IT training

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Nuts about security

Training staff on data security is vital, and lessons on how to do it can be learned from Tufty the squirrel **p24**

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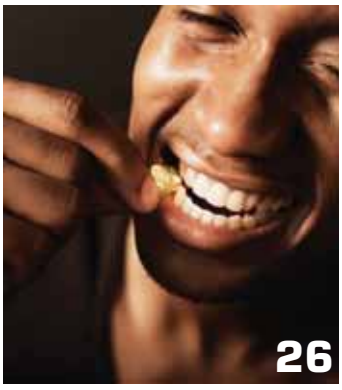
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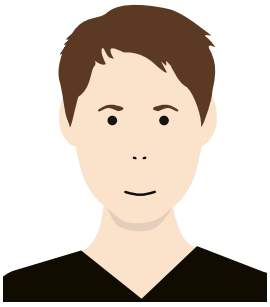
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Editor's intro

A warm welcome to the ITT world



I can't believe it's already almost three months since I started taking over as acting editor from Helen Wilcox, who is now enjoying her baby break (and probably struggling with severe sleep deficit).

Helen left me with high expectations of the IT training community, and she has been proven absolutely right – everyone I've met and talked to over the last three months has been incredibly helpful and friendly, and I have very much enjoyed the various (IT) training events that I have been invited to.

One such event was a debate about e-learning at the prestigious Oxford Union, where learning experts discussed the question of whether the e-learning of today is essential for the skills of tomorrow – read more about it on p21.

While opinions were divided during that particular debate, Clive Shepherd explains how you can make online learning work for your organisation in his column on p34.

It seems we often look at qualifications that cover basic or intermediate IT skills and training, but what about those trying to reach the top of the ladder – becoming a CIO? Gary Flood had a look at what is on offer, and it seems that here too, the air gets thinner the higher you go.

In contrast, there are ever new ways opening up to improve those IT service management skills, and you can read about the experience of Kevin Baxter, who is currently finishing his dissertation for a MSc in IT service management at the University of Northampton (p26).

Data security is becoming an increasingly important issue in most companies, but how do you ensure that employees take it on board? You might be surprised to hear that lessons can be learned from Tufty, the squirrel that probably taught many of you how to safely cross a road.

Measurable results are also the theme of Alan Bellinger's article about performance management (p28). While there seems to be a light at the end of the recession tunnel, performance is still high on the agenda, especially for L&D departments who often need to work extra hard to prove that training produces output. But how can they contribute to the process of defining metrics – a job usually left to the business unit management?

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IT training

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Update

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

Improving IT skills is high on the agenda of UK managers, according to a survey conducted by Opinion Leader Research on behalf of BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. It found that senior IT managers put IT skills and qualifications ahead of better IT infrastructure when it comes to boost economic recovery. Nearly 65 per cent want to see a greater focus on IT education at all levels and more investment in developing IT skills. Over half of the respondents (51 per cent) said that it is very important to improve the commercial focus for IT qualifications. Eighty one per cent would prioritise education as an area for IT investment.

Despite the need for greater investment in IT training, research by the British Educational Suppliers Association (BESA) found that the UK-wide **budget allocation for ICT** indicated a decline of £9.8 million in 2009-2010. It is estimated that primary school ICT budgets will decrease by 2.2 per cent, and secondary school budgets will go down by one per cent, excluding budgets on curriculum software and digital content. The research, which surveyed ICT coordinators and heads of IT from 770 primary and 572 secondary schools from across the UK, also found that there was a drop in teacher confidence using ICT.

Training for new technologies



Many European companies fail to provide appropriate training on the use of new technologies in the workplace. A study published by the Economist Intelligence Unit found that very few firms train employees on the use of devices, applications and websites. Only 21 per cent provide training on the use of personal communications devices; 17 per cent do this in regard to social networking applications. Only 20 per cent plan to do so in the future.

The Open University and e-skills UK are looking to reverse this drop in confidence through a 5.6 million **technology training programme**. The programme's aim is to improve teachers' confidence with computers, helping them to keep up with the often very clued up younger generation. The programme will focus on training technology to teachers and ensuring they are aware of how computers can be used to drive innovation and increase business opportunities.

Another step to address the shortage of IT skills has been taken by Microsoft. The company is investing £45 million in **IT training and apprenticeships** to help 500,000 unemployed people in the UK back to work by 2012. The campaign, called Britain Works, seeks to provide money for basic IT training and support charities that work with the long-term unemployed. Microsoft aims to start 3,000 apprenticeships with a number of its 32,000 partner companies across the country. The candidates will work at the company and attend government-funded IT training courses. Another aspect of the initiative is to deliver free computer skills training

through a new online portal owned by Microsoft, and also in partnership with other learning providers.

The Learning and Skills Council has released **£3 million of funding** to support the delivery of the government's e-learning strategy 'Harnessing Technology'. Training providers can bid for funding, with the objective to use technology innovatively to improve learning experience in the workplace. This latest boost brings the total amount of money invested in the Learning Innovation Grant (LIG) project to £13 million over five phases.

E-learning is not only becoming popular with the public sector, but with private companies. A survey of learning and development professionals by the World of Learning 2009 showed a significant **shift in L&D strategy** and methodology in response to the recession. Forty per cent of respondents stated that they had increased e-learning and in-house training, and 28 per cent made more use of informal learning techniques. Twenty per cent placed increased emphasis on re-skilling, while only 16 per cent reported that their company's approach to L&D had not changed at all during the current economic downturn.

A survey by Video Arts conducted among 565 learning professionals came to a similar conclusion, with 54 per cent of respondents saying that they intended to provide **more in-house training** in the future, and 38 per cent planning to increase the amount of online video streaming. Fifty-six per cent also want to provide more short courses of two hours or less.

Supplier briefs

BCS launches Green IT qualification

Following a three month pilot in the UK with training provider QA, BCS's Foundation Certificate in Green IT has now been launched. The three day foundation course covers areas such as: understanding the importance of IT when trying to achieve an organisation's green objective; being able to identify and address green IT requirements; understanding the regulations, legislation and policies and carbon energy accounting; creating a green IT strategy; and how to create a green IT strategy, among others.

QA sells systems division

UK learning services provider QA has sold its sister company, solutions provider IQ Sys, in order to focus on its core learning services business. IQ Sys was acquired by SCH Distribution (SCHd), part of the SCH Group, an independent European technology business.

New UK sales manager for Guinti Labs

Giunti Labs, online and mobile learning content management solutions provider, has appointed Dan Taylor as its UK Sales Manager. Taylor joins Guinti Labs from PPi Learning Services, where he was client director. Taylor was appointed following Guinti Labs' expansion in the UK market in 2008 and its continuing growth in revenue.

Updated CompTIA A+ exams available

The updated CompTIA A+ exams are now available. The updated version consists of two tests, CompTIA A+ Essentials and CompTIA A+ Practical Applications. CompTIA A+ Essentials measures the competencies required of an entry-level IT professional with a minimum of 500 hours of hands-on work experience in the lab or field.

The CompTIA A+ Practical Applications exam has a more hands-on orientation and focuses on scenarios in which troubleshooting and tools must be applied to resolve problems.

Candidates must pass both exams to become CompTIA A+ certified. Prior versions of the CompTIA A+ exams are still available until 31 July 2010 to allow current candidates to complete their courses.

New courses for CCNP wireless certification

Cisco, in cooperation with Fast Lane UK, has developed four new certified wireless courses to help candidates attain Certified Cisco Network Professional (CCNP) wireless certification.

The courses cover areas such as integrating VoWLAN services into the WLAN, and implementing QoS for high-bandwidth applications. They also teach advanced skills needed to integrate mobility services, tune and troubleshoot the WLAN and implement indoor enterprise MESH networks.

The CCNP wireless curriculum also prepares for the new Certified Cisco Internetwork Expert (CCIE) wireless certification, the highest level of technical networking certification offered by Cisco. The CCNP wireless courses each take five days and can be taken in any order. The prerequisite for the entire curriculum is the 'Implementing Cisco Unified Wireless Networking Essentials (IUWNE)' course.

Redtray acquires PPi Learning

Training outsourcing provider Redtray has purchased PPi Learning Services. The deal allows Redtray to add authorised Microsoft training provision to its portfolio. Roy Sunley, CEO of PPi, will take the role of Managing Director of Redtray Learning Services.

Remarc becomes part of QA

QA has acquired UK-based training and recruitment solution provider Remarc, bringing all its business in to QA.

This increases the company's geographic coverage, with seven centres across the North of England and a further 18 centres across the rest of the UK and Scotland.

David Chan appointed director for new CIO centre

City University London has appointed former BBC executive and CIO David Chan as head of its recently-launched Centre for Information Leadership.

The interdisciplinary centre was formed in recognition of the CIO's growing influence in business and policy making, and offers short courses, CPD, doctorates research and consultancy.



Alan Bellinger

Six L&D tips

This is a good time to re-focus your L&D activities – there's going to be a scramble for incremental investment funds and you'll want to have a watertight case for your fair share. So here are my six top tips of areas on which to focus:

1. Develop cross-function initiatives. One of the benefactors of a post recession environment is cross-function activities. This means that L&D is, for once, in the sweet-spot; but you need to establish this position and not simply wait for it to materialise, as that'll mean you'll probably miss it.

2. Maximise shared services.

The top focus areas for shared services right now are competency frameworks; measurement and assessment; performance management; a learning technologies strategy; and internal communications. Look at what you can realistically provide, see what your stakeholders really need, and then phase the roll-out accordingly.

3. Re-balance formal and informal interventions.

Providing your key stakeholders with support for their informal learning activities will generate credibility. You'll grow that credibility further by demonstrating that the pavlovian instinct of 'we need skills; we need a course' is no longer a mantra to which you subscribe.

4. Ensure alignment of initiatives. This is a good time to get rid of commitments that are past their sell-by date. If you can show that any initiatives don't create value and aren't aligned, then find a way to disengage – even if it's as simple as a gentle re-phasing.

5. Address stakeholder management.There are six stages within the stakeholder engagement model – just do a quick test against each of your key stakeholders to see where you are. The stages are:

- transactional provider: you are evaluated on an assignment-by-assignment basis;
- tactical partner: stakeholders will refer to you, but only in appropriate circumstances;
- strategic partner: there is a sharing of longer-term information and plans;
- accepted partner: stakeholders recognise the contribution you can make;
- respected partner: stakeholders are proactive in seeking your engagement; and
- trusted partner: there is true synergy between L&D and stakeholders.

6. Improve readiness assessment. Focus on what assessment can bring to your organisation. This enables you to take a pro-active position and to get away from a 'one-size fits all' approach. It demonstrates that you're truly focused on providing a service to stakeholders that addresses performance issues. But don't over-engineer the approach – with assessment questions the law of diminishing returns tends to set in early!

BCS Information & Technology Training Specialist Group

Looking at professionalism

Raising the professionalism of training practitioners in IT is one of the main objectives of the I&TT Specialist Group, now one of the fastest growing and most popular groups in BCS.

To accomplish this, I&TTSG is currently looking at what exactly it means to be involved with helping others to learn about IT, whether as a trainer, technical person, learning and development practitioner or IT specialist.

The group has now launched a survey entitled 'What constitutes a "Training Practitioner in IT?"' in order to get input from other people involved in the field.

It looks to get feedback on the specialist group's perception of a 'training practitioner in IT', and also to allow people to put forward ideas and suggestions on how to make improvements to the group at the same time. The data from the survey will be used to make recommendations for changes in the group.

Completing the survey allows respondents to enter a prize draw to win two tickets to the Institute's IT Training Awards in February 2010 (www.ittrainingawards.com) and the chance to be profiled by BCS in the 'Training Practitioner' week, which takes place 1 - 5 February 2010. The draw will be made on 4 December 2009.

The survey can be found at **www.bcs.org/server.php?show=ConWebDoc.9786**

I&TTSG new committee member Michelle Kaye

Profile

Michelle's career has spanned, officially, 13 years – from working for a training company, to in-house trainer, to contract work, and currently working as the sole in-house trainer for a legal firm in the West End of London.

The work covers a huge number of different aspects, from training life cycle (talk to people, design a course, write the course, write the notes, setup the room, run the course, take down the room, talk to people again), to supporting staff (answer calls, fix problems, move kit around, and so on).

When Michelle joined BCS she was looking for support as an IT trainer. Out of everything that BCS offers, she found the I&TTSG and signed up without hesitation.

After being a member for a year, during the 2009 AGM Michelle took the plunge and offered her services for the committee, was accepted and now she is the web person for I&TTSG.



Hear it on the podcast

The recent refresh of the Prince2 manuals has resulted in changes in the content of the Prince2 training courses and exams. The participants in IT Training Podcast 10 explain what has been altered.

The recent refresh of the Prince2 manuals has resulted in changes in the content of the Prince2 training courses and exams. The participants in IT Training Podcast 10 explain what has been altered.

Examinations for the 2009 version of Prince2 started on 6 July, following the launch of the updated manuals and syllabus. How has that affected training and examinations? Emma Jones, Prince2 Chief Examiner, and Melanie Franklin, CEO of Maven Training, both agree that the new manuals are much improved.

'It has become far more flexible, far more fluid,' explains Jones, and Franklin adds, 'Information is much easier to find, and we can get people to engage a lot more with the manual. We don't have to help them navigate so much, and we don't have to re-write elements that were not clear.'

Yet the new manuals also pose challenges: for one, the terminology has changed, which Jones points out has had quite an effect on the exams. Also, the greater flexibility poses a challenge, especially the introduction of strategies, which helps in terms of application but makes it harder to test. 'Testing is difficult because strategy is what you want it to be', says Jones. 'There is guidance in the manual, but nothing that says this is how you should do it.'

Prince2 has also put in a section on tailoring the method, as before it could be that people would come back from a course understanding every nuance in the method, but then getting disheartened because they couldn't apply it line for line to their organisation.

The foundation exam has also moved to testing understanding rather than recall. 'It is still easy to test, but it is a challenge for trainers to train as the exam is no longer about memorising,' explains Jones.

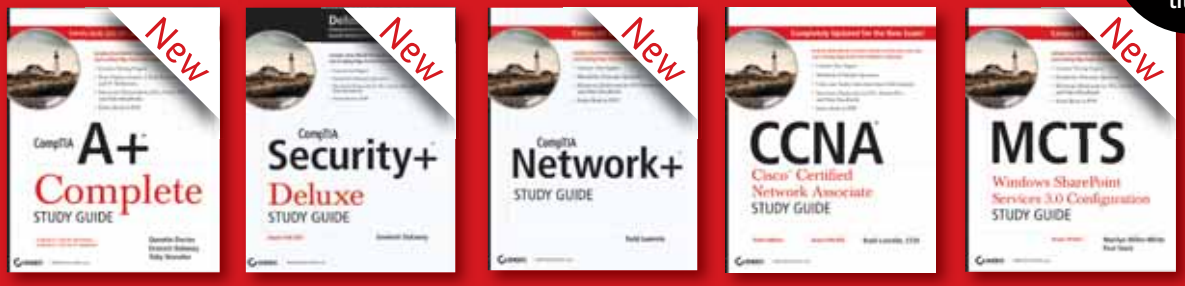
Maven Training has actually rewritten all its courses 'on the principles of accelerated learning, in other words getting the learners to do a lot of the work,' says Franklin. 'People can get involved a lot easier', she adds. 'They are actually doing it, rather than just listening.'

Listen to the full podcast at **www.bcs.org/podcasts** or via iTunes.

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On the ground

How can you create a learner-friendly and effective training room?



Often, as I enter training rooms I see them everywhere: Do NOT bring drinks or food in here; Turn the lights off if you are the last to leave; DO NOT turn off this PC; Turn monitors off…. So many do not's and turn off's – am I turned off from learning in such an environment?

So many training rooms, especially in IT, have the welcome of a wet windy day on a choppy sea. You enter to see banks of PC screens – mmm, great, school. A projector attached to the trainers PC – mmm, great, I'm going to be shown what to do. Is this how your learners are welcomed?

What about putting up signs saying, 'Welcome to your learning environment', 'Learning starts here', 'Knowledge gaining station'?

If you have to use name tents, make them colourful and put the quick reference material appropriate to that session on the back. This way the name tent becomes useful to you and the learner: you can still call on them by name, and they are encouraged to depart with it rather than leaving it hidden under keyboards at their desk.

Use colour, such as different colour pens, different colour note paper, colourful welcome screens – all this helps to make the room a fun place to learn. Ever considered placing a small, kinaesthetic-friendly learning toy on the desks?

Another quick way to create a learner-friendly environment is to have some music playing (as long as you have the relevant PRS license).

Lastly, during the session use the work that the learners have created, especially if it is on flip charts, to put up in the room. The reflectors, the visual learners, will learn as their minds wander.

It's the learners' learning, so it should be the learners' room too. Have fun.

Al Hopkins,
Office Training Solutions Limited

Next issue

How do you manage a group that is self-learning in a workshop environment?

Breaking developments

Can the latest internet phones make mobile learning a reality?



Latest figures show that 8.3 million BlackBerry internet phones were shipped during the summer quarter and that there are now around 32 million BlackBerry accounts active. Figures for the Apple iPhone demonstrate similar uptake.

Use of these gadgets is growing – not just in numbers, but in the way we are discovering their potential. And while some may resent the way they encourage the blurring of our business and personal worlds, they do offer flexibility and a certain amount of freedom from being desk-bound.

Many firms that have included e-learning within a blended learning scheme find that once staff try it, they start to favour it over more conventional methods because of its flexibility. When courses are delivered over mobile devices such as the BlackBerry, this advantage is multiplied, enabling users to take courses in, say, an hour's gap between appointments, or on the train.

Content is divided into bite-sized chunks or short learning video clips, so employees can make full use of the odd half hour before work or if a meeting is postponed, without feeling they are cut off at the height of their concentration.

Courses can be downloaded and used on mobile devices enabling users to revise difficult points in their own time, if they wish. Far from begrudging this intrusion into what would otherwise be spare time, they see this as benefitting themselves personally as well as their employers.

Kevin Young, SkillSoft EMEA

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

Next issue

Which web 2.0 tools are most effective when training IT skills?

IT in a foreign language

Ed Lepre has had an exceptional career. Born profoundly deaf, he now works as an IT trainer with Happy Computers, teaching delegates in British Sign Language, his 'mother tongue'. He also recently won the IT Trainer of the Year Award. Jutta Mackwell reports.







Can you give me a 'short history' of yourself?

I was born profoundly deaf and was brought up using BSL (British Sign Language) as my first language. I went to a special school for the deaf, both primary and secondary, but after that attended a local mainstream college.

I studied Electronics/ Electrical Engineering at Coventry University, and then did a BSc (Hons) in Electronic Product Technology at London Metropolitan University. After university, I worked for two years as a freelancer in web development before joining Happy Computers.

How did you become interested in IT training?

I began teaching myself how to use a computer and how to program at the age of seven, when my father bought me a spectrum computer.

I have also always dreamt of becoming a maths teacher, to be able to see learners gain confidence in their ability, and in that sense being an IT trainer is not that different from being a maths teacher.

How did you get to where you are now?

While I was working as a web developer, Adam Starr, Employer Advisor at the RNID (Royal National Institute for Deaf People), asked me if I'd be interested in teaching IT, and I was given the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to take part in a three-day 'Train the Trainer' course run by Happy Computers.

There were 20 deaf candidates in the group to start with, but only the six best candidates were picked for the whole of the three-day course. The first two days of training was to get an idea of how to train to your best ability. Then I was sent away for a month to practice training techniques, styles, presentation, training methods and so forth. It was a struggle to start off, but I loved learning more and more about how to be a great teacher.

> **What I love about my job is meeting different people from different backgrounds and different stages of life every day**
> Ed Lepre

After the training I was given the opportunity to become an IT trainer, leading to a temporary part-time technical role, due to staff shortage, to web development and now a trainer development manager and examination invigilator.

What does your current job entail?

I am currently training three days a week on average, two days on ECDL and MOS (Microsoft Office Specialist), and one or two other days on open courses (for example, customised training courses such as Microsoft Office, DeskTop Publishing and Adobe Packages and so on).

I also look after the technical side of things, for example monitoring computers and sorting out technical problems throughout training courses.

Another major part of my role is

to improve our web accessibility, especially for deaf people whose first language is not English. These web pages mostly use BSL videos to communicate.

What makes a good and effective training course?

I think one of the most important things when training is to build a good rapport with all delegates. I usually start the training course off with a short introduction, such as fire exits, if people are on the correct course, ice-cream time (3 p.m.), air-conditioning (anyone too warm or too cold), followed by getting to know the delegates, their job role, their experience in specific courses and finding out what they would like to get out of this training course.

It is also important to reassure delegates that it is ok to make mistakes (after all we all make mistakes) – this is what happens in the real world, and it helps them to learn to solve these problems.

What do you enjoy most about your job?

What I love about the job is meeting different people from different backgrounds and different stages of life every day. I also love the variety of my role and the opportunity to experience working across all departments.

What does a trainer need to keep in mind when training hearing-impaired delegates?

When I started, I asked my manager Henry Stewart to give me an opportunity to train hearing people so I could see what the difference was between training hearing and deaf delegates. I had a BSL interpreter in the room, who would translate what I said in BSL to the delegates and vice versa.

When training hearing-impaired or deaf people, the style and method are completely different. One thing to keep in mind is that English is very often not the first language, and delegates need extra time to read, especially during live application examinations.

There are different 'groups' of deaf people. 'Capital D' deaf people, who grow up with BSL as their first language, usually don't consider themselves disabled, in contrast to 'lower case d' deaf people, who don't use sign language and grow up with English as their first language.

BSL is based on gestures, facial expressions and body language and has its own grammatical structure and syntax, whereas SSE (Sign Supported English) is a language that is used like spoken English. There are very few deaf people who can't use either BSL/SSE and communicate orally.

Any tips for communicating with someone who is hearing-impaired?

When you communicate with a deaf person, speak clearly, but not too slowly! If you speak too slowly, it becomes difficult to lip-read you as it distorts the lip pattern. I have encountered so many people who exaggerate the pronunciation of words, thinking this makes whatever they are saying clearer. To get my attention, I can hear my name being called sometimes, but if that doesn't work, tap me on my shoulder, wave within my field of vision, or even throw a light object at me (although this tends to be done by friends and family - obviously, people are not comfortable just throwing things at each other!)

How difficult is it for someone who is deaf to have a career as a trainer?

Not many job descriptions would match a deaf IT trainer. It's a very exceptional career, especially if your first language is not English, but BSL. I would say it is very rare to have a deaf trainer, as any hearing trainer can teach deaf delegates through a BSL interpreter. But from my experience and the feedback I get from deaf delegates, they prefer to have a deaf IT trainer whose first language is BSL rather then having the three-way communications via a BSL interpreter.

I have learnt that the most important attributes and skills of a good trainer are patience and flexibility

Ed Lepre

How do you keep up-to-date with the latest IT developments?

I have a natural curiosity to learn and develop new skills. I have gone from being a qualified ITQ, to ECDL, MOS and finally to MCAS (Microsoft Certified Applications Specialist). I am always looking out for new software products.

I can't resist learning new things, and that is what I am good at, gaining knowledge and passing it on to delegates on my training courses.

What would you say are the most important attributes and skills of a good trainer?

I have learnt that the most important attributes and skills of a good trainer are patience and flexibility to adapt your training methods to the needs of your delegates.

Also it is very important to treat everyone the same, no matter whether they are smart or struggling to keep up. I have always believed that everybody has the ability to learn and develop their skills.

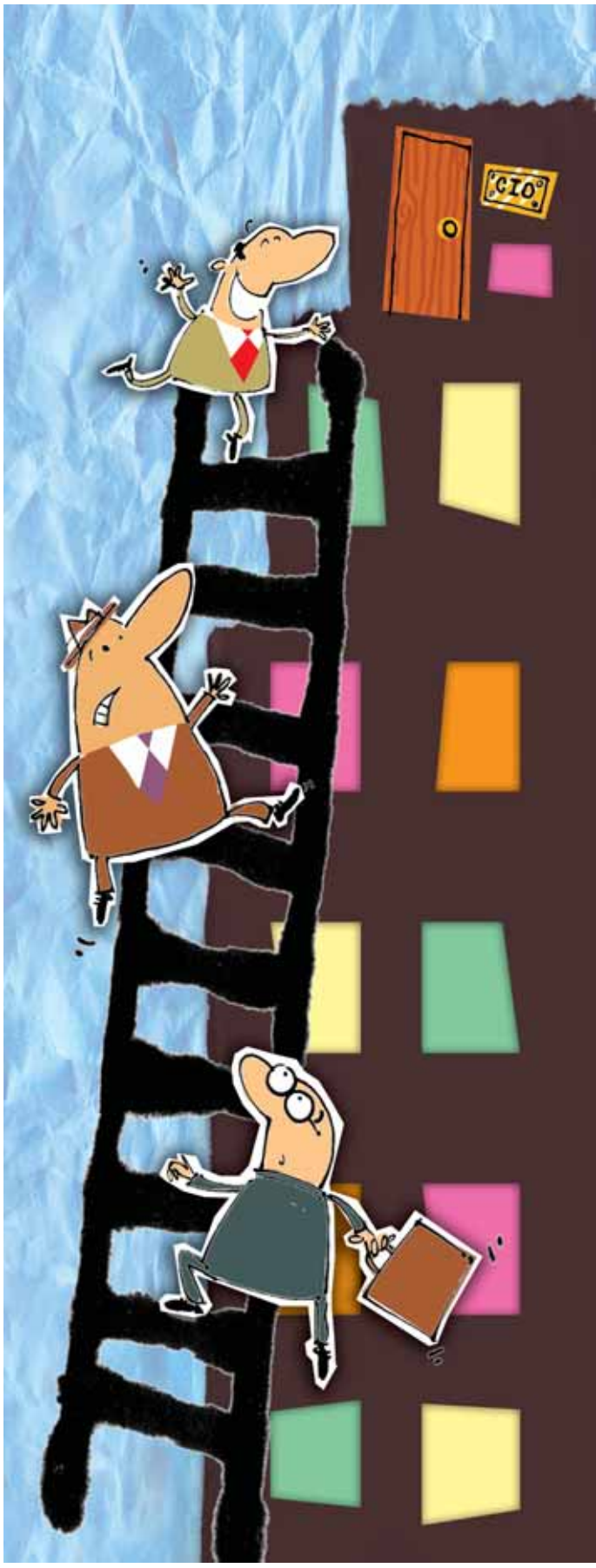
What did winning the IT Trainer of the Year Award mean to you?

I had been awarded a silver medal by BCS in 2006, but nothing can be compared to winning gold this year. I felt fantastic, excited, pleased and amazed at what I had achieved over the years. My dad knew all along that I would win (parents weren't invited – they would have loved to see me going up the stage and collect my award).

This IITT award means a lot to me, and I think it is also a very encouraging message to other deaf people, showing that it is possible to achieve their dreams in life.

Developing CIOs

If you want to get into IT, the education path is mostly pretty straightforward. But what do you do training-wise if you want to get to the other end of the progression – the top job in IT in business, becoming the Chief Information Officer (CIO)? Gary Flood investigates.



When it comes to training CIOs, it turns out there are very little formal options on offer in the UK. Though respected analyst group Gartner has a short programme (its CIO Academy, which takes place annually as a residential course at the Said Business School at the University of Oxford), and some universities do offer structured programmes, there is a widespread feeling that there is a problem in terms of preparing aspiring and next generation CIOs for the job.

At least one prestigious UK institution believes there is such a training gap and has stepped in to fill it. The City University in London has announced a programme for developing the CIOs of the future, The Centre for Information Leadership.

'There is currently no centre in the UK that aims to bring an interdisciplinary approach to the development of CIOs, supported by truly independent, evidence-based strategy and policy work,' says Andrew Tuson, City's Head of Computing. The Centre will launch a masters degree in Information Leadership designed for experienced information technology professionals in 2010, as well as a mix of other education options.

'We are doing this because we don't feel the UK higher education sector is really doing enough to support the CIO and the IT leader as they progress through their career,' he goes on. 'Some business schools offer what they claim is training for senior IT people based on a multi-disciplinary approach, which is fine – but we don't think there's enough out there that's specific and targeted enough for this job role.'

Existing courses

Having said that, some of City's academic rivals have somewhat ruffled feathers at any claim that there is nothing out there in higher education, citing their own, often well-established, programmes. The two best-known UK academic institutions offering executive and bespoke training for business people are the University of Cranfield and Henley Business School (now a part of the University of Reading).

Joe Peppard is Professor of Information Systems in the School of Management at Cranfield University. Cranfield doesn't offer an MBA type degree specifically for CIOs, he explains, but does provide a structured three month course for CIO education and development. 'Our average intake are mid-career IT professionals, from a mixture of public and private sector backgrounds, in their 40s, and I do have to say predominantly male,' he says.

Around 20 such individuals per academic year from across European companies take the programme, which is broken into a series of residential and project components centred on building what Peppard calls 'organisational capability' and 'leadership' qualities. 'We work on candidates' relationship skills, both internally and with suppliers, but also look to them to provide proof of how they can help drive change and foster innovation in the organisations they are placed in,' he adds.

Meanwhile at Henley, senior IT executives from an unnamed but 'major' European business are having a special customised masters programme developed for them by a team led by former CIO Sharm Manwani, Programme Director. The curriculum, he says, focuses on core CIO topics such as how to better align business and IT goals and business benefit delivery tracking. As it stands, only delegates from the client company can attend the course: this is standard practice for Henley, which often offers bespoke management training for a paying client as well as general courses open to all.

MBAs - a potential route?

So is City's charge that there is a crisis in CIO training an overstatement? Not really, as there is actually very little room for complacency when it comes to the state of training for the CIO level of IT leaders in this country.

For example, one might think that a modern MBA, a qualification open to all aspiring C-level executives, would feature IT highly. But that is not so. 'Many of the leading US and UK business schools have dropped IT or IS as a required, core component in their MBAs,' laments Peppard. 'This is an issue of some concerned debate in the IT leadership community in universities as it's potentially quite worrying,' he adds. 'You can foresee a whole generation of captains of industry who will emerge with no overall sense of the contribution IT can make.'

For Manwani, the dropping of IT on most general MBAs is 'shocking' and there 'clearly is the danger of a gap developing here. IT-enabled business change is a huge factor in the 21st century and there could be a real problem if larger organisations weren't exposed to the power of IT at the highest decision making level,' he warns.

Graeme Smith, an IT industry veteran who did an MBA in the 1990s so as to advance his career, sees the same problem: 'Having an understanding of how advanced technology provides business benefits to an organisation should be a part of all executive toolkits.'



We still have a startlingly high rate of IT project failure... there's still some kind of gap between knowing how to do this and doing it right

Joe Peppard, Cranfield University

Still, there are some top British business schools, such as Manchester, that do in fact have an IT element as a core requirement in their MBA programme. Clare Hudson, Director for Career Management Services at the School, says, 'I can confirm we do have a core IT module, management of information systems, on our main MBA programme, which puts it on the same level as other absolutely core business disciples like finance, international business operations, economics and so on.'

However, Hudson adds that the IT people who take the MBA don't as a rule return to IT jobs, even at the CIO level. 'The IT people who come on to the course tend not to go back to IT of the kind of technical background they came from, but to more general management and strategic roles in the business.

A set of tool to get me further ahead

Gary Gascoigne, a graduate of one of the Cranfield IT leadership programmes said they'd got great value out of the experience. Gascoigne, who is General Manager in the central IT department of high street retailer Asda in Leeds, graduated out of one of the Cranfield IT leadership programmes and said he got great value out of the experience. (Asda and Cranfield have a long-established relationship, with the latter providing high-level training and management education.)

Gascoigne joined the Asda training programme in a technical role 20 years ago, was trained in core Novell and Microsoft technologies, then moved up to project management.

'I went on the Cranfield IT leadership programme in 2008 and found it very useful – in fact I have returned to take some more short courses since. I liked the way it looked at things from the IT perspective alongside other business approaches. I think it worked extremely well, made me think outside the box and start seeing things from a more strategic level. I think it's definitely prepared me for new skills and new roles in the future – within both Asda and also Wal-Mart [Asda's parent company] itself, potentially.'

'This training has given me a set of tools I think will help me get further towards becoming a CIO one day – definitely.'

IT at a strategic level

What's behind the decline of interest in IT at the strategic level? A refusal to see its alleged transformative possibilities, worry critics. 'If the CIO isn't on the board and ends up reporting to the CFO - well, that's a disaster. All he's ever going to be asked to focus on is cost, cost, cost. The CIO's aspiration has to get as far as the board so that the true transformational impact of IT can be fully achieved,' claims City's Tuson, for example.

Peppard, for one, believes there is something seriously wrong with IT itself. 'Even after 50 years of commercial IT use we still have such a startlingly high rate of IT project failure. Why? It can't be if it ever was that "the technology just doesn't work" because it does. Something is still missing here - and there's still some kind of gap between knowing how to do this and doing it right.'

The wider issue around CIO training then is actually questions such as what CIOs are and what their contribution should and could be. As much as 70 per cent of IT leaders believe that more attention



Cranfield School of Management offers courses for CIO education and development. Manchester is one of the top British business schools that includes an IT module in its MBA (pictured right)

needs to be placed on the education of CIOs, according to a recent poll of members by CIO Connect, a membership organisation for CIOs. But training for what, precisely?

For Ade McCormack, a self-styled 'Blogger, Advisor, FT columnist, Author and Speaker' on issues around the 'CIO agenda,' there is a real crisis in what IT and CIOs are 'for'.

One problem here is that there is no one, clear, agreed definition of what a CIO actually is – still,' he warns. 'In general, it's an ill-defined role also subject to a lot of ongoing change; it's a very dynamic job function in that sense.'

Becoming a CIO demands having quite a lot of both learned and acquired skills. 'A CIO must add softer management and political skills to their natural talents. It's tough, because most members of the management team are not required to ride two horses in this way,' says John Lamb, who has over 30 years experience as a writer and analyst of the IT scene.

There could be a real problem if larger organisations aren't exposed to the power of IT at the highest decision making level

Sharm Manwani, Henley Business School

CIOs in the boardroom

That's not to say that there aren't many individuals who do attend some of the CIO training available and who find great value in it (see box on page 15); nor that there aren't any very capable IT leaders bringing true value to their organisations. But there seems to be quite a lot of evidence around that suggests talk of the natural end-point of the IT careerist being 'on the board' at a peer-level position to the head of sales or marketing or finance is not necessarily true.

Statistics show that not one single



leader of a FTSE 100 public company comes from an IT background. This slightly more fact-based perspective, perhaps, might suggest more appropriate and realistic training pathways for ambitious individuals and organisations with tight training budgets, too.

'What's the real goal here?' asks Stuart Lauchlan, a commentator on IT for 20 years. 'The business-literate CIO or the IT-literate business person? For decades, IT people have staked their claim on a seat at the boardroom table and pursued MBAs and other such qualifications in a bid to be more than "the geek in the suit". In some ways, it's a horribly out-of-date view – the idea that you go off and get a piece of paper – a very expensive one at that! – and somehow you're now business person of the year.'

It seems that training for a CIO role is much more complex than one would have thought. Yet what is certain is that IT isn't going to 'go away' – business, like it or not, has to deal with it and find the best way of benefitting from it.

Useful web links

Details on the Gartner CIO development course:
www.gartner.com/it/cio/2007/index.jsp

Cranfield School of Management runs two executive development programmes aimed at senior IT professionals, the Cranfield IT Leadership Programme and The High Performance Leadership Programme:
www.cranfield.ac.uk/som/executive/itlp

For details on education for IT leaders at Henley, please contact **sharm.manwani@henley.reading.ac.uk**

You may also find his book of interest on issues around IT's contribution to business at **www.amazon.co.uk/Enabled-Business-Change-SuccessfulManagement/dp/1902505913**

Manchester Business School is at **www.mbs.ac.uk**

For details on what City plans, contact **andrew@soi.city.ac.uk**

Ade McCormack's blog contains many useful insights into the changing role of the CIO:
www.auridian.com/value/cios/

CIO Connect is a membership organisation for existing and aspiring CIOs:
www.cio-connect.com

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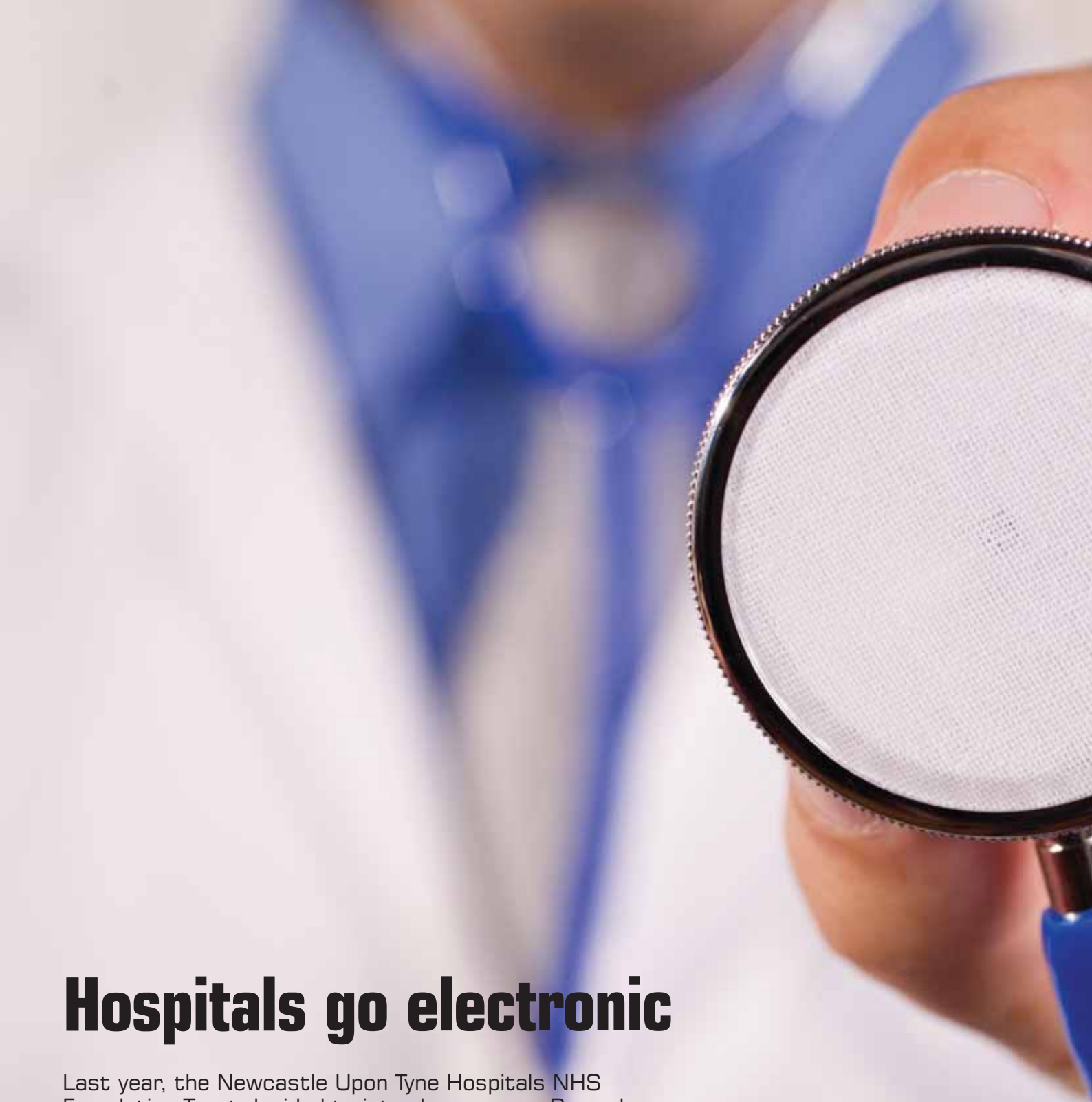


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Hospitals go electronic

Last year, the Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust decided to introduce a new eRecord system to improve patient and medication administration. In less than a year, the trust's IT training team, with the help of training company Ideal, tackled the preparation and training of several thousand staff.

Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is one of the largest NHS Trusts in the UK, with around 12,000 staff working across multiple sites. Its major sites, Freeman Hospital, Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle General Hospital, Newcastle Dental Hospital, Newcastle Fertility Centre and Northern Genetics Service, contain some of the busiest departments, dealing with thousands of patients



each year.

In 2008, the trust established a business case to change its administration system to eRecord, a bespoke application developed by Cerner, a US-based supplier of healthcare information technology. The aim of introducing this system was to improve the quality and safety of patient care, to modernise systems and processes, using IT, and to better control cost.

In the process, two main areas, the patient and the medication administration systems, are being updated and centralised. While patient administration was mainly handled electronically before, the ordering of tests and the prescription and administration of medicine was still paper-based. Also, bed management was still dependent on staff collecting and reporting a bed state to find out where and how many empty beds there were.

To introduce the new system and provide the necessary training, Simon Holloway, then Education, Training and Development Manager at the trust, contracted trainers from Ideal, a UK-based health system service company with training experience in Cerner projects.

'Their trainers had an impressive track record in Cerner applications,' explains Simon. Also, with only ten staff in IT training, the trust did not have the capacity to train several thousand people on the new system. 'We were the cavalry, if you will,' says Richard Ayres, Regional Manager at Ideal. 'Basically we were involved in supporting both training capacity and capability on the project.'

'The cooperation with the contract trainers from Ideal was very positive,' says Simon. 'They worked really well with our trainers and were happy to follow our training scripts.'

Creating the need for training

Communication and change management were two of the first things to tackle as the new system was considered and rolled out. The trust's IT training team began to spread the word through newsletters, promotional videos, TV screens in canteens and personally through attending meetings and talking to people. 'The message was basically "eRecord is going to bring change and opportunities in the way you work, and staying where you are is not an option"', explains Simon.

Together with Ideal's Technical Director Mark Lovatt, Simon and his team set up a series of targeted workshops, aimed at specific areas of operation and staff. Invitations went out to key targeted people to get a spread across different areas, and each directorate was encouraged to send staff. Workshops usually ran from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and attendee numbers varied from six to 16.

The two main objectives of the workshops were to engage staff and to show them that change was possible and that their input was necessary and valued. 'We wanted to stimulate thought on what people would like to see if they were working with a blank sheet of paper,' explains Mark. 'Results were then fed back to the project team, and categorised under "things that could be done now" and "things that could be done in the future".'

In December 2008, the team ran 11 workshops to cover five key areas of the eRecord system, such as outpatients (booking and waiting list management/ patient flow through the department), theatres (scheduling and patient flow), inpatients (ordering and EPS) and medicine administration and observations.

After a short demonstration of the new system, delegates were split into groups of three and given 15 minutes to write down what they would change if they could. 'Rather than just doing what they had always done, this was about a new opportunity, and seeing how the new system could support that,' says Mark. 'Often people assume that a new system is just coming in and

there is nothing they can do about it. With these workshops, we wanted to show staff that this was not just an idle exercise, and that their ideas would be listened to.'

Despite busy work schedules, staff were very motivated to take part in the workshops. The highest DNA rate was only 23 per cent, and the lowest was at one per cent. There was also a real 'cascade effect' as staff from departments where people had had an involvement with the workshops were a lot more positive about the end-user training. Also, clinical consultants who attended would speak to other consultants about the training and the workshops, and book their staff in for the end-user training.

Well prepared

After the initial change management workshops in December, the team started to prepare for the end-user training that was to take place in the nine-week period before roll-out. From January, Simon and his team were busy developing training materials for online and classroom-based training and producing user guides.

In order to be able to distribute and track learning, the trust upgraded its learning management system (LMS) to Adobe Connect, but also provided online training through its own learning portal.

The preparation of training material proved very challenging as the system was still being tailored. 'Fortunately, we had a lot of skill in-house, with people such as our excellent lead IT trainer Peter Martin, and Kevin Harland, our IT trainer for e-learning,' says Simon.

The training material also had to be adjusted to different roles within the hospital, from clerical staff to nurses or consultants. The over twenty different training packages were then published on the learning portal and staff could access and choose which course was best suited for them.

In terms of prior IT skill assessment, the trust's IT training team were already well prepared: 'We've had a number of years to build up core skills,' explains Simon. 'We've been working with clerical staff since 2000/01 to build up entry level IT skills, using qualifications such as ECDL, MOS, and since 2008, NHS ELITE, which contains a NHS-specific online basic skills pre-assessment.'

Another important element to successful deployment of the training was the familiarisation of Ideal's trainers with the new system. As their role was to support and work with the trust's existing team, it was important to cooperate very closely and also get to know the workings of the hospitals.

'Every deployment is different, and even though our trainers have a lot of experience with Cerner, this system was highly bespoke,' says Richard. 'Fortunately we had a localisation period of about two weeks, which was a luxury we don't usually get.'

The training phase

The end-user training phase started nine weeks prior to the initial go-live date. Training took place across multiple sites, and the team had to get creative with training facilities to get training as close to the workplace as possible. 'We took over a newly-built ward before it was released to patients, and also turned a derelict ward into a training room,' explains Simon. 'We wanted people to spend the time away from their workplace on training, not on travelling.' Training activity was reviewed with the directorate managers and the eRecord programme in weekly meetings, making sure that training was responsive to the directorates' needs.

Training lasted anywhere from one to five hours, and group sizes varied between six and 15, depending on room capacity. Staff were introduced to the new system and given the plenty of chance to practise.



Often people assume that a new system is just coming in and there is nothing they can do about it

Mark Lovatt, Ideal

Taking part in classroom training was encouraged but not compulsory, and staff could choose whether they wanted to train online or face-to-face.

Challenges

One of the main challenges during the training was the fact that throughout the training phase the eRecord system was still being adapted and tailored. In a number of cases, staff who had already been trained needed to be made aware of changes in the application. This type of training often happened in big groups in a lecture theatre rather than small groups in a classroom, which was quite a big challenge for some of the trainers.

When the go-live date slipped for technical reasons, the team had to become creative to keep the motivation up, and they introduced a 'rehearsal phase' after the official training phase was over. The aim was to build confidence and competence for using the new system. 'Obviously this phase required a lot of floor-walking and a different approach as it wasn't so much about training people but keeping them "close to the boil",' explains Simon.

Positive feedback

Yet despite the challenges, the training project is proving very successful. Around 4,000 staff have taken part in the face-to-face training, and feedback was extremely positive. Ninety-two per cent said that the training was good or excellent, and the general feedback was that the training was very well organised, clear and consistent. Ninety-three per cent also agreed that they felt able to apply the knowledge learned.

'The face-to-face training was absolutely a success,' says Simon. 'Even though some of the temporary training rooms were not the best, the feedback we got was very heartening. Evaluations were strongly positive and staff were generally very happy.'



Essential or overrated: **does e-learning work?**

Can e-learning today really deliver what it promises? Eight learning experts discuss this question at the Oxford Union. Jutta Mackwell reports.

'This house believes that the e-learning of today is essential for the important skills of tomorrow'. This was the motion put to eight e-learning experts for a debate at the prestigious Oxford Union, organised by e-learning company Epic.

E-learning has become one of the buzz words in training and learning and development. It has been praised for its flexibility, cost-efficiency and its 'greenness'. But does it really do what it promises, and does it help to impart the essential skills of tomorrow? Or is it simply 'computers instead of books' (as Rory Cellan-Jones, BBC's Technology Correspondent who chaired the debate, learned from his taxi driver) or 'what employers do when they don't want to pay for proper training'?

According to Professor Diana Laurillard, who holds the chair of learning with digital technologies in the faculty of culture and pedagogy at the University of London, 'no sane person can say that e-learning is not essential.' Rather, e-learning is 'the most exciting thing to have come our way since the invention of writing' as it helps to present ideas and knowledge in a new and different way.

Practical advantages

E-learning also makes sense on a pragmatic level, as Major General Tim Inshaw, Director of Training and Education, explained. It can increase the speed of gaining knowledge and reduce the time and money spent on training significantly– Inshaw even said he was hoping to achieve a time reduction of up to 25 per cent. In a time of recession, figures such as these are essential if an organisation wants to continue training - which in turn is essential in order to survive and come out of the recession and 'not be defeated in the value for money arena,' as Inshaw put it.



E-learning is the most exciting thing to have come our way since the invention of writing

Diana Laurillard, University of London

Andrew MacGovern, VP - Strategic Talent Technology at Thomson Reuters, added another layer to this argument, looking at high-profile employees, who struggle to find the time for training courses. E-learning, especially mobile e-learning, can make training accessible on train journeys, while waiting for a meeting to start or whenever an employee finds some spare time on the move.

The purpose of e-learning therefore should be to create real-time interaction between experts, learners, colleagues and peers; and LMS should be not just 'e-learning vending machines' (a term coined by Dr Marc Rosenberg, a leading expert in the world of e-learning), but actually allow for skill gaps analyses and help to find the right course to address the gap.

Another aspect that speaks in favour of e-learning is the fact that with 'Generation Y', a tech-savvy generation is entering the business platform. Combined with a world where IT is becoming increasingly vital for businesses and employees, e-learning helps to address both the need to provide training in a form that is accessible to web 2.0-accustomed employees and also allows them to apply and practise their IT skills while learning.

'D-learning'

This point was taken up by Kirstie Donnelly, Director of Products and Marketing at learndirect. In today's world, a large number of people live their lives through their use of technology. She suggested using the term d-learning (digital learning) rather than e-learning, as this includes the very web 2.0 applications people now grow up



with. Using e-learning (or d-learning) puts the learner in control of learning, which should increase motivation and retention of knowledge.

Learning through digital media also has a potential for 'something liberating' in education as it helps breaks down social barriers, Laudillard pointed out in her final remarks. One student, a woman three feet tall, said of her online experience that it had been the first time she had been treated like an adult by others. Another said 'when I'm online I'm not in poverty'.

Reality check

Yet the crux of the matter, as the opposition pointed out, lies in the 'e-learning of today'. The reality of today's e-learning, as David Wilson, an independent corporate learning analyst, explained, is that most organisations do not include things such as web 2.0 learning or serious gaming in their training portfolio, and rapid e-learning is mostly nothing more than 'the creation of non-relevant content faster with less instruction and less longevity', said Wilson.

Whether it is putting the technology over pedagogy, or simply translating classroom learning into an electronic version, or using e-learning as a strategy rather than a tool, the e-learning of today often ignores the reality of the workplace. E-learning today is mostly about basic knowledge acquisition, and in many ways hasn't moved on from the e-learning or computer-based teaching that has been around for the last 30-40 years, in Rosenberg's opinion.



We treat e-learning as we treat Microsoft Word... knowing how to use it will not make you write the next Pulitzer Prize novel

Marc Rosenberg, Management Consultant

Redefining e-learning

In order to work, e-learning needs to be completely and radically redefined. It needs to be information-centred rather than technology-centred and expand choices rather than limit them. 'We treat e-learning as we treat Microsoft Word,' Rosenberg explained. 'But knowing how to use it will not make you write the next Pulitzer Prize novel.'

E-learning at the moment is most effective when its subject is 'black and white', such a legislation, compliance and system processes. However, the essential skills of today are management and leadership skills such as negotiating, decision making and analysis, said Claire Little, VP – Emerging Markets with SHL Group, and these cannot be taught through the e-learning of today.

Another, very practical obstacle to introducing effective e-learning is internet connection. Out of 6.5 billion people worldwide, only 1.5 billion have access to a computer. Additionally, even with a connection of 8Mbs, Little found that it still takes about an hour to download a movie from iTunes – which doesn't bode well for integrating more interactive and dynamic features into e-learning.

Mobile learning?

Looking at the global picture, there is also the issue of mobile learning. In countries such as India, people might not have an internet connection, but the majority have a mobile phone. If e-learning doesn't tap into these mobile technologies and therefore cannot be accessed by a large majority of people, it cannot be defined as being essential for the skills of tomorrow.

Putting learning at the centre

Adding the HR perspective to the picture, Wendy Cartwright, Head of Human Resources for the Olympic Delivery Authority, pointed to the enormous upsurge of coaching in mentoring in the workplace. E-learning can easily become shallow, lacking the essence of learning, which is about changing behaviour and a profound experience, the 'aha, I didn't know that'-effect. It is very difficult to replicate this kind of learning experience in a one-dimensional environment.

Also, as Cartwright suggests, the 'facebook generation' often have a short attention span and in numerous cases lack social skills. Just because they are able to use IT intuitively doesn't necessarily mean that IT-based learning is the best way for them to learn.

However, as one member of the audience pointed out: 'The people who are doing e-learning today are the ones who develop the e-learning of tomorrow. Some years down the line, they will say "Look, this is the stuff that we wanted to do"'. For this reason, it is important to continue to reinvent and design not only cost-effective, but effective forms of e-learning.

In the end, however, the 'noes' won the day, as only 90 of the attendants left the debating chamber through the 'aye' door, compared to 144 who thought that e-learning needed to embrace wider technological advances in order to deliver the essential skills of tomorrow.

You can view highlights, add your own comments and take part in the debate at **www.elearningdebate.com**

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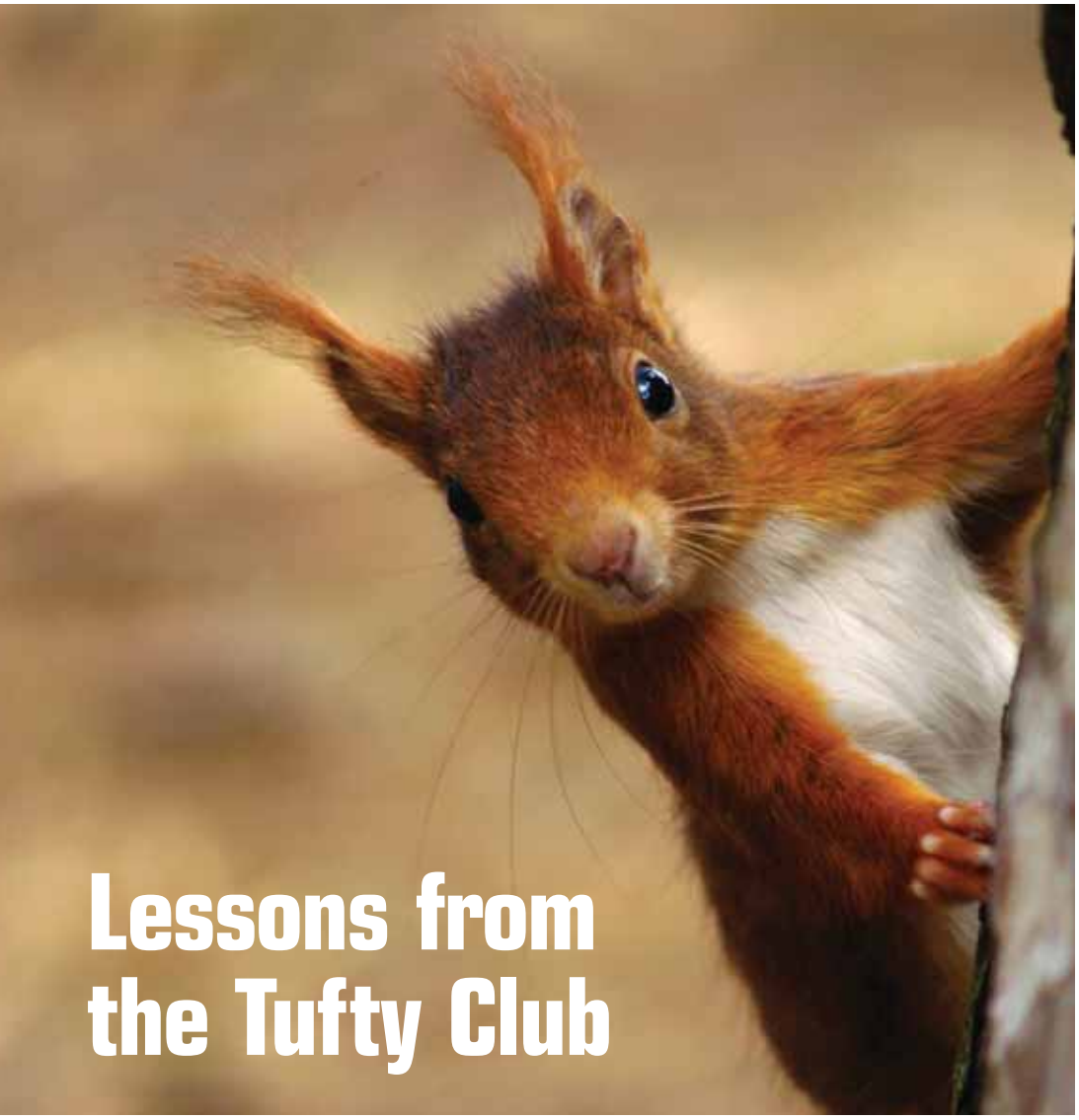


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Lessons from the Tufty Club

Data security has become one of the major topics in IT, and staff need to be made aware of the issues involved. Paul Hansford, a security consultant, looks at what is needed for an effective training approach and what we can learn from a children's road security club.

In an ever more accountable and litigious business world, staff security awareness is becoming increasingly important for organisations. If there is a security breach, they need to be able to assert that it is down to an individual making a mistake or behaving against company policy – anything but the notion that the breach resulted from a lack of security strategy or the ignorance in the workforce.

As more organisations exploit technology to facilitate home- and remote-working, the security weak point is not the IT, but those who use it. And the response to this must be to make staff aware of the security issues: the dangers, the impacts they could have and what staff need to do to minimise the likelihood that things will go wrong.

But what exactly is 'security awareness'? In the least effective examples, it is a module – among many others – in an induction training course. Job done? Not really. In other examples, it may include a poster campaign; perhaps a pep talk by the CEO. Job done now, then? Probably not – these approaches may satisfy compliance and demonstrate that the organisation has 'done something'. But it won't get the job done.

To change behaviours, we need a multifaceted, accurately targeted awareness campaign

Paul Hansford
Security Consultant

To really get the awareness job done, we could do worse than learn from Tufty. Tufty the squirrel taught me how to cross the road. I read or listened to stories of Tufty and his chums' adventures, which inevitably involved crossing the road. I was a member of my local Tufty Club, proud to wear the badge. In short, I lived La Vida Tufty. And I learned how to cross the road.

Tufty was invented by RoSPA in 1953. By the early sixties, the Tufty Club had become a nationwide network of over 24,000 groups. Over the years, Tufty and his chums changed in appearance, to keep them relevant to the times. Tufty is still going today, promoting road safety to kids.

But what do we learn from this? RoSPA clearly thought about its target audience and how best to reach them. It involved parents as well as children. It delivered the message in a range of appropriate formats that addressed the needs of its audience (to be entertained and kept interested) and made sure the message was 'well clothed' in its delivery method. And over time, they updated the way in which Tufty delivered the message, to continue to be relevant to changing audiences.

So: security awareness, à la Tufty. Let's understand first that while training may be part of awareness, awareness takes more than training. To change behaviours, we need a multi-faceted, accurately targeted awareness campaign.

Organisations are often reluctant to fund campaigns because it is notoriously difficult to measure their return on investment (ROI). So we need develop the campaign in a measurable way. One way of doing this is to take a project management

approach and split the campaign into six stages.

At each stage, we can revert to management, check with them that all is well and ask for approval to proceed with the next stage. Let's look at approaches for each of these stages...

Stage 1: identifying the business need

What do we want staff to do differently as a result of the campaign? How will we know we have persuaded them to do so? Fewer security breaches? More enquiries about how to work securely? A higher profile or greater respect for security in business decision-making?

Stage 2: identifying the awareness gap

The common mistake is to believe that we know what staff need to know and proceed (usually with informational training) to tell them. This unilateral approach fails to recognise where the real challenges may lie. Rather we need to understand why staff are not behaving as we want them to. We can look at that as being one of four states:

- Unconscious incompetence: blissful ignorance – staff don't know that they need to know about security. This implies a need to transfer knowledge.
- Conscious incompetence: limited awareness – staff know security is an issue, but don't know how to go about it. This implies a need to transfer knowledge and to empower staff to consider and question security issues.
- Conscious competence: getting there – staff are aware of the security issues and generally comply, but may sometimes allow expediency to override security. This implies a need to address why security takes second place when it shouldn't.
- Unconscious competence: sorted – staff fully incorporate security into their workplace thinking and behaviour. This implies only a need to refresh the message from time to time.

Security awareness needs to be managed as a project, with measurable deliverables

Paul Hansford
Security Consultant

So we need to really investigate why staff fail to fully take on security. If simple ignorance is not the problem, are behaviours influenced by any particular attitudes? If so, are those attitudes influenced in turn by deeper beliefs? Is there a corporate culture that subliminally says 'security is a necessary evil' or 'getting the work done overrides security'? Understanding where the blocks exist will influence how we deliver the message(s).

Stage 3: identify the messages

Based on our findings in stage 2 and the performance indicators we set in stage 1, we can define the messages that we need staff to accept. At this stage, these will be prescriptive (for example, 'do not share your password').

Stage 4: design the delivery method(s)

We will prioritise the messages and select the delivery methods (live training, e-learning, literature, posters...) best suited to deliver them, taking account of the behaviours, attitudes and beliefs we identified in stage 2. There are many types of media we can use, appropriate to the size, spread and working patterns of the workforce; and taking a leaf out of Tufty's book, we can go further by for example involving team leaders in cascading the message (taking care to ensure they deliver it faithfully), including assessment of security performance in staff work targets and the appraisal system. How many terms of reference include the simple phrase '...and performs their role with due regard for security'?

Stage 5: deliver the campaign

The campaign must have a start and stop point, so management can evaluate how well the performance indicators have been met. But while the formal delivery takes place within these two markers, the campaign can actually start before and continue after these. By keeping staff aware of how the campaign is being developed, we can create an interest in the subject before we deliver the formal events; those events should themselves begin prescriptively and move staff toward autonomy throughout the campaign. For example, discussion groups – initially led by trainers but increasingly handed over to staff – may flush out the attitudes and beliefs that block improvement in security behaviours. The campaign may instigate an intranet security discussion page that is left to run after the campaign is over.

Stage 6: assess the results

As the formal campaign ends, we can assess performance against the indicators we agreed with management. Assessment about knowledge or understanding can be made soon after the campaign end point. Changes in behaviour that result from improved attitudes or beliefs about security may take longer to become visible. If the campaign has been successful, we may take another leaf out of Tufty's book and reiterate what are now recognisable messages to staff in new ways, to refresh awareness over time.

Security awareness is more relevant and a more worthwhile investment than ever before. It needs to be managed as a project, with measurable deliverables. Training does not make an awareness campaign. It takes a real understanding of how staff regard the subject, and using methods both inside and outside traditional training techniques to tackle that lack of knowledge or challenge those blocking attitudes and beliefs that prevent improvement.



Training to the gold standard

Good IT service management is essential to engaging effectively and efficiently with customers. Qualifications range from basic foundations courses in ITIL to a full Masters degree, which won the itSMF's 'Innovation of the Year' Award in 2008. Gary Flood reports.

There are probably few IT professionals who have no idea what the IT Infrastructure Library (ITIL) is. That's because it seems to have become the 'gold standard' for what many of us want to achieve in terms of making technology not about bits and bytes, but a service that can be easily managed and consumed by its customers.

'ITIL has made it possible for the techie organisation to talk a common language with the rest of the organisation,' claims Barry Corless, former Head of Education at training firm Remarc before its recent absorption by QA. 'We used to waste so much time arguing if one vendor's incident was the same as another's job ticket. ITIL has all in all radically improved the way IT is both supported and delivered.'

Indeed, qualifications in ITIL are gaining acceptance in all parts of the industry as a sign of expertise in service management. But how do you get such qualifications in the first place?

New approaches

An interesting new path to ITIL expertise is being offered at full Masters degree level by Northampton Business School, where since 2006 the world's first service management degree has been offered via a combination of full-time, part-time and distance learning. So far around 50 students from both the UK and abroad from a range of public (NHS), private and SME organisations have taken the course, says Susan Bailey, Principal Lecturer and Field Chair, IS, at the school, part of the University of Northampton.

'We see the degree as a postgraduate qualification in all elements of service management,' she says. Students tend to come in with a clutch of industry qualifications (for example, the ITIL v2 'Red Badge') but feel they need to amplify their certifications with a more rounded, intense exposure to service management at a deeper level.

> **ITIL has made it possible for the techie organisation to talk a common language with the rest of the organisation**
>
> Barry Corless, Remarc (now part of QA)

'Other forms of ITIL education by their nature tend to be less deep. Here, we get candidates to really work through what they already know from that and put it in a wider context, by seeing the links between service management and say, quality approaches or change or project management disciplines.'

To get the qualification at Northampton you need to pass 180 study credits. But an ITIL qualification like Manager Certification (v2) or ITIL Expert (v3) gives you 20 points already, so you can extend that knowledge through exposure to other aspects of this way of aligning business and technology. 'We have structures in place that welcome previous experience and professional training and encompass that in a proper

business degree approach that's completely aligned with industry,' Bailey claims.

That's great, for those who have the time and commitment to take such a path for interest. Bailey says that's an understandable reaction, but really misses the point as by working with bodies like itSMF the course has a clear mapping back to what hard work has already been put in acquiring the qualifications and basically offers a way to get a better job as a result. 'It's in effect an MBA – it's a chance for a full development and extension of you as a business expert.'

A case in point is one current candidate for the MSc, Kevin Baxter, who works on long-term contract in the BBC, where he is a change manager tasked with implementing ITIL across the organisation. Baxter is now working on the final leg of the degree, his dissertation, set for completion in 2010, and says he fully expects the qualification to benefit him both personally and professionally.

'I'd definitely say a Masters degree in this climate in this specialisation will set me apart. It's not only been incredibly stimulating, I've explored things I just wouldn't have come across through my focus on ITIL, like CoBIT and the philosophy of quality itself. It's too early to say if I will get a pay rise or a better job directly out of it but it's given me things in ITIL alone I couldn't have got elsewhere, as there's still really no sign of the ITIL Master qualification due after the Expert one [v3].'

It also has to be noted that all this has been 100 per cent self-funded and involved Baxter studying in his own time – which suggests that he really did find something here that promised real benefit.



We get candidates to really work through what they already know and put it in a wider context

Susan Bailey, Northampton Business School

Training the workforce

Qualifications like the Northampton degree are still a rarity in service management qualifications, with the majority still being sent on courses run by third-party IT training organisations – though possibly most can't say they turned round and saw they had the rest of the office on the course with them.

This is effectively what happened at Plymouth City Council, which has put everyone in IT (about 80 people) through some form of ITIL certification, so everyone has Foundation training at least and managers have more specialist qualifications. At the same time its servicedesk and second-line support teams have had extra training, for example through SDI (Service Desk Institute) training. Additionally several of their third-line team have undergone specialist training in the Hornbill support system.

The Council is now starting to roll out v3 training, with QA being its lead ITIL trainer for both ITIL curricula. 'We made a strategic commitment some years back to never re-invent the wheel in IT if we could avoid it, and so saw ITIL as a real way to improve the availability and efficiency of a number of our services, starting off in incident, problem and change management,' says Mel Gwynn, Operational Service Delivery Manager at Plymouth. Plymouth, which has nearly 5,000 IT users across the Council, sees ITIL as having been key to many service improvements. But now it wants more, and is indeed looking to v3 for its next steps.

'We are very interested in the planning and optimisation, release management and capacity and availability elements of the new version of ITIL. That's because we feel we've used v2 to get the basic processes in place – now we need to extend that success and go more in-depth with service management,' she believes.

It seems that ITIL has a clear structure of training and qualification progression finally emerging post the new release of the latest version. And though not everyone will go to the length of taking on a full degree, the fact that such a course is available demonstrates that demand for good education and career development based around service management is a reality for many IT professionals going forward.

From v2 to v3

The body behind IITIL – the UK government's Office of Government Commerce (OGC) – announced in the summer that ITIL v2 would be officially withdrawn soon and that a consultation process is now underway to work out how to fully transition to v3, which was launched in May 2007. Why does this matter? Basically, v3 is quite different to v2, consisting of eight volumes and very much predicated on the idea of service management. The new version is only five volumes, but has more constituent modules and is more aligned to a wider conception of a service lifecycle. This has confused some people in the market, say critics, but the comeback from the ITIL 'industry' is that v3 offers a more rounded approach.

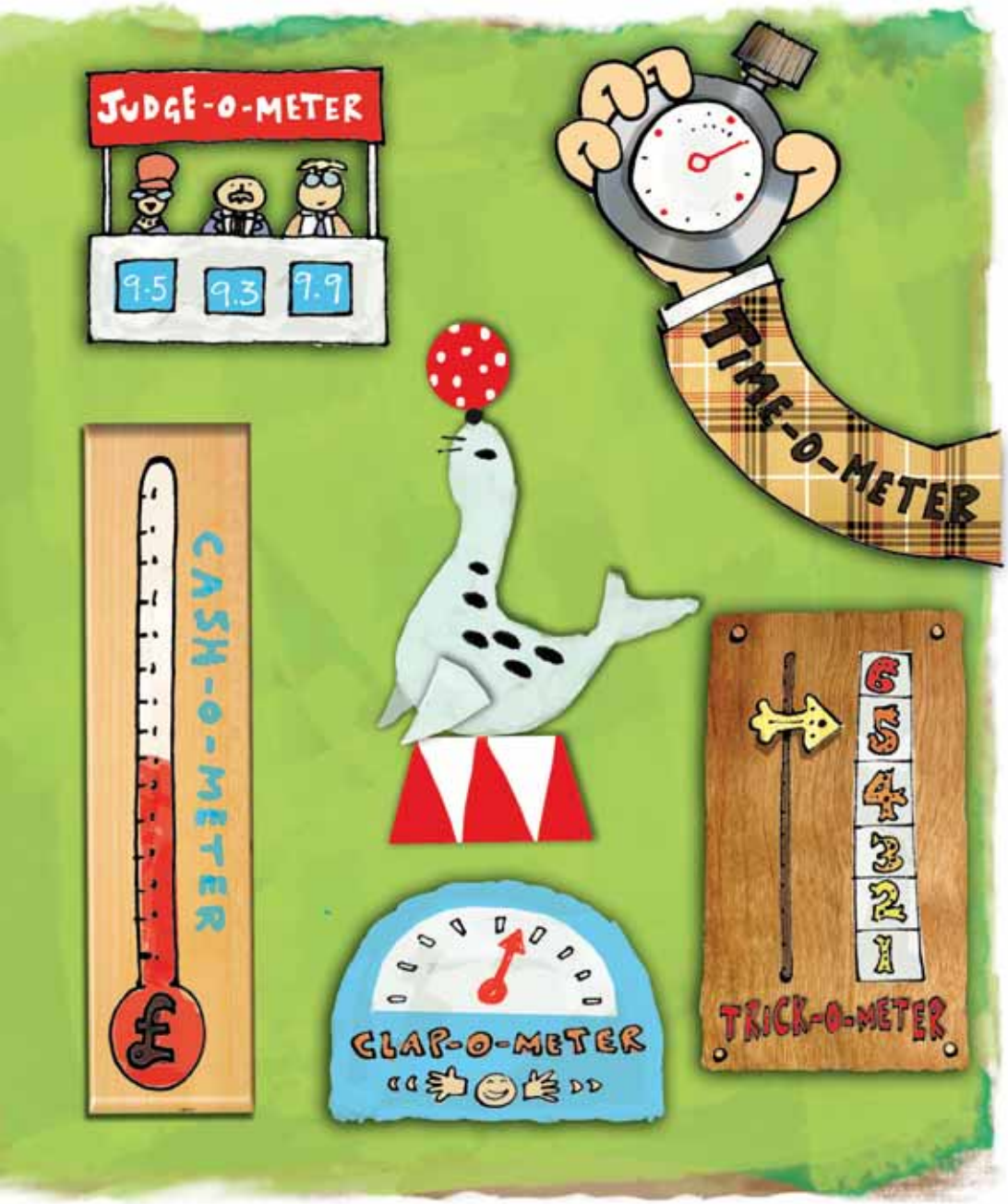
More information can be found at **www.ogc.gov.uk/guidance_itil_4672.asp**

Useful links

Northampton's IITIL degree
www2.northampton.ac.uk/portal/page/portal/business/docstore/leaflets/pg/ITServiceManagement-MSc-PGC-PGD.pdf

QA offerings in the ITIL space
www.qa.com/media/572302/itil%20and%20service%20management.pdf

Information on the main community group supporting ITIL
www.itsmf.co.uk/



Perform – or else

If 'learning' is the means, then 'performance' is the ends, and performance management shows that Machiavelli was right – the ends justify the means, says Alan Bellinger.

As L&D professionals, what do you do? (A tip – think carefully before you answer.) If your answer involves 'learning' that means that you're focusing on the inputs rather than the outcomes; but if your response involves developing performance or building capability, then have three brownie points.

My point is this – it's messages based on outcomes (rather than inputs) that will resonate with management as we start to emerge from the recession.

Performance management

Performance management (PM) is generally implemented as part of a business intelligence (BI) initiative; the underlying BI platform provides the data that can then be used to provide the metrics that will highlight personal, process, group, departmental, corporate and business performance. Although some stand-alone PM initiatives have been undertaken, the lack of integration with operational systems usually means that such programmes have a short life cycle.

PM and skills

In a pre-PM environment, the level of performance of each individual was generally determined by the subjective judgement of each individual's supervisor. And there are three factors that have impacted this considerably over the last decade. Firstly, the span of control has increased to such an extent that no manager today can have a clear view on the performance of all their staff; secondly, the growth in specialist skills means that the manager lacks the competence to judge the specialist; and finally, more is achieved through collaboration, which means that each individual's contribution becomes somewhat blurred.

Of course there are some areas of the business where performance is highly visible. Take, for example, the position of a sales person. Their performance really is identifiable - they, their manager, and many people in the organisation know exactly how much they sold in the last month/ quarter/ year. Performance in IT is far less visible.

For most staff, it's difficult to assess their performance as their metrics are both more general and more complex. Which is why, in any PM system, it's critical to define the metrics effectively. L&D can only act as the catalyst in this definition process; it's the business unit management and their teams that are in the best place to define them.

PM metrics

Yet L&D can contribute to facilitate the process of defining the metrics to be used. The common starting point is to look at financial metrics as they're easily recognised and have a consistent meaning across the enterprise. But the problem with financial metrics is that they are a lagging indicator of performance; they tell you that you have a problem when everyone else in the organisation is already aware of it.

What is needed is the development of a cause-and-effect link between each of the key performance indicators that represent the different perspectives of what constitutes enterprise-wide performance. These indicators will generally fall into one of five categories: the customer (activities that impact on how the customer sees you), internal workflow (activities that involve the way in which one group interacts with the rest of the enterprise), social responsibility (activities that incorporate sustainability and give-back), learning and growth (is the organisation able to learn and adapt to new challenges?), and finally, the financial metrics, which extend all the way up to creating shareholder value.

When developing the metrics, make sure that you have them covered at each of the following three levels:

- Strategic metrics are high-level, simple and understandable metrics that are aimed primarily at shareholders or other stakeholders. The financial measures of net income, earnings-per-share and operating income growth are important, but so are measures such as market share, social responsibility and customer retention.
- Performance metrics are more granular targets that can be used by business unit managers to measure functional contributions to the strategy. Performance metrics need to be linked to strategic metrics; examples of IT performance metrics include service delivery, agility, resilience and responsiveness.
- Operational metrics typically identify granular activity related to individual or team performance, and help business unit managers run their parts of the business. They feed the performance metrics, and they should represent the most important drivers of the strategic measures.

One of the biggest dangers here is to can get into 'analysis-paralysis mode'. To avoid this focus on those metrics that will have the biggest impact on delivering your critical business objectives, especially if they relate to a leaner and meaner organisation.

The stove pipes

Another major problem that many organisations are experiencing with PM is that it's being rolled out on a rather piecemeal basis. This can take two forms: either some domains are ahead of others in the implementation, or different domains are using different approaches.

If different domains are taking different approaches, then L&D's should work with each of them. To synergise them, you'll need to develop an enterprise metrics framework to link the disparate PM applications in a consistent manner and provide a solid basis for enterprise-wide performance management.

Business process

It is important to embed the PM solution into the organisation's overall processes. Many stand-alone implementations will have been done outside the process framework, and unless the analytic functionality of PM is incorporated into the business processes then either, or both, the PM solution and the business processes will become dysfunctional. An example of where the lack of integration into the HR processes will become critical is if the PM framework isn't tightly coupled with appraisal, development planning and rewards processes. The litmus test for this is whether the HR processes and the PM processes work to the same level of granularity and taxonomy.



What is needed is the development of a cause-and-effect link between each of the key performance indicators

Skills gaps will limit PM

One of the major issues with PM systems is the question, which part of the organisation is taking the lead in their development and deployment? In many organisations they have been finance-led for the reasons we identified earlier - it's an easy target. But it's important that PM applications fit seamlessly into the overall BI strategy. If they don't, data consistency issues will arise and interpretation issues will explode.

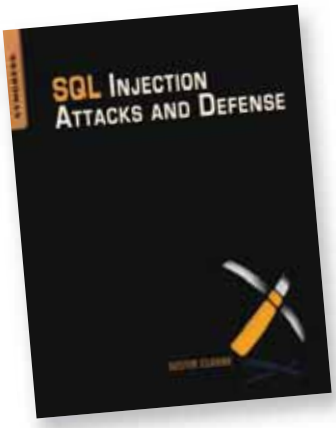
Alternatively it could be the IT department that takes the lead, but the concern here would be that few IT professionals know enough about the processes and the metrics involved to be able to identify the performance criteria that should apply. The final candidate for the roll-out responsibility is the L&D department; after all it's the logical place and it would overcome both the stove-pipe and the sub-optimisation issues that either of the other two approaches would create. But it could be a real challenge for L&D as project responsibility will involve a very broad skill set. The only solution is to create a sound collaboration environment and to structure the phasing of the project in such a way as to ensure that there are 'quick hits'.

The value of training

PM helps to provide outstanding metrics for assessing the value of training. If we can clearly identify the performance we expect – performance metrics – then we can evaluate the effectiveness of any learning intervention. So the whole area of measurement and assessment will need to be completely re-assessed – but let's save that one until the next issue.

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



SQL injection attacks and defense

Justin Clarke, 496pp

Syngress Press, £35.99

ISBN: 978-1-59749-424-3

Rating ★★★★☆

The book's first chapter gives an overview of how web applications and SQL injection work. I had assumed that the book was aimed at experienced security professionals and was becoming worried that the content of the rest of the book might be a little too basic after finishing this section.

These fears turned out to be unfounded and the second chapter progressed very rapidly from basic and simple everyday techniques for identifying SQL injection to more advanced techniques for identifying the databases involved and identifying blind SQL injection. This chapter had some very useful material on detecting SQL injection opportunities and performing blind SQL injection.

It was pleasing to see a chapter on performing code reviews for SQL injection as it seems to be much more common for books and papers to cover application testing rather than trapping the issues at an earlier stage where they can be fixed in a less expensive and less time consuming manner.

The chapters on exploiting SQL injection flaws provide a lot of useful material for the tester who will be familiar with the issues around convincing clients and management of the inherent dangers of SQL injection. Multiple techniques and situations are discussed and related to a number of different commercial databases.

Like the chapter on code reviews the section on countermeasures gives good coverage of an area that doesn't usually receive much attention. Ironically most network 'defence' books concentrate on how to attack a network rather than how to defend it.

This is understandable enough and an insight into the attackers' techniques and mindset can be very helpful in hardening systems, but of course the testing is always being performed in the interests of improving the systems.

Overall the book provides a very useful addition to the library of the professional penetration tester and while much of the material is available on the web there is a great benefit in having everything gathered together and presented in a logical order.

Reviewed by Nick Dunn



Software Engineering: A Practitioner's Approach

Roger Pressman, 928pp

McGraw-Hill, £47.99

ISBN: 978-0-071-26782-3

Rating ★★★★★

There are few books that manage to be as useful to students as to practitioners, but this is certainly one of them. The book is also supported by a comprehensive set of student, instructor and professional resources on a website.

The author uses a four-layered approach for software engineering: tools (automation or semi-automated support for the methods and process), methods (technical know-how), process (the glue that holds the layers together and the basis for management control of a software project) and quality.

The only criticism I would make about the content is that there is no mention of service oriented architecture (SOA).

A fictional project ('Safehome'), but with real situations and problems, is used throughout the book to illustrate the workings of a team as it builds a software product.

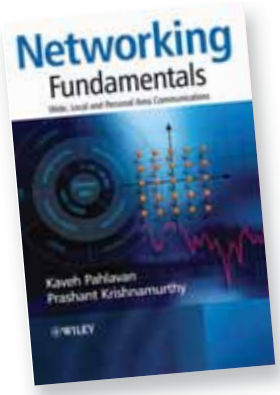
The book will be useful to anyone who is interested in, or involved in, software development. This includes project managers, business analysts, architects, designers, developers and testers, as well as students who are studying software engineering or related topics. The contents, index and references sections are extensive, and there is a useful 'Contents at a glance' section at the front. The first page of each chapter contains a 'Quick Look' section that asks and answers six key who? what?, why? and how? questions, and in the left hand margin there is a mini contents list with page numbers for key concepts in the chapter.

Each chapter is rounded off with about three pages of summary, 'Some problems and points to ponder' and a further reading and information sources section. Almost every page contains one or more quotes, key points, questions (which are answered in the text), advice and web references in the left hand margin.

In case you have a previous edition, and are wondering if it is worth buying this edition, it is claimed that it is more than a simple update.

All in all, this is a well laid-out, readable and highly navigable book, and with over 900 pages of useful content, it is excellent value. If you only own one book on software engineering, then this should be it.

Reviewed by
Kawal Banga, MBCS, CITP, CEng



Networking Fundamentals - Wide, Local and Personal Area Communication

Kaveh Pahlavan and Prashant Krishnamurphy, 656pp

Wiley, £45

ISBN: 978-0-470-99290-6

Rating ★★★★★

Networking Fundamentals addresses all the essential issues related to telecommunication. The material is widely supported with case studies, illustrations and tables. There are also a lot of formulas, examples and exercises with step-by-step solutions. Moreover, a companion website provides solution manuals together with some other resources for instructors.

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to local and wide area networking in a general sense, and covers the characteristics of media and physical layer transmission as well as raising the issue of coding and access methodology.

Part two is devoted to the internet and cellular networks. It also includes a detailed study of IEEE 802.3 ethernet and wireless local and personal area network standards.

I found the last part the most interesting since it deals with pragmatic network subjects like security or wireless geographical localisation and architecture of the network types.

The book also includes appendixes that contain information about text, image and video coding, introduction to decibels and to signal transmission.

Two further appendixes explain the meaning of the most popular acronyms and of the variables used in the numerous formulas of the book.

All in all, I would recommend the book to everyone, whether novices or expert, as it covers an incredible amount of knowledge on communication. The language is suitable for any reader and the presentation is excellent.

Reviewed by Jolanta Mizera-Pietraszko



Web 2.0 Architecture

James Governor, Dion Hinchcliffe, Duane Nickull, 271pp

O'Reilly, £26.99

ISBN: 978-0-59651-443-3

Rating ★★★★☆

This short book is aimed at web architects, technically-minded entrepreneurs and developers. It defines a web 2.0 architecture and identifies 12 architectural patterns that can be applied to new web developments.

The book divides into three main sections. The first section discusses and attempts to define the concept of web 2.0 by looking at Tim O'Reilly's original description of web 2.0. The authors then compare and contrast many websites, e.g. Britannica Online and Wikipedia, to refine their definition.

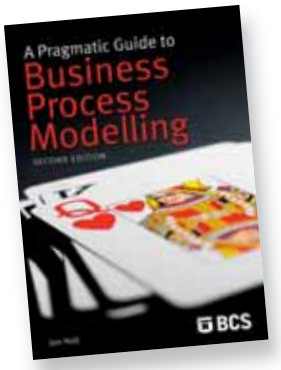
The second section describes architectural models and patterns as applied to web 2.0. From this the authors define a template for architectural patterns, which they then apply in the third section. This should be familiar material to most web architects.

The third section is the largest and most useful. It identifies and discusses 12 web 2.0 architectural patterns. Examples include 'software as a service', mashup and participation-collaboration. The descriptions of the patterns are thorough and include business aspects, but have a fairly abstract feel.

Sadly the authors don't carry on to discuss architectural attributes (e.g. security, performance or scaleability), views or implementations to any depth. This seems a shame as it would have been useful to give them a context.

The book is well produced and has an accessible style. It has plenty of diagrams, though no working code examples. Overall it does a good job of defining the web 2.0 architectural patterns. I would recommend it for someone developing a new concept for a website, though be aware of its narrow scope. Given that the third section is the most useful, the book is fairly expensive for its size, though retailer discounts should help. The book is available in paperback format, PDF and in the Safari library.

Reviewed by Simon Clarke, CEng FBCS CITP



A Pragmatic Guide to Business Modelling

Jon Holt, 220pp

BCS, £29.95

ISBN: 978-1-906124-12-0

Rating ★★★★☆

Opening this book, I expected a theoretical discussion on BPM followed by many practical case studies and examples, most likely, I supposed, using BPMN.

As it turns out I was not completely disappointed. My main issue with the book was that UML is used instead of BPMN. I was hoping to see more use of BPMN notation for process flows, as this is becoming an industry standard.

Nevertheless, the book, although brief, is very well organised and covers both the theory and gives one case study for process modelling in practice. Coverage includes a UML primer and a brief discussion of EA.

In summary, this book is a great first read, if you are new to this area, but it lacks the depth needed to really become an expert in this area.

Reviewed by Adrian M. Rossi, CEng, CITP

For further information on these books please contact the sales team at C.B.Learning.
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Inspiring, educational and informative: IITT conference a success

A packed audience of almost 200 training professionals attended the IITT's annual conference and exhibition on 23 and 24 September 2009, at the four star Royal Lancaster Hotel in Hyde Park, London.

The conference was a great success and focused on the use of technology to bring training into a modern style and understanding that there are ways to do this without breaking the budget – something of use to all in the current climate.

The event kicked off with an exhibition on day one, which included some of the biggest names in IT training, including Assima, BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Watsonia Publishing, Etc Venues, Pearson VUE, Global Knowledge, CompTIA, FDM Group, iSOFT Group Plc, itSMF Ltd, Howden Insurance Brokers, John Wiley & Sons, Learning Guide Solutions, Toolwire, Happy Computers, Accenture and The Training Room Hire Company.

The reception and networking evening event commenced with reception drinks followed by a four course networking dinner. The evening was rounded off by first special guest speaker, Dr Itiel Dror, who gave a fascinating insight into the way the human mind works and processes information. Audience participation kept everyone enthralled and amazed throughout – who can honestly say that they spotted the gorilla?

The second day encompassed the double streamed conference, beginning with keynote speaker Bob Mosher, who had flown in from the USA especially to attend this year's training conference. Discussing the issue of 'Thriving in Adversity – Doing More with Less', Mosher introduced delegates to the fundamental principles and practices of performance support and how to establish a holistic learning ecosystem fostering dynamic learning in the workplace.

Award for Bob Mosher

At the end of Bob Mosher's keynote the IITT took the opportunity to present him with the Colin Corder Award for services to IT training. This accolade was given at

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the 2006 IT Training Awards, but unfortunately Bob could not come to London due to a prior speaking engagement in the US. Chief Executive of the Institute of IT Training, Colin Steed, presented Bob with the award trophy.

Dena O'Gorman, IT Training Manager of Guys and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust, said of Mosher's speech: 'The opportunity to be inspired by Bob Mosher and see the vision he believes so passionately in, transformed into a workable and practical but fun learning solutions has energised the team.' She went on to say, 'The IITT conference was inspiring, educational and informative – for any IT training manager this is one investment you should make.'

Streams and workshops

Stream A, entitled 'Setting your Direction' and chaired by Alan Bellinger from IITT, saw speakers from Hilton, Xerox, Houses of Parliament and IBM L&D discussing career progress with the use of learning and development. Stream B, chaired by Vic Wiseman, was set to the theme of 'Technology and Delivery' and included speakers from Web Based Thinking, Lovells LLP and Cheshire ICT Service addressing the issue of learning technologies and how they can be incorporated to aid learning.

This year's conference also saw a programme of workshop sessions. Workshop leaders were Julia Emelogu, Genny Dixon (e-Skills UK), Donald Taylor (Non-Executive Director – IITT), and Frank Porter (Chief TPMA Assessor – IITT).

IITT Award winning trainers were also present at the conference. These were Denise Hudson-Lawson, Julie Wedgwood and Julia Emelogu, all Gold Awards winners at the IT Training Awards 2009.

The well renowned success of this event prompted BCS, now known as BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, to select the conference to announce the launch of its corporate re-brand. The launch was accompanied by a brand new logo, a re-designed website and a new corporate focus. This initiative comes as a result of significant research into the IT professions' requirements from a professional body.

'We're announcing a complete transformation of BCS into The Chartered Institute for IT, and we're going to change how we present ourselves, focusing on the chartered aspect,' explained BCS Chief Executive David Clarke.

The re-brand comes as a way to improve the quality and perception of the IT profession, and the need to refresh the look and feel of the brand, bringing BCS into a modern, up-to-date look with greater web capability. This encompasses a new online membership application based on the latest web 2.0 technologies, provision of research material and career support, including a revamped jobs site (BCSrecruitment.com). These new applications also aim to bridge a connection between academia and industry.

Niall Gavin, Group IT Training Manager, FirstGroup Plc, said of the event: 'The Annual ITT Trainers' Conference is one of my two major professional development commitments per year, as much for its conviviality as for its content. The venue - The Royal Lancaster Hotel in London - was, in my view, the best yet. The welcome reception/dinner was enhanced by Dr Dror's excellent and concise (a lesson in itself) talk, whilst the conference itself provided several key learning opportunities – Bob Mosher's keynote address was inspirational and Alan Bellinger's 'Demonstrating Value' talk and equation has now become part of my daily dialogue with my own internal customers at work. I'm thoroughly looking forward to next year!'

The event was sponsored by CompTIA, Assima and headline sponsor BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

IITT webcasts

The IITT are running monthly webcasts for members and non-members. The programme running up until March 2010 is as follows:

14 October 2009,10:30 a.m.
How to show e-learning can add value to your organisation. Presented by Lars Hyland, Brightwave

24 November 2009,10:30 a.m.
Essential shortcuts – mastering Office 2007 documents. Presented by Sheena Wyatt

18 December 2009,10:30 a.m.
Untying the ribbon – getting to grips with Office 2007. Presented by Sheena Wyatt

13 January 2010,10:30 a.m.
Maximising pivot tables in Excel 2007. Presented by Sheena Wyatt

10 February 2010,10:30 a.m.
Time management tips for Outlook 2007. Presented by Sheena Wyatt

18 March 2010,10:30 a.m.
Take control of your presentations – undoing bad habits. Presented by Sheena Wyatt

If you would like to attend a webcast, register at **www.iittconnect.co.uk** and follow the links from the 'Events' page.



Clive Shepherd

Live online learning is the bridge

Live online learning is hardly a new phenomenon, with a heritage extending to some 10 years or so. While its use is widespread (as much as 10 per cent of all formal training in the US is carried out this way), it can sometimes be held back by the multitude of labels by which it is described: remote instructor-led training, synchronous e-learning, virtual classroom training, and so on.

What we're talking about is the use of web conferencing tools such as Cisco Webex, Adobe Connect, Saba Centra, Microsoft LiveMeeting and Elluminate, as a medium for live, online learning events. It doesn't help that the same technology is also used for online presentations (a.k.a. webinars) and online business meetings. We're talking learning here; the sort of learning you would find in a bricks and mortar classroom, just online.

The efficiency arguments for live online learning are pretty obvious, particularly in the current climate: it's much cheaper in terms of travel and subsistence costs; participants waste less time travelling to a central location; it's more environmentally friendly; and it also encourages shorter training sessions.

You may be sceptical about whether online training can be as effective as its face-to-face counterpart. Well, the evidence seems to point to the fact that it's what you do in a classroom (physical or virtual) that's important, not whether your instructor is right there in front of you or appearing on your screen and through your headset.

You could even argue that live online training could be more effective. After all, sessions can be held as soon as the need arises, without having to wait for participants to gather in a central location; it's easier to attract the participation of experts who are geographically dispersed; and the ability to record sessions makes it possible for those who miss the live event to still gain some benefit.

When you move from instructor-led interventions in the classroom to self-paced content accessed online, you are making two major changes at once: you are shifting the medium from (face-to-face to online) and you are changing the method (from instructor-led to self-paced learning).

This could be inappropriate for several reasons: the contrast between old and new could be too much for employees to cope with at once; you have two change programmes to manage simultaneously – all the cultural issues associated with the change in method, and the technical issues related to the use of new technology; not to mention the possibility that your L&D professionals could be completely out-of-sorts with such a stark change in their skill-set.

So, it might be better to consider using live online learning as a bridge. This approach could look like this: first you introduce web conferencing as a way to top and tail what are substantially classroom-based interventions; you run a welcome session a week or two before the face-to-face event, and run a wrap-up session a few weeks after. You then gradually introduce more self-paced online activities between the welcome session and the event (some reading, videos, podcasts, web research, perhaps a questionnaire), and similarly between the event and the wrap-up. Ultimately, you could consider removing the face-to-face event altogether as the centrepiece, assuming it is not absolutely essential, and replacing this with more live online sessions, some structured e-learning, perhaps even some collaborative online activities using forums, wikis, etc.



It's what you do in a classroom that's important, not whether your instructor is right in front of you or appearing on your screen and through your headset

Shifting some of your training sessions online could save you a fortune, help you to spend more nights in your own bed and perhaps even save the planet; but all those savings are futile if your online events are not as great as those you conduct face-to-face. If you start out with the assumption that communicating online is second best to being face-to-face then your prophecy is guaranteed to come true. Live online events can be spectacularly successful, particularly for IT training, but that doesn't mean that you won't need some training beforehand, online or otherwise.

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