since the dotcom bust, technology has enjoyed a spectacular revival centred on web 2.0, providing mostly free services aimed at huge worldwide audiences.

Web 2.0 has literally revolutionised the way we use computers, enabling us to collaborate, network and share with our peers with incredible ease, taking advantage of the massive expansion in server and network capacity around the globe – all paid for by some mysterious other.

Most web 2.0 services are provided on the assumption that online advertising will eventually provide the revenue stream to 'monetise' the venture. Well this has clearly worked dramatically well for Google, but now the recession is hitting hard, it appears there's nowhere near enough advertising revenue to go round. According to a recent article in *The Economist*, Silicon Valley stands on 'ground that is as unstable, seismically and metaphorically, as it was in the earlier bust. The world economy is in crisis, advertising is collapsing and start-ups are once again vanishing into thin air.'

Products and services can only be provided free of charge if someone other than the user is prepared to foot the bill

Typically, if something looks too good to be true, it probably is. Products and services can only be provided free of charge if someone other than the user is prepared to foot the bill. If advertising is not sought or is not available in sufficient quantities, it seems to me that there are limited circumstances in which free services can survive.

The first of these is when the provider is the beneficiary of some form of grant, most likely through government, but perhaps from some charitable institution. Typically this will be pump-priming money, designed to stimulate research and development. It might get a project off the ground, but the money would not support a venture that took off on a large scale.

The second situation is where providers are treating the product as a 'loss leader.' They hope that a positive reaction to the product will boost their visibility and reputation, making it easier for them to sell other products and services. There are countless examples of where content is provided free in this manner, in the form of blog postings, white papers, podcasts and free webinars, by consultants and all sorts of commercial bodies. This material has an implicit sales purpose which makes it difficult to impose a charge.

But content is also provided by newspapers and other publishers who charge conventionally for their print-based products. Now that newspapers themselves are under such pressure, and titles are closing down rapidly, it's hard to see how this model can be sustainable in the long run – after all, someone has to pay for the correspondents who provide the news stories that everyone else likes to comment on.

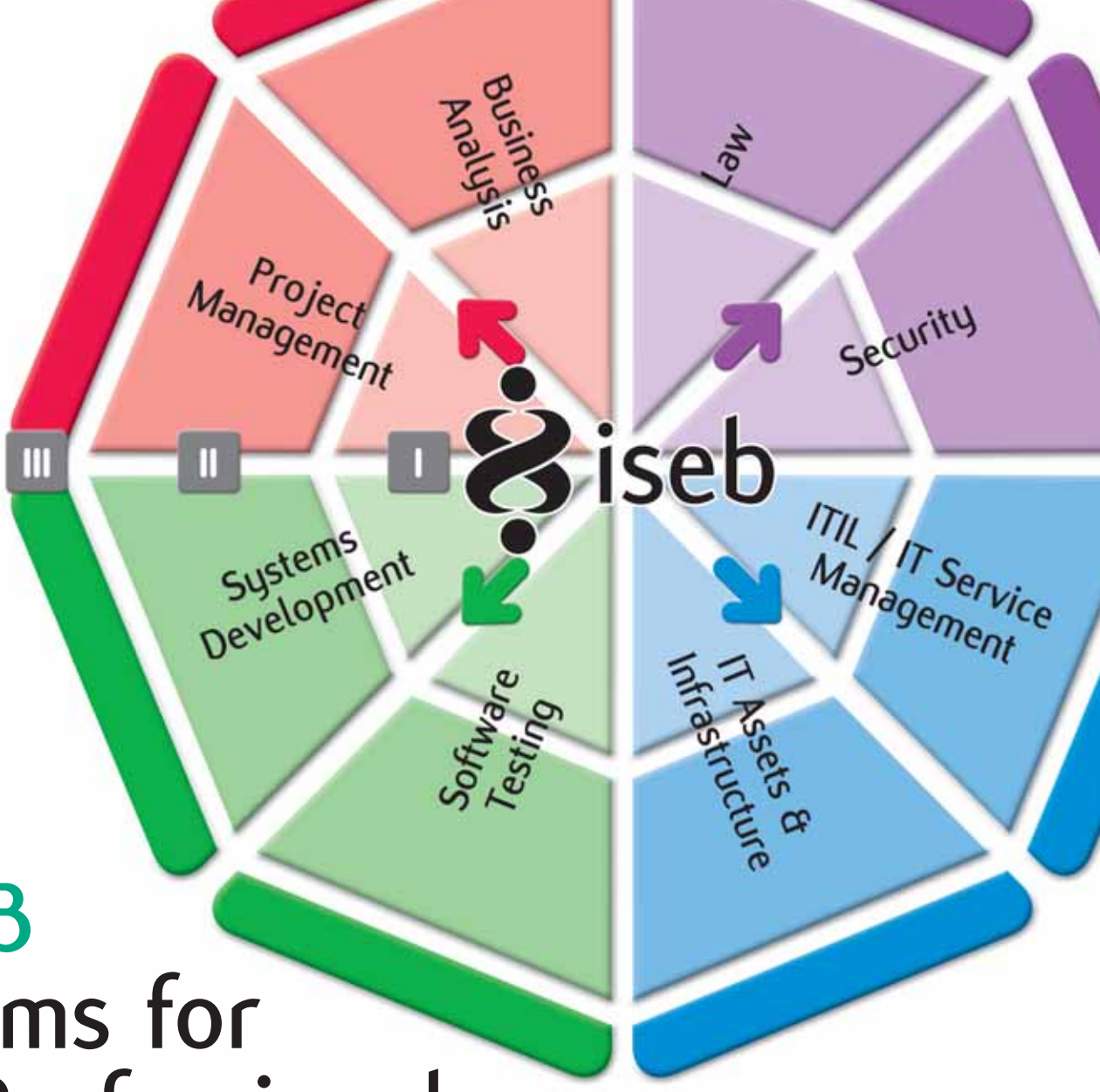
A third model is where the provider distributes an entry-level offering, hoping to build an appetite for the product that can only be satisfied by a premium version or with the aid of add-on services, such as consultancy, support, training, hosting or adaptation of the product. A great many software products that are becoming commonly used in the workplace fall into this category, including survey tools, online project management systems and web conferencing applications.

The premium versions may not appeal to consumers, but are certainly attractive to enterprises which require large quantities of online storage, high levels of security, top performance and so on. Some open source tools can also be assigned to this category – the software itself might be free, but it still has to be hosted, configured and supported.



The final model is where the provider earns enough from other activities that they can afford to offer the product in question for free, perhaps simply because they believe in it. This argument extends to those individuals who contribute their spare time freely, as a hobby or as a form of voluntary work, not least those who work on open source software development.

So, we have got used to free content, free web 2.0 services and free software, but we cannot assume that this situation will continue indefinitely. We may have to start dipping into our pockets to keep those services that we most value alive. After all, in the end there's no such thing as a free lunch.



ISEB
Exams for IT Professionals

ISEB is a worldwide exam body. ISEB have provided almost 325,000 exams in the last 9 years to years to IT Professionals, covering the eight major subject areas above.

Qualifications in these areas are available at Foundation, Practitioner and Higher levels.

Visit www.iseb-exams.com to download your summary of the ISEB qualifications portfolio.

iseb

Prof IT
Delivering **IT** Professionalism

BCS

PEARSON VUE

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE. SUPERIOR TECHNOLOGY.
SECURE TEST CENTRE NETWORK.



Stand out from the crowd, test with the best!

Pearson VUE is the world's leading computer-based testing and assessment business. We work with organisations of all sizes to create flexible, custom-built assessment solutions and deliver them in a secure and reliable testing environment.

Pearson VUE Test Centre

If you are interested in becoming a Pearson VUE Authorised® Test Centre (PVTC) your business can benefit from our full service training and testing solutions and offer test candidates convenient, on-site testing. You will also receive superior customer service and technical support from our UK-based contact centre team and the on-line Pearson VUE Support Services (VSS).



For further information about how to become a PVTC or any of our other services, please email pvemechannelsales@pearson.com or call us on

+44 (0)161 855 7229

www.pearsonvue.co.uk