ITtraining

COLUMN How will public sector cuts affect L&D departments? **08**
CASE STUDY A look at an innovative IT Training Academy **14**
SKILLS Enterprise architects bridge the business – IT gap **23**
TOOLS The LMS of the future needs to be a real enabler **24**

Autumn 2010 **www.bcs.org/ittraining**



Weathering the storm

Our second round of top tables shows that e-learning companies have held their own in harsh economic conditions **p18**

GROWTH



Over 800 companies worldwide trust ThirdForce to develop their IT staff and organisation's IT skills. With more than 4000 courses and an exemplary pass rate, we offer you a money back guarantee.*

You set the goal and our solutions will help you get there with:

Business and Personal Skills: Increase organisational expertise in relevant areas

Desktop Skills: Train your employees to use the latest versions of Microsoft Office

IT Professional Skills and Certification: Prepare your IT employees to gain top industry certifications

And if that's not enough, for a limited period we are offering a 25% saving on your current training programme.**

* We promise to refund the cost of your IT Certification training if you fail your exam after completing the relevant ThirdForce course.
** We promise to provide you with a 25% saving on your current e-learning training. Offer ends 30/11/2010.

ThirdForce
e-learning that works

Getting a quote is easy:

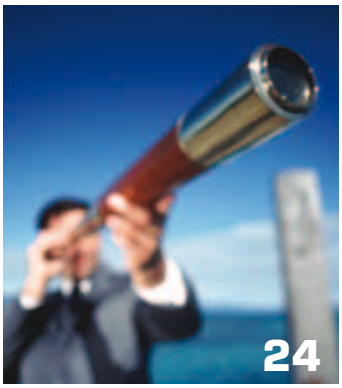
Call: 0800 626 328
Email: corporate@thirdforce.com
Visit: www.thirdforce.com/ittraining

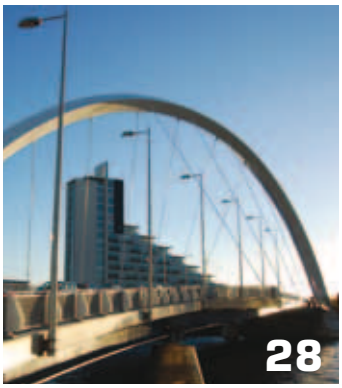
Contents











News

06 **Update**

Staff motivation A Europe-wide survey found that staff are highly motivated to learn, with many willing to make personal sacrifices to develop their skills.

Top IT employer The finance sector remains the top ranking sector in terms of IT job postings.

07 **Supplier briefs**

IT Training Awards 2011

IT Training Awards 2011 are now open for submission.

08 **BCS I&TTSG**

Dates for your diary

An I&TTSG event in Leeds, an online event on creating engaging learning and this year's AGM.

32 **Institute of IT Training**

Conference programme

A great line-up of seminars and workshops at the IITT National Conference and Exhibition.

Features

12 **A passion for technology**

IT Industry Awards finalist Valerie Maddock set up an online IT induction and information security course.

14 **From welfare to work**

An innovative IT Training Academy aims to pave the way for the long-term unemployed to get back into work.

18 **Weathering the storm**

This year's e-learning top tables show that the market has held up despite the harsh conditions over the last year.

24 **The future of LMS**

What does it take to turn your LMS into an enabler that meets your organisation's future needs?

26 **Seeing the bigger picture**

A job that bridges the gap between business and technology - the enterprise architect.

28 **Innovative collaboration**

The Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group joins councils together to make the most of technology in training.

Trainer to trainer

11 **Global training and blogs**

Training a global workforce and using blogs when learning.

Self study

30 **Book reviews**

Functional programming, managing projects in the face of uncertainty and establishing social networks.

Comment

08 **Alan Bellinger: cuts**

How will your L&D department fare when public spending cuts start to bite?

34 **Paul Jagger: CITP**

What to expect when requalifying as a Chartered IT Professional.

Editor's intro

Focus on e-learning



We're celebrating the second year of our e-learning top tables and it's interesting to see how things have developed over the last – admittedly very tough – year. While there are some changes in our tables, we also find many familiar faces and, as with the top IT training companies, most e-learning providers seem to have managed to weather the credit crunch storm of the last 18 months reasonably well. Turn to page 18 for Clive Shepherd's analysis of last year's market and some predictions of what will be hot in the year to come.

E-learning also features in two case studies in this issue – Whitebox Digital uses innovative e-learning to build bridges for the long-term unemployed to (re)enter the workforce, and Scottish councils and authorities in the Clyde Valley join together to make the most of technology in training.

With training being delivered online and a global workforce becoming more and more of a reality, trainers need to adjust and incorporate new things into their repertoire. Our trainer-to-trainer section gives practical advice on what to keep in mind when running a training course with people joining in from all over the world, and how you can make the most of blogs.

More e-learning is on the books in our interview with IT Industry Award finalist Valerie Maddock, who heads up the IT and user support at The Salvation Army. There she developed a mandatory e-learning induction and information security course. She talks about the achievements and challenges of introducing e-learning in the charity, and why she loves to work with technology that helps to make people's lives easier.

But we're not only looking at e-learning in this issue. With increasing talk about the new IT professionalism that must combine business and IT skills, we've decided to have a look at one of the quintessential roles that requires a big dose of both – the enterprise architect. Gary Flood outlines the job profile, career path and what certification is available.

And last, but not least, Alan Bellinger picks up on recent research conducted by IMC on learning management systems (LMS) and their use, which found that many organisations seem to have a love-hate relationship with their LMS. In his article Alan explains why LMS suppliers need to be trend-setting innovators and what it takes to turn the often not that well-liked tool into a real enabler.

Email jutta.mackwell@hq.bcs.org.uk

IT training

Acting Editor **Jutta Mackwell**
Managing Editor **Brian Runciman**
Typesetter **Amy Doyle**
Advertising **Joe Brooks**

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT
First Floor, Block D, North Star House,
North Star Avenue, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 1FA
Registered Charity No 292786
Editorial telephone +44 (0) 1793 417 512
Editorial email: jutta.mackwell@hq.bcs.org.uk
Advertising telephone +44 (0) 20 7657 1801
Advertising email: Joe.Brooks@tenalps.com
Subscriptions: **www.bcs.org/ittraining/subs**

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

IT Training magazine is published quarterly.
The opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of BCS or the organisations employing the authors.
© 2010 British Informatics Society Limited

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

Printed in the UK by St.Ives Plc, London.
www.bcs.org/ittraining

bcs The Chartered Institute for IT

haymarket recycle When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it. Institute of IT Training

80%

of the Top 10 IT training providers have achieved IITT Accreditation



Let us help you on your learning journey

Tel: 0845 006 8858 Email: accreditation@iitt.org.uk Web: www.thetrainingprofessional.com www.twitter.com/TheIITT

Update

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

High-value skills: SQL and C#



According to a survey by CWJobs, SQL is the skill that's most in demand in the first quarter of 2010, closely followed by C and C#, with over half the permanent jobs posted requesting these skills. C# has seen the biggest recent increase in demand, up by 12 per cent.

Inadequate staff skills are seen as the greatest threat to businesses' ability to capitalise on the recovery, a survey by Capita Learning & Development found. More than two-thirds of the 500 business leaders surveyed admitted that their under-trained workforce was struggling to cope with expanded job remits due to job cuts during the recession, and over 50 per cent claimed that their company was failing to deliver the training necessary for recovery. The majority also doubted that their L&D department's strategy and delivery were aligned to the company's operational strategy.

Yet employees themselves are **highly motivated to learn** and develop their skills, with most of them willing to make personal sacrifices to undertake training, a Europe-wide survey by learning and development provider Cegos found. Over 75 per cent of the 2,200 employees surveyed said that they would give up their free time to undertake training, and over half of them were prepared to part fund it.

The survey, which was carried out among employees from small, medium and large companies in the UK, France, Germany and Spain, showed that the potential to increase salary and fulfilling their personal and professional potential were the main motivators to develop skills. Half of those surveyed said they were highly motivated to undertake training to be better placed to find a job quickly in case of redundancy.

The survey also found that **emerging learning tools** are growing in popularity, with UK employees leading the way in the use of webinars (51 per cent), blogs (34 per cent), forums (33 per cent), podcasts (32 per cent) and wikis (31 per cent). The UK is also on top of the list with blended learning (41 per cent versus 31 per cent average) and e-learning (56 per cent).

The majority of companies, however, are still not examining the impact of training on their business, though UK managers are twice as likely to carry out a post-training follow-up, with 31 per cent as compared to the European average of 17 per cent. UK employers also scored highest in terms of **understanding training needs** and helping staff to define a clear training path to develop their skills and achieve their goals.

IT is at the heart of recovery plans for the majority of businesses coming out of recession, a survey of UK IT managers by Esteem Systems found. Over 60 per cent of

businesses and organisations said they will be **investing in IT** to help drive business forward. However, only three per cent of businesses plan to replace IT staff to fill the skills gap left by the recession, showing that they are still cautious about investing in recruitment. Two thirds identified managed services as the preferred way to deliver recovery in IT.

Despite the large dip in the financial services sector over the last year, it has remained the **top ranking sector** in terms of IT job postings since 2006. The last quarter showed an increase of 23 per cent in the number in this sector, IT jobs specialist CWJobs found. This is also reflected in research conducted by ReThink Recruitment, which found that two-thirds of all technology jobs after the credit crunch are concentrated in London and the South East of the UK and mainly in the financial services industry. According to Director Michael Bennett, this is due to banks kick-starting projects that were stalled during the recession and finding themselves understaffed.

The latest Technology Demand and Supply Report, published by the Recruitment & Employment Confederation (REC) Technology Sector Group, also stated that **demand and supply for IT labour and skills** has increased for another quarter, with the ratio between demand and supply now standing at 1.5 potential applications per job. According to the report there are now 60,000 unemployed IT professionals and 68,000 employed jobseekers competing for 86,000 vacancies. Areas that are difficult to recruit for are systems developers, architects, .NET and SQL server.

Supplier briefs

Parity Training in administration

Parity Training, a previous subsidiary of IT solutions firm Parity Group, went into administration in June. The business was sold to ECS Ltd in January 2009. There is no trading relationship between Parity Training and its former owners Parity Group.

Tony Read CEO at National Skills Academy

E-skills UK announced Tony Read, a former Nortel CIO, as the new CEO at the National Skills Academy for IT. Read is due to take up the position on 9 August. He has worked in IT and telecommunications for 25 years, 12 of them as CIO and IT Vice President.

The National Skills Academy for IT aims to develop a national register of IT professionals that helps staff develop and assess their skills. The intention is for employers to manage the skills of their IT staff and ensure the UK has world-class IT skills.

AOGEA recognises Microsoft Certified Architects

Following Microsoft's discontinuation of the Microsoft Certified Architect (MCA) Solutions and Infrastructure certifications, the Association of Open Group Enterprise Architects (AOGEA) now recognises both certifications alongside The Open Group's certification programmes, ITAC and TOGAF, and the Federated Enterprise Certification programme.

All individuals holding either certification are eligible for a three-year membership in the AOGEA. This offer, which is funded by Microsoft, is valid until 31 December 2010.

OU becomes certified Microsoft IT Academy

The Open University is now a certified Microsoft IT Academy. The first course in the OU's Microsoft IT Academy programme, *TM128 Microsoft server technologies*, launches in October 2010. The course, designed by the OU, covers both the fundamentals of computer networks and the specifics of how Windows server technologies can be used in practice. Registration is now open for the 30-credit Level 1 module.

Microsoft server technologies will form part of the requirements for both Microsoft Certified System Engineer (MCSE) and Microsoft Certified System Administrator (MCSA) programmes, and forms part of the pathway to MCITP (Microsoft Certified IT Professional) certification. The course can also be counted towards an Open University modular degree. The Open University is accredited with the IITT for its e-learning platform and for its course content.

Instant feedback with online exams

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, is offering candidates the chance to take examinations online through a number of the Institute's accredited training providers. The results can be delivered to a candidate's screen within moments of the examinations finishing, along with a follow-up email with details of performance.

BCS ITIL V3 Foundation and the BCS Foundation Certificate in Green IT are among the first examinations from the Institute to be offered in this way. The Institute is also making all other multiple choice-based examinations available via the online system.

The system, which relies on an internet connection, can be used at an accredited training provider's offices, an in-house training environment, or at a corporate venue.

Harbrook Training now Innovise ESM Training

Harbrook Training has changed its name to Innovise ESM Training and launched a new training-specific ecommerce website as part of the acquisition by Innovise.

Innovise ESM Training is now part of Innovise and sits in the Enterprise Service Management (ESM) division of the Innovise Group. Innovise ESM Training has been formed from the training divisions of three recently merged organisations: Harbrook, Abilitec and Infrasolve.

IT Training Awards 2011 open for submissions

The Institute of IT Training is now accepting award submissions for the annual IT Training Awards, which will take place on 3 February 2011 at the Dorchester Hotel, Park Lane, London.

Confirmed sponsors include Prometric, BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT, Ricoh Europe, 2e2 Training and Saffron Interactive.



Alan Bellinger

Public sector cuts

If you work in the public sector there are two possible scenarios that you are facing. Scenario 1 is 'we can easily delay the training we had planned, and therefore L&D can take a disproportionate share of the cuts'. Scenario 2 is 'with 600,000 public sector jobs going, the need to work smarter has never been more important – and L&D is critical to working smarter.'

Do you empathise with either of these scenarios? You'll probably be with the first group if you have a 'training mindset'; and with the second if you have a 'performance mindset' (see Charles Jennings's blog **http://charles-jennings.blogspot.com/2010/04/five-barriers-to-effective-learning-in.html**).

L&D needs to be able to point to situations in which they can add significant value by enabling people to work smarter; but that's not easy. Whether you regard yourself as a trainer or a performance consultant doesn't matter – you will always be able to demonstrate that you can create value. That's because you will always be able to show that you can reduce the lead time to competences.

It is all about establishing the value of working smarter before the learning intervention. There are two parts to the process; the first is to establish the benefit (either a performance benefit or risk mitigation benefit), and the second is to monetarise that benefit.

The interesting point about this value theory is that it is all based on assumptions; as we calculate the value before the intervention, no-one can know the exact metrics. So the first question is 'what is the performance benefit from working smarter?' You're now looking for a percentage – say 10 per cent. And here's the key point: it's generally the beneficiary of smarter working who makes this prediction and this gets them engaged in the process.

To monetarise the benefit, we need to make an assumption, and that is that the value-add that an individual (or group of individuals) creates within a given period is equal to the cost of employing them over that period.

So let's demonstrate this with an example – a team of social workers. Let's assume that, by changing the workflow and providing them with incremental skills, we are able to increase their performance by 20 per cent. We'll further assume that there are four social workers in the team, their gross salaries add up to £200K, and that salary costs represent 67 per cent of the total budget.

We now know that this team creates an annual value-add of £300K and that by enabling them to work smarter we can create a value of £60K. So if the learning intervention cost £15K we have created a value of 4:1 within just one year! 40 per cent cuts? L&D is a beneficiary, not a victim! (If you want to see the maths, go to my column on **www.bcs.org/ittraining**).

BCS Information & Technology Training Specialist Group

Roadshow, online event and AGM

Roadshow

At the beginning of June, Paul Jagger of IBM and Paul Turner of BIS Skills repeated their very popular event, held jointly with the Business Change Special Interest Group, 'Making Change Work Through Engaging Users'.

The event explores the fundamental importance of learning in enabling organisational change to succeed, and how IT-enabled change programmes often focus on implementing new processes, applications and infrastructure but leave the needs of the human element to the last minute, or – worse – largely ignore those needs. Both speakers give examples from their own experience and identify techniques to avoid potential pitfalls.

Following the popularity of the event and many requests for events to be held outside London, Paul Turner and Paul Jagger have kindly agreed to take this event 'on the road' to Leeds on 22 September, giving members living outside the South East an opportunity to come to an I&TTSG group event. As this is going to be a very popular event, watch the website for details and sign up quickly.

Online event

Our next online event will take place on 29 September, when an award-winning trainer will share their secrets for creating and delivering effective and engaging IT training. This is sure to be an absorbing and informative session, which training practitioners from a variety of areas will enjoy. As before, additional information about the event and details of how to book can be found on the website.

AGM

Looking ahead to other plans for the autumn, the I&TTSG Annual General Meeting will be held on 13 October in London.

As well as the formal part of the evening, there will be our first-ever Pecha Kucha competition. Never encountered Pecha Kucha before? It's a fast-moving presentation where each presenter is allowed just 20 slides, each shown for 20 seconds, to explain their ideas on a particular topic.

Further details for this event are still under wraps but watch the website for details ... and look out for information about the prize on offer for the winner!

In brief: I&TTSG dates for your diary

22 September	'Making change work through engaging users', Leeds
29 September	'Secrets of an IT trainer', online event
13 October	Annual General Meeting, BCS London

Check our website for updates **www.bcs.org/ittsg/events**

bcs
The Chartered Institute for IT

Enabling the information society

OpportunITy

BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT.

Discover how becoming a BCS member can open up the opportunities, support and training you need to succeed in IT.

Visit **www.bcs.org/opportunity**

Knowledge | Recognition | Networking

Good HR makes good business

SAVE 15%*



SUBSCRIBE TODAY FOR ONLY £75.65*

Subscribe to Human Resources

It is people that determine an organisation's competitive advantage. A subscription to *HR* magazine will equip you with the latest issues in HR & people management, helping you make the most of your staff and your business.

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

Subscribing is easy

08451 55 73 55 and quote HRMAG10

subscriptions@haymarket.com

www.haysubs.com/hrmag10

Human Resources

**Direct Debit payment option – £75.65. Saving 15% against the annual cover price of £89.00*

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

Order details

HRMAG10

Yes, I would like a subscription for:

- ☐ **£75.65** Direct Debit (saving 15% on 1 year rate)
- ☐ **£89.00** Standard 1 year rate
- ☐ **£160.20** Standard 2 year rate

Your details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Initials: Surname:

Job Title:

Company:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel: Fax:

Email:

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

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

☐ **Yes I would like to receive carefully screened and work-related emails from third parties**

☐ Please tick here if you do not want to receive work-related direct mail from carefully selected third parties

☐ Please tick here if you do not want to receive relevant work-related information by telephone from carefully selected third parties

Please choose one of these three options

Direct Debit

☐ I would like to pay by Direct Debit for £_____

Bank/Building Society account number

Branch Sort Code

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society

Address

Reference Number – For office use only

Cheque

☐ I enclose a cheque for £_____ made payable to Haymarket Publishing Services Ltd

Credit/Debit card

☐ Please charge my credit/debit card for £_____

VISA/Mastercard/Maestro/Other (delete as applicable)

Card number

Expiry Date / Issue No (Maestro only)

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

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

Please return coupon to: Haymarket Subscriptions, FREEPOST SEA10115, Southall, UB1 2WH

08451 55 73 55 (quote HRMAG10) subscriptions@haymarket.com



On the ground

How do you best tailor your training to a global workforce?



When delivering learning to a global workforce, the most obvious things to consider are language and culture differences, but just as important is getting the timing right. What may be a convenient time in the UK may be a very inconvenient time elsewhere in the world. Try using some of the online tools such as the World Clock meeting planner on **www.timeanddate.com** or **www.worldtimeserver.com** to find a time that is suitable for as many participants as possible. This may mean that you have to be more flexible in order to meet the needs of the majority of your learners.

Avoid colloquialisms as well as references to local places unless you are very clear that everyone knows what is being referred to - for example, while an internal audience will know that 'Chesterfield' is the recognised name of your UK headquarters it might not mean anything to those outside the UK.

As with so many other types of training, avoid forcing humour into your training because it usually falls flat on a UK audience let alone trying to find an appropriate level for an international one. That is not to say that humour should be avoided, it should just fall out of the situation rather than being forced into it.

Enhance training with lots of visuals that go beyond language to be understood. A great example of this (albeit simplistic) is the HSE's Napo series of videos designed to train Health and Safety messages using visuals and sound (rather than language). These videos have been produced for a number of countries so it is important that the messages are understood across the various different languages and cultures. **www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/books/napo/index.htm**

Jooli Atkins, Matrix FortyTwo

Next issue

How to best communicate system change before a rollout or upgrade.

Breaking developments

How can you effectively integrate and use blogs in learning?



Over the last 10 to 15 years there has been a move in the educational arena towards reflective practice, the theory being that taking in training passively or even actively is not enough. You need to reflect upon the experience and consider how you can apply it to your own situation to improve performance.

It's not really a new thing, however educationalists are now taking things a step further with internet-based tools in the form of personal learning systems, eportfolios and blogs.

Individuals can easily set up their own blogging sites and record and reflect upon their activities. The process of recording and reflecting upon the training in a blog in itself will help reinforce the learning.

Group or collaborative blogs that run for sometime after initial training or during a longer term programme enable trainees to share experiences from the real world.

When done well and with the support of a trainer, these collaborative blogs become a trading ground for experiences with trainees contributing their experiences and responding how they would deal with the situations others find themselves in.

One word of warning; public blogging sites may be inappropriate for some activity, particularly if people are reporting their real world experiences. It may be wise to check that the blogs can be kept private and are only accessible to appropriate people and are manageable by the trainer. Giving trainees freedom to choose a system can result in chaos for the trainer.

Colin Dalziel, Pebble Learning

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: jutta.mackwell@hq.bcs.org.uk

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

Next issue

How to maximise the benefits and effectiveness of floorwalking.

A passion for technology

Valerie Maddock, Head of IT Learning and User Support at The Salvation Army UK Territory and IT Industry Award Finalist 2009, spoke to Jutta Mackwell about her job and how she introduced e-learning to train staff of one of the UK's largest providers of social care.



So what is your job about?
My specific responsibilities are IT learning and user support. I've got a team of six people in user support and two in IT learning. I'm also involved in IT strategy, policy and procedures. It's a very diverse role really. It's also quite unusual: when I talk to other charities, learning is usually part of HR and then there's IT and user support. Having both in one role is not very common.

We don't have an IT department as such; it's called the Strategic Information Department. We're only around 20 people, but we look after all our staff in the UK and Ireland - around 5,000 users.

I'm not a great believer in fast-track learning
Valerie Maddock

How did you get to where you are now?
I started in computing in 1970 – it was very different then, with big machines and punch cards! I worked with computer systems as a senior statistical assistant at Leeds University. I then became a computer officer, which wasn't just about analysing medical research data, but also about teaching students about medical statistics. This is really how I got into support and teaching.

I originally wanted to be a scientist and studied applied biology on a part-time basis. I then got into medical statistics and eventually moved from science to IT and information management. I started working with The Salvation Army 15 years ago as a training consultant.

What qualifications do you have?
I have a degree in computer science, and later did a Postgraduate Certificate of Education at the University of Greenwich, both on a part-time basis. The latter gave me the confidence to know that I was doing things right in my approach to teaching IT.

After that I took on e-learning and did a Certificate of Online Training Design and Development Skills at IITT, a Certificate in E-learning Management Skills and a Diploma in E-learning. In 2008 I completed an MA in Education, specialising in e-learning, again at the University of Greenwich.

It's been really good to do the courses part-time as it meant I could apply everything straight away. I'm not a great believer in fast-track learning – if you do something over years, you can take it back into your environment and have a much richer learning experience. I'm definitely a long-term learner.

Tell me a bit more about your interest in e-learning.
I'm very passionate about e-learning. Whenever technology

comes up with something that reaches people I'm interested, and I love to take any opportunity to try out something that will make a difference.

For example, we found that people weren't able to get their head round mail merging and it's quite a difficult thing to describe. So we created a seven-minute demo with Adobe Captivate that went through the various steps, and people were surprised that it was really quick and easy to do. It was hugely popular.

In the early stages of my time here, there was no e-learning, everything was done face-to-face, which was very time- and resource-intensive as we have a large user base. So I tried out e-learning with them. The first time it wasn't terribly successful. I think many people found it daunting and very different to turning up at a classroom. They weren't ready for independent learning. I think the lack of marketing didn't help.

So how did you make it work?

We've now moved to just-in-time material rather than hours and hours of online learning that doesn't fit and we also create our own online training. I developed a SharePoint site that the whole organisation can access. It's full of learning resources, from just a PDF explaining how to do something to short flash-based tutorials.

We try to manage everything from headquarters through remote assistance, by email or by phone. However it's not e-learning or nothing – we will always also facilitate and provide support, and we still do classroom-based training.

We're looking at delivering these courses online, especially as we're short of resources in terms of people, and we now have a network that will allow us to do that.

For some time we have been delivering 45-minute Quick Byte seminars on a monthly basis, on an IT-specific topic that will make a difference, and we hope to deliver these in a webinar format before too long.

You also developed an IT induction and information security course...

One of the reasons for this was that we have a lot of new users all over the UK and Ireland, but early on we couldn't insist on IT induction training being mandatory as it was done face-to-face. There were big inconsistencies of delivery, and there were also the logistics and the cost.

I was getting a wee bit frustrated with it, to be honest. I thought there must be a better way of doing this. So I started putting together an online course.

The system was built so that our user support team could put in a process that meant whenever a new user applied for an account, they would automatically get access to the IT induction course, and only once completed would they get access to the network – basically a 'walled garden approach'.

And out of this came a book on IT induction and information security.

Yes, that's right. It really came about after I was featured in an article about starters and leavers in the Info Security magazine. IT Governance Publishing read this article and contacted me about writing a pocket guide on IT induction.

All the external positive feedback it got has also helped to get approval to do version 2 of the IT Induction course – it needs updating, to make it look a lot more modern, more intuitive and professional, really to give it a sexier look and feel and meet the needs of our growing and diverse user base.

Then you were nominated for the BCS Industry Awards 2009...

I was absolutely thrilled – getting into the Top 10 to me felt almost like winning the award. To start with, I thought 'what have I done that's worth an award?' But then I thought 'why not?' So I applied, and was invited for an interview. I was terrified at first, but it was actually great fun. And then I found out that I'd made it into the Top 10.

The whole publicity was also great for our organisation – it helped to take the blinkers off and look at what we actually do. It meant I could say to others 'there's no reason why you shouldn't be doing something like this'. It was a very positive experience, not just for me, but for the whole department. It makes you realise that you've got something to share.



Whenever technology comes up with something that reaches people, I'm interested

Valerie Maddock

So what's the next step?

Personally, I'd actually like to learn a musical instrument. I spent all my time on my career, but have always wanted to learn to play the saxophone so I've decided to do that. It'll be the first hobby in my life! Well, apart from learning to fly when I was younger. That was great – it certainly puts things into perspective when your 3,000 feet up, helping you to see the bigger picture.

Valerie Maddock's career timeline

1994 - Present
IT Training Consultant/Head of IT Learning & User Support, The Salvation Army, London

1990 - 1994
IT Training & Support Manager, Leeds Teaching Hospitals

1975 - 1990
Senior Statistical Assistant/ Computer Officer, Leeds University

1973 - 1975
Medical Physics Technician, Leeds Teaching Hospitals

1970 - 1973
Physics Technician, Leeds University

Professional memberships

1993 Member of the British Computer Society (MBCS)
2000 Member of the Institute of IT Training (MIITT)
2004 Chartered IT Professional (CITP)

From welfare to work



A new IT Training Academy, set up by Whitebox Digital, aims to provide those in long-term unemployment with the necessary IT skills to (re)join the workforce. Jutta Mackwell spoke to founder David Barker and his colleague Debra Carter about the new approach to training and tackling unemployment.

On first sight Whitebox Digital, a full service digital agency, might look like any other IT service company. Yet its vision goes way beyond providing next generation IT solutions to third sector organisations. In February this year, it launched its apprenticeship programme for NEETs – those not in education, employment and training. Its aim is to provide those who are struggling to (re)enter the job market because of long-term unemployment, criminal records, homelessness or dropping out of school with invaluable professional and IT skills.

Whitebox Digital, an enterprise that came second in this year's South East Job Centre Plus 'Employer of the Year Award', is made up of two parts – its IT business and its accredited Microsoft Advanced IT Training Academy, meaning it can provide in-house all the training, exams and certification to help its trainees join the workforce.

Having to study through remote e-learning also says 'we trust you, you can do it'

David Barker, Whitebox Digital

Using e-learning

Training for the Whitebox's current 129 apprentices is delivered via a combination of remote e-learning (about three to four days a week) and workplace learning (usually one day a week), and trainees receive regular phone, webinar and one-to-one support – quite an achievement considering the core staff at Whitebox numbers only 13. The reasons for this focus on e-learning are manifold. Whitebox founder David Barker explains: 'Having to study and learn through remote e-learning passes the responsibility to get the work done on to the trainees. It also says "we trust you, you can do it". Also, some of our trainees may have rebelled against the authoritative approach. E-learning allows them to move at their own pace.'

E-learning also enables accessibility – in terms of disabilities, and also in terms of geographical location. 'It ensures that people who are disabled and would have problems accessing some of the workspaces are not excluded from the programme', says Debra Carter, whose role spans HR and community relations. Additionally, remote e-learning and the ability to take the exams in-house allow Whitebox to start training schemes all over the UK. 'We choose the locations based on need,' says David. 'At the moment we've got trainees in Newcastle, Worcester, London, Guildford and Eastbourne. In Eastbourne we've got our own office space and trainees come in about three days a week and work alongside the team. We see them as employees who are doing intensive training.'

Microsoft e-learning material and elements such as Element K's virtual environments allow the trainees to, for example, take apart computers, interact and chat with each other and other Whitebox staff. The fact that they only need a laptop or a PC and broadband access to work with

cutting-edge technology is for many of them a new experience. One of the current trainees, Sandra Ellis, says, 'I'm loving learning about next generation IT, it is amazing. Before I got this apprenticeship I had done a couple of basic IT courses, but this is very different – I'm learning about technology I never knew existed!'

Starting off

The idea for Whitebox Digital was born about five years ago, when David decided to give up his job, sell his house and use the money to take a year out to work with rough sleepers, long-term unemployed and offenders in order to get an understanding of why they couldn't get out of the situations they found themselves in. 'I was a NEET myself, and it took me a very long time to find an apprenticeship,' he explains. 'Finally a business took me on, not so much because of my skills, but because of my attitude. About five years ago, after having co-founded one of the UK's first internet marketing companies and having worked with large technology companies, I realised the opportunity that'd been given to me then and that there are many out there who get left behind as the odds are stacked against them.'

What David found while spending time with people was that one of their most common denominators was that they couldn't get work because they didn't have the necessary skills. 'Charities and government are both pushing for these people to get into work, but they just lack the skills. Rather than just offer them training courses, it's important to create a "tunnel" from welfare to work,' he explains. 'If we create jobs, we can take on people.'

After his year of research, David had come up with a prototype, but because the concept was based on cloud computing and virtualisation (which, at that time, was still very much in its fledgling stages), he struggled to get funding. 'I almost ended up homeless myself – I'd spent all my money on the research and the prototype,' he recounts.

So David went back into the commercial sector, working with companies such as L'Oréal, Intel and Telegraph for three years to earn the money needed to set up the project. During that time, he began putting the pieces for his idea in place. He began with the launch of the website element of Whitebox Digital, then launched the IT company and finally, in February 2010, saw the first group of apprentices enter the IT Academy. 'It was great because the website part was functioning well by the time we set up the academy,' he explains.

Recruitment and training

True to David's own experience, trainees are not chosen primarily on skills, but on attitude. 'We work with job centres and charities,' explains Debra. 'Usually we have a one-hour interview with the potential candidates, to get to know them and their attitude. If they are up for learning and enthusiastic, we will take them on. It's great to have the mix of people from different backgrounds and age groups.'

This means that for some of the trainees, the programme starts with basic literacy and numeracy or English language courses. Also, the training is not only about IT skills, but equally about professional skills and learning how to be part of a workforce. 'Initially we have to manage the trainees, but after two months or so, when we've had time to assess their strengths, we, for example, select a coordinator, a project manager or an implementer and they then have to support a group of trainees,' David explains. 'By the end they should all have an additional job skill in their profile. It's not about being in authority over the others – it's more like a football team, working together and helping to focus on their tasks.'

Trainees start out with the Digital Literacy Certificate, followed by an exam to become a Microsoft Certified Application Specialist. The next stage is taking the CompTIA Strata Certificate exam, allowing them to choose between the business and the IT technician route. The business route means that trainees will become certified experts in Microsoft Office and also receive training in project management, client services and sales. The IT technician route, in contrast, continues with CompTIA A+ and CompTIA Network+ and finishes with an exam to become a Microsoft Certified Desktop Support Technician.



Rather than just offer training courses, it's important to create a 'tunnel' from welfare to work

David Barker, Whitebox Digital

While some people may argue about the value of certification, for the trainees to be able to put the Microsoft logo on their CVs makes a big difference, as Debra points out. 'It proves they have the in-depth skills rather than just knowing about it on a superficial level,' agrees David. Certifications can help them distinguish themselves in the job market and, as a by-product, it also certainly helps to boost their self-confidence.

Job prospects

In addition to the day-to-day work and training, the trainees also spend one week every month working in the community: from serving soup to collecting litter to helping staff charity events. Coordinators from among the trainees are responsible for liaising with charities and getting their groups organised to help at the various events. 'We do this as we want to encourage apprentices to look back as they move forward in their career and give a helping hand to others in their community. It's also a great way to impact the local community positively, and we get to know each other throughout the weeks really well,' says Debra. 'Some trainees actually end up joining these charities as permanent staff.'

As Whitebox Digital grows, the company is hoping to integrate more trainees into the company. While it aims to take on as many of their trainees as permanent staff

as possible, it cannot offer a place to all of them. 'We'll not be able to take them all in, but as the apprenticeship is based on a 25-hour week, people can take on part-time jobs during the training, and we'll continue with their training even if they get a full-time job,' explains David. 'We also work with recruitment agencies. The difference for them now is that they've not only got technical skills but more importantly references – we can comment on their personality, their time-keeping and so on. This makes it a lot easier for them to get a job.'

Trainee Darren Chuter says that his employment at Whitebox has helped him in many ways regarding his life. 'I have been employed at Whitebox Digital as a trainee desktop technician for three months now and I find the help they offer is high above the standard you would normally expect,' he says. 'The remarkable thing about being an employee at Whitebox is that the staff, including trainees,



For the trainees, to be able to put the Microsoft logo on their CVs makes a big difference

Debra Carter, Whitebox Digital

receive regular updates on the what is happening within the company. The helps everyone to understand the role they need to undertake and the goals ahead. I have also received a higher awareness of what is actually going on out in the world within charities, and this makes me value my life more.'

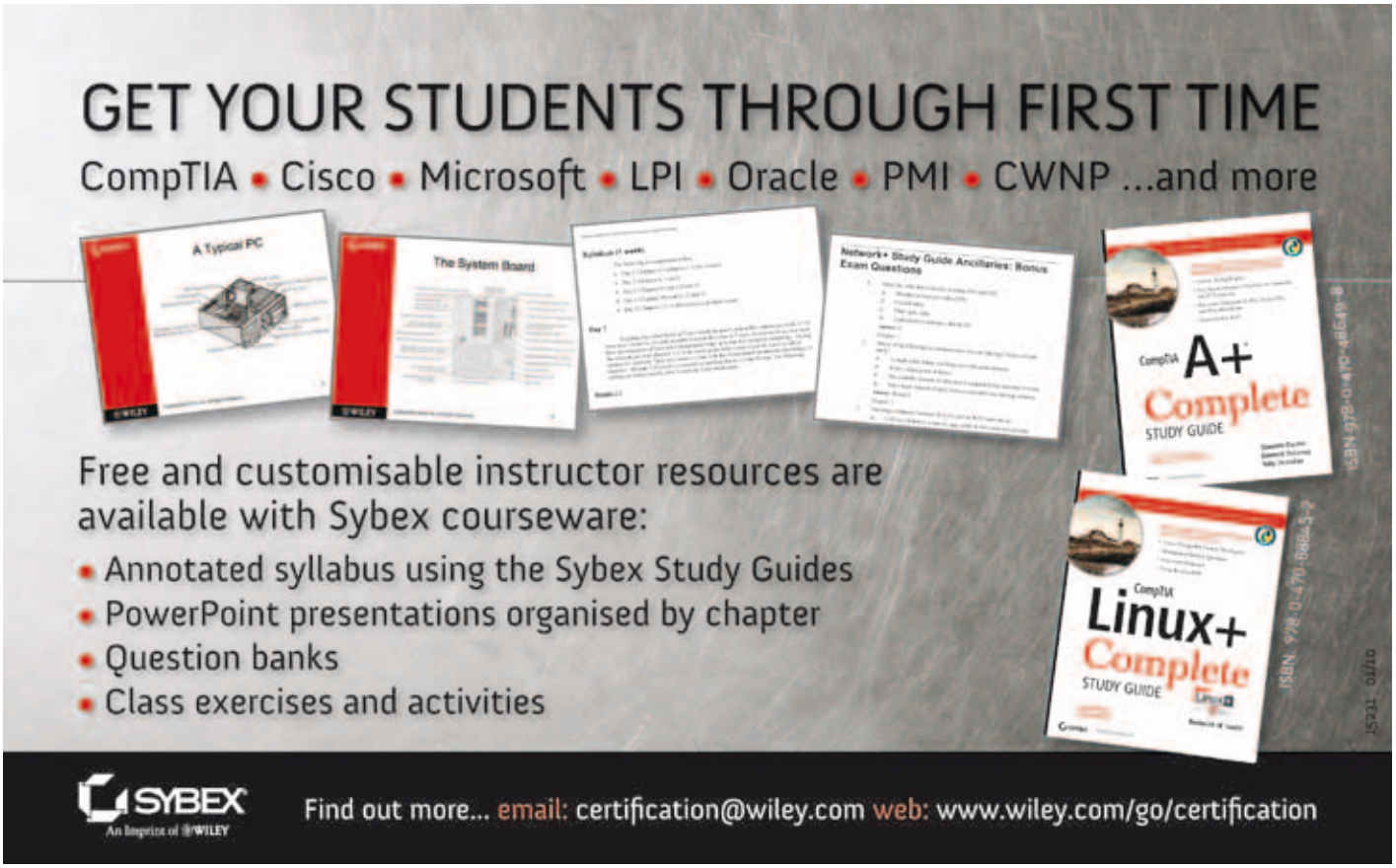
Looking ahead

Whitebox Digital is now looking to expand its training programme to places such as Glasgow and Manchester and also to more rural places that struggle with long-term unemployment. 'It's great to have the technology and infrastructure in place to expand quickly and reach remote areas,' says David.

While some trainees have taken the first exam after only a couple of weeks, David and his team realise that everyone is different and working through certifications such as CompTIA A+ and Network+ might require more time. Therefore, the company has committed to train their apprentices for a year – double the six months' support through the government's Future Jobs Fund.

The Future Jobs Fund was set up to tackle youth unemployment, giving employers a grant to offer young people a job for six months. 'We didn't get direct funding from this, but got a contract from 3SC, who won a contract from the government to create 3,000 jobs. They gave us the contract for our jobs,' explains David.

With the new government, this source of funding has now been slashed, but David and his team are not too worried about this development. 'We've set up a template and everything is now in place,' says Debra. 'The Future Jobs Fund has given us an amazing opportunity and we've now got something to offer wherever the new government is going.' David agrees: 'From our perspective, it has given us an "innovation budget". Now we can build on that.'



WELCOME TO THE TOP

Each issue of mt gives business leaders the inspiration they need to get to the top and stay there.



Subscribe today and get access to:

- The mt interview will bring you closer to leading management professionals
- The latest success stories and top management tips
- Interesting and topical features focused on leaders of the business world
- Practical advice from expert contributors on how to manage and progress your career
- Regulars include Brainfood, In my opinion, The mt Diary

Subscribing is easy:

1 Call: **08451 55 73 55** and quote **mtad10**

2 Email: **subscriptions@haymarket.com**

3 Online: **www.haysubs.com/mtad10**

management today — **not just business as usual**

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

Order details

MTAD10

Yes, I would like a subscription for:

- ☐ **£67.15** Direct Debit (saving 15% on 1 year rate)
- ☐ **£79.00** Standard 1 year rate
- ☐ **£142.20** Standard 2 year rate

Your details

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms Initials: Surname:

Job Title:

Company:

Address:

Postcode:

Tel: Fax:

Email:

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

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

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

Please choose one of these three options

Direct Debit

☐ I would like to pay by Direct Debit for £ _____

DIRECT Debit

Bank/Building Society account number

☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Branch Sort Code

☐☐☐☐☐☐

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

To: The Manager Bank/Building Society

Address

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

Cheque

☐ I enclose a cheque for £ _____ made payable to Haymarket Publishing Services Ltd

Credit/Debit card

☐ Please charge my credit/debit card for £ _____

VISA/Mastercard/Maestro/Other (delete as applicable)

Card number ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Expiry Date ☐☐/☐☐ Issue No ☐☐ (Maestro only)

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

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

Please return coupon to: Haymarket Subscriptions, FREEPOST SEA10115, Southall, UB1 2WH

Weathering the storm



It's the second year of our e-learning top tables, and Clive Shepherd takes a look at how the market has fared over the last year and ventures a look at what may be around the corner.

In this second year of *IT Training*'s survey of e-learning companies, we have the great advantage of being able to make comparisons. How have particular companies fared in relation to their competitors and the market overall? In particular, how has e-learning benefited or suffered as a result of the harsh economic conditions?

The figures we report here are, by and large, for calendar year 2009, just when the fallout was at its worst from the crisis of October 2008, at least as far as the private sector was concerned. Forecasts were that many projects would be put on hold, but that e-learning could be a beneficiary overall as organisations looked to keep their learning and development (L&D) programmes going within much lower budgets. Let's see what happened.

Bespoke content developers

In this category we look at those companies that design and develop tailored e-learning content to meet the particular customer requirements. This is a long-standing market, stretching back to the 1980s, with major players that in many cases have equally early foundations. One exception to this rule is Kineo, less than five years old, but moving up this year from seventh in the table to second as a result of a 40 per cent rise in turnover when most of its competitors have remained static. Kineo is based in Brighton, but also has offices in Sheffield, Israel and the USA.

> **Very few major players have experienced significant downturns in their fortunes**
>
> Clive Shepherd

Kineo's Steve Rayson explains how Kineo has managed to secure growth in an otherwise difficult market: 'Our message about rapid e-learning has gained a lot of

traction. We position ourselves at the lower cost end of the bespoke development space and concentrate on high quality at reasonable cost and with a fast turnaround. This broadly reflects what the market is looking for – nice looking content that is fit for purpose.'

Another effect of the recession has been organisations looking to beef up their in-house development, but with specialist help where required. Rayson explains: 'We do a lot of work with internal teams at companies such as O2, McDonalds and HSBC. We fill in with the technical and creative skills and the extra capacity that it is typically uneconomic to maintain in-house.'

Rayson has also been conscious of an increasing demand for all-in-one solutions to training problems. 'A lot of our clients are asking us to provide a simple LMS platform alongside their content. As Moodle specialists we can do the whole job.'

Heading the bespoke list for the second year running is London-based Line Communications, which is 21 years old this year. According to Director Sales and Marketing, Steve Ash, Line's continuing sales success through the recession was down to careful strategic planning. 'We took the decision 18 months ago to try and reduce our reliance on the public sector, given that we knew cuts were coming after the General Election. We conducted a drive to increase our presence in the corporate sector, and this has paid off in the strength of our current client list, which includes Anglo American, BP, BT and Ford. In the corporate sector, we have concentrated on obtaining business results for our customers, rather than on fancy graphics or rapid development. We adopt a more consultative, proposition-led approach, which sets us apart from many of our competitors.'

Line has over ten years' experience working in the defence sector, which could now be seen as vulnerable with the impending cuts.



Our message about rapid e-learning has gained a lot of traction

Steve Rayson, Kineo

Not so, says Ash: 'Much of our work is critical to the performance of personnel operating in major theatres. This work is secure because success depends on it.'

Ash is also conscious of an increasingly international flavour to their work. 'Most of our customers are UK-based, but our content is reaching a large global audience, which requires us to manage large amounts of localisation. It would also be fair to say that many of the projects we are asked to undertake are direct replacements for existing face-to-face programmes.'

Off-the-shelf content providers

Whereas bespoke content services tend to be delivered on a more localised basis, e-learning products have a world-wide market. While our top ten list for off-the-shelf content providers focuses on vendors with a significant UK presence, the revenues are global. Heading the list by a clear margin for the second year running is SkillSoft, a company with roots in both the USA and Ireland.

SkillSoft's sales held up in tricky market conditions across the world. According to Kevin Young, SkillSoft's General Manager for EMEA, 'Hard times have strengthened our value proposition. Procurement departments are now much more active in determining training spend and they are challenging L&D departments to do more with less.'

Young has been aware of a shift in customer demand towards shorter, more informal types of e-learning content. 'We have seen increasing interest in our Books24x7 service and in the Leadership Development Channel, which provides six-minute videos featuring top-line management thinkers for middle and senior managers. We also have been asked to provide our business skills offerings in much shorter one-hour chunks.'

A new entrant to the list of off-the-shelf content providers this year is Learning Pool, which specialises in providing content and learning platforms for the public sector. This position could seem precarious, but not so, says Paul McElvaney, one of Learning Pool's founding directors. 'Learning Pool provides a range of custom learning products to customers in the public sector, but it's not just our content that makes us unique or successful. Our ability to build an active community around our services means that we have become the logical place for public sector organisations to come to help them reduce costs, increase efficiency and improve the capacity of their people – all crucial stuff in an environment of severe fiscal tightening.'

Authoring tool providers

With an increased emphasis on in-house development, it's not surprising that those companies featured on our top five providers of authoring products should have witnessed growth over the past year. While Adobe almost certainly dominates with its Captivate and Presenter products, for which no figures are available, other providers with a strong IT training bias have done particularly well. Behind US-based Techsmith, with its Camtasia and SnagIt products, for the second year running sits Assima, which has seen a 27 per cent growth.

According to Assima's UK Managing Director, Paul Stevens, the USA was first to show the signs of pulling out of recession, with Europe relatively flat. He comments, 'There's no doubt that organisations are beginning to embrace technology more, not just for the cost savings, but because of the potential for quality gains. Compared to a single hit in a classroom, e-learning and performance support materials can provide much more flexible support over a continuing period. Employees can become more confident with IT systems more quickly.'

Stevens backs up his claims with reference to Becta's February 2010 report 'Delivering Results in the Workplace', which contains a wealth of tangible evidence of e-learning success in UK organisations.

Stevens also points out that the biggest contracts won by Assima in 2009 were to replace existing face-to-face training programmes with e-learning. And there is increasing evidence to suggest that organisations are producing much of this new e-learning content in-house. 'There is strong demand for our Assima Training Suite, which generates software sims with a learning component, and the Assima Performance Suite, which provides embedded support within applications. Customers are more confident that they can produce their own content, particularly with our training and guidance. After all, they have the business knowledge and this provides the content with greater credibility.'

LMS / LCMS providers

The table of LMS and LCMS providers has changed to some degree because some of the major US players have taken their companies private and no longer report their sales. By some margin the leader in our revised table is Saba, which has seen growth in spite of the recession. Ian Baxter, Saba's Director of Marketing, EMEA, comments: 'Saba is one of the few public, profitable and cash flow positive companies in the corporate learning space. In Saba, customers get a long-term financially viable partner with a true global presence.'

Saba has been one of the first vendors to deliver a collaborative social learning solution to augment formal learning. They continue to innovate further by offering embedded social capabilities in all people processes, including performance reviews, succession planning, talent mobility and leadership development.

How does Saba respond to the possible threat from open source providers? Baxter explains, 'While we see open source platforms in a few deals, most customers do not believe they get a global, scalable and configurable solution that is unified with other people processes. We believe the impact of open source platforms is very minimal in the enterprise LMS market.' So what impact has the entry to the market of ERP (enterprise resource planning) vendors such as Oracle and SAP had on the fortunes of the specialist LMS providers? 'There are a variety of myths that ERP vendors pervade such as they are "free" or that "integration" to the existing system is seamless or that "no upgrade is required," but in all cases the myths have been debunked. The costs associated with trying to use a database vendor's solution for people always results in more costs, less impact, longer times to implement on a least in class solution.' Fighting talk.



We believe the impact of open source platforms is very minimal in the enterprise LMS market

Ian Baxter, Saba

And not forgetting ...

As we noted last year, e-learning encompasses a very wide range of products and services, many of which have applications beyond learning and development. Without doubt the most significant of these is web conferencing, which is typically embraced first by organisations as a tool for online meetings, but which also has tremendous potential for learning and development. Unfortunately, because web conferencing is dominated by major telecommunications and IT companies for whom it would be practically impossible to extract revenues that relate specifically to L&D, it is not possible for us to track the growth of web conferencing for training in these tables. However, we can be confident that the use of the 'virtual classroom' is definitely on the up in the UK, after a very slow start.

Why has web conferencing been so slow to take off in L&D? Well, firstly, many L&D professionals have been blissfully unaware until recently that such technology existed and IT departments haven't helped them out in this respect. Perhaps through the increasing popularity of free public 'webinars' (web seminars) and the use of tools such as WebEx for everyday meetings, the secret is now out. What remains to be achieved is an up-skilling of instructors and facilitators to overcome any initial fears and to make sure they make effective use of the platform, and then some good hard thinking about how virtual classroom sessions can be embedded into the L&D offering.

Perhaps even more noteworthy, at least in terms of the hype, has been the increasing corporate awareness of the potential significance of social media tools to enhance collaboration across organisations, improve corporate communications and support informal learning. In most cases, because of the wide implications of any changes to communications practice, the decision to embrace social media will be taken beyond the L&D department. It may not even require any substantial investment in new software, as more recent versions of tools such as SharePoint are perfectly capable of supporting bottom-up and peer-to-peer collaboration. However, the barriers to the use of social media for learning are much more cultural than they are technological. It will take some time for command-and-control structures to be sufficiently freed up to make any meaningful use of social media a reality in many organisations.

Looking ahead

As I said in my column in the summer issue of *IT Training*, the learning and development profession is at a crossroads. For many organisations, the enormous uncertainty brought about by the credit crunch left them temporarily paralysed and unsure of which way to turn while they assessed the

IMC Content Factory: bespoke e-learning, made by experts.



From conception to implementation: we offer end-to-end expertise

IMC's Content Factory team offers expertise in the whole end-to-end content production process from conception through to implementation. Your content will not only look good, it will perform for you. Our expertise in pedagogy, didactical logic, e-assessment and evaluation will provide content that really sinks in. From simple rapid authoring to media rich serious games, IMC can design content that is right for you.

By the way: in CLIX, we provide one of the world's leading learning management systems, so from a pay-as-you-go SaaS solution to a full scale corporate implementation we can help you deliver your content and track your results as well.

To discuss how IMC can provide effective bespoke learning content, call us on 01732 741888 or simply e-mail us on info@im-c.com

imc
www.im-c.com

Advanced Learning Solutions

Top tables E-learning companies

Top 10 UK bespoke content developers

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Organisation	Revenue 2009 (£m)	Revenue 2008 (£m)	Web address
1	1	**Line**	7.05	7.20 (e)	www.line.co.uk
2	7	**Kineo**	5.20	3.70 (e)	www.kineo.com
3	2	**Epic**	5.15	6.10	www.epic.co.uk
4	3	**CM Group**	4.72 (A)	4.25 (2007)	www.cm-group.co.uk
5	4	**Cognitive Arts**	4.34	4.01	www.cognitivearts.com
6	6	**Redtray**	3.66	3.75	www.redtray.co.uk
7	5	**Brightwave**	3.00 (e)	3.80 (e)	www.brightwave.co.uk
8	9	**Saffron Interactive**	1.80	1.80	www.saffroninteractive.com
9	8	**Assima**	1.69	2.38	www.assima.net
10	10	**IMC**	1.48	1.01	www.im-c.com

Top 10 off-the-shelf content providers globally

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Organisation	Revenue 2009 (m)	Revenue 2008 (m)	Web address
1	1	**SkillSoft**	207.25 (B)	196.36	www.skillsoft.com
2	2	**Element K**	42.76	39.48	www.elementk.com
3	-	**CrossKnowledge**	25.00	-	www.crossknowledge.net
4	3	**ThirdForce**	18.97	26.90	www.thirdforce.com
5	6	**ILX Group**	6.17	4.30	www.ilxgroup.com
6	5	**Video Arts**	3.46 (C)	4.63	www.videoarts.co.uk
7	-	**LearningPool**	2.10	-	www.learningpool.com
8	9	**LearningGuide**	1.80	1.28	www.learningguide.co.uk
9	8	**Watsonia Publishing**	1.38	1.43	www.watsoniapublishing.co.uk
10	10	**Symantec Education Services**	1.21 (D)	1.21	www.symantec.com

Top 5 authoring tool providers globally

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Organisation	Revenue 2009 (£m)	Revenue 2008 (£m)	Web address
1	**1**	**Techsmith Camtasia**	22.48	21.87	www.techsmith.com
2	**2**	**Assima**	6.03	4.73	www.assima.net
3	**-**	**TT Knowledge Force**	4.89	3.30	www.tt-s.com
4	**-**	**Kaplan IT Learning**	4.72	-	www.kaplanit.com
5	**-**	**Mohive***	2.00	-	www.mohive.com

Top 5 LMS / LCMS providers globally

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Organisation	Revenue 2009 (£m)	Revenue 2008 (£m)	Web address
1	**2**	**Saba**	72.06 (E)	67.65	www.saba.com
2	**5**	**Meridian Knowledge Solutions**	13.16 (e)	9.72	www.meridianksi.com
3	**5**	**Element K**	10.53	9.72	www.elementk.com
4	**-**	**NetDimensions**	4.50	-	www.netdimensions.com
5	**-**	**IMC**	4.16	-	www.im-c.com

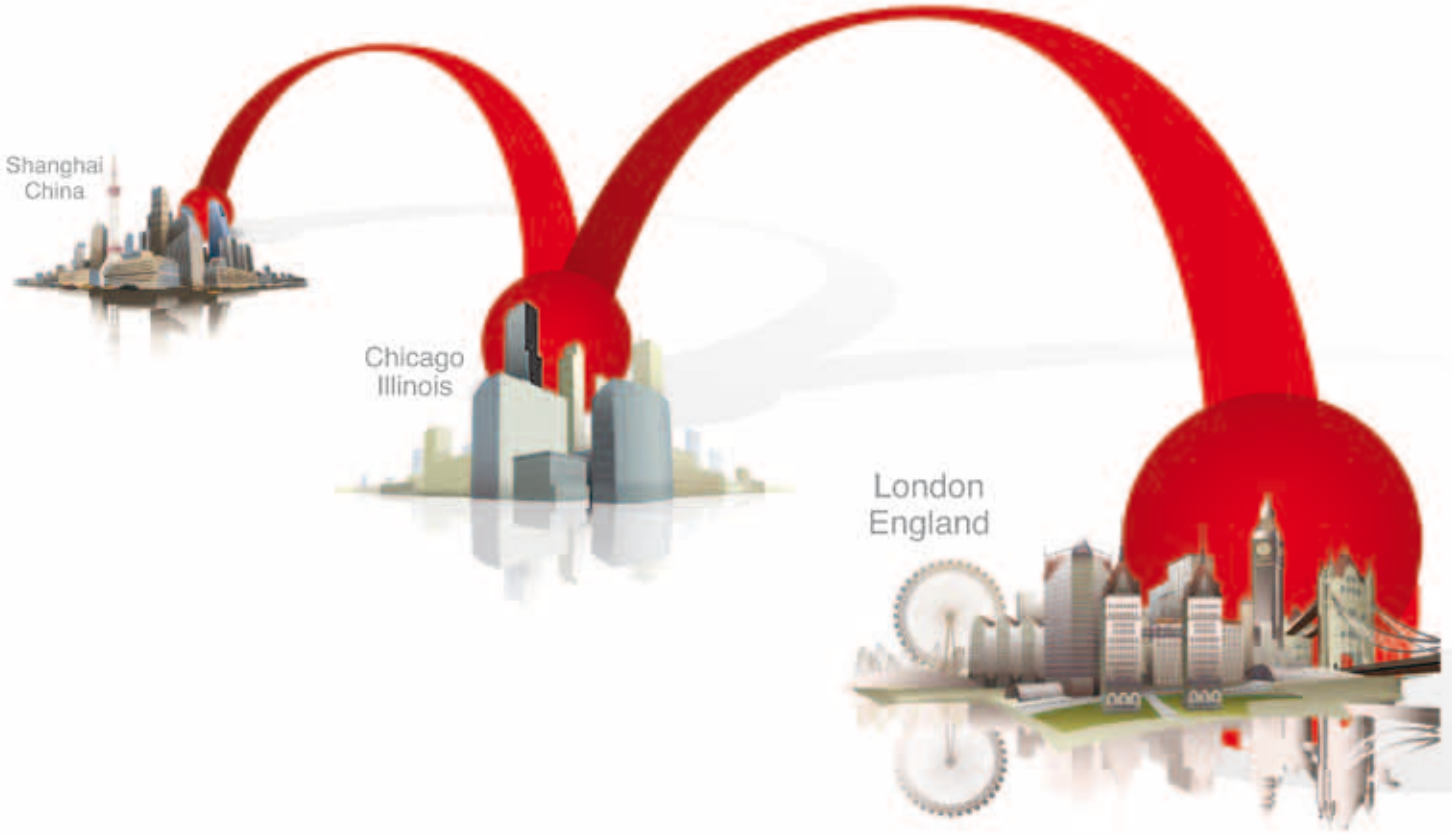
damage. In most cases and with all fingers and toes crossed, it looks like we've turned a corner and the private sector in particular is beginning to make decisions about how they want L&D to look in the future. In many cases the picture they are painting is very different from what went before.

In some respects it can be viewed as surprising that the various sectors of the e-learning market have held up so well during this crisis. Very few major players have experienced significant downturns in their fortunes and some have continued to expand. As the economy starts to move again, e-learning will almost certainly continue to grow as a share of the overall L&D spend. If there is a caution, it is that the makeup of the e-learning mix is shifting and that this could cause some structural change in the industry.

Expect to see more in-house development, a more rapid design and development process, a greater use of virtual classrooms, more use of collaborative and web 2.0 tools and delivery that makes better use of the capabilities of smart phones and tablets. One thing is for sure and that is that the only constant will be change.

* Revenue figures are for the calendar year of 2009, except for:
A: FY ending December 2008
B: FY ending April 2010
C: FY ending September 2009
D: FY ending March 2010
E: FY ending May 2010
'e' indicates that the company has supplied an estimate.
*Mohive was acquired by CrossKnowledge in March 2010
Please note: Not all companies active in a particular category are necessarily included in the lists. We were not able to include companies whose turnover (or part of the business relevant to the category) is not available on public record and where the company has declined to provide the information. We have done our best to provide an accurate list but cannot guarantee complete accuracy.

More global coverage.
More local consultants.



More learning in more languages.

More is better. Especially when it comes to assisting global organizations with their complex online learning needs. For example, more is better when providing localized learning content (over 3,000 online courses, 600+ books and 800+ videos in 19 languages*), free consulting (over 100 experts worldwide) and customer support (24/7/365). More is also better when it comes to the ability to create custom content for informal or formal learning styles and providing online mentoring. Yes, SkillSoft can give you more – more global coverage with more local support than any other provider. Because more is what we do best.

Find out how SkillSoft supports global customers' needs at
www.skillsoft.com/global

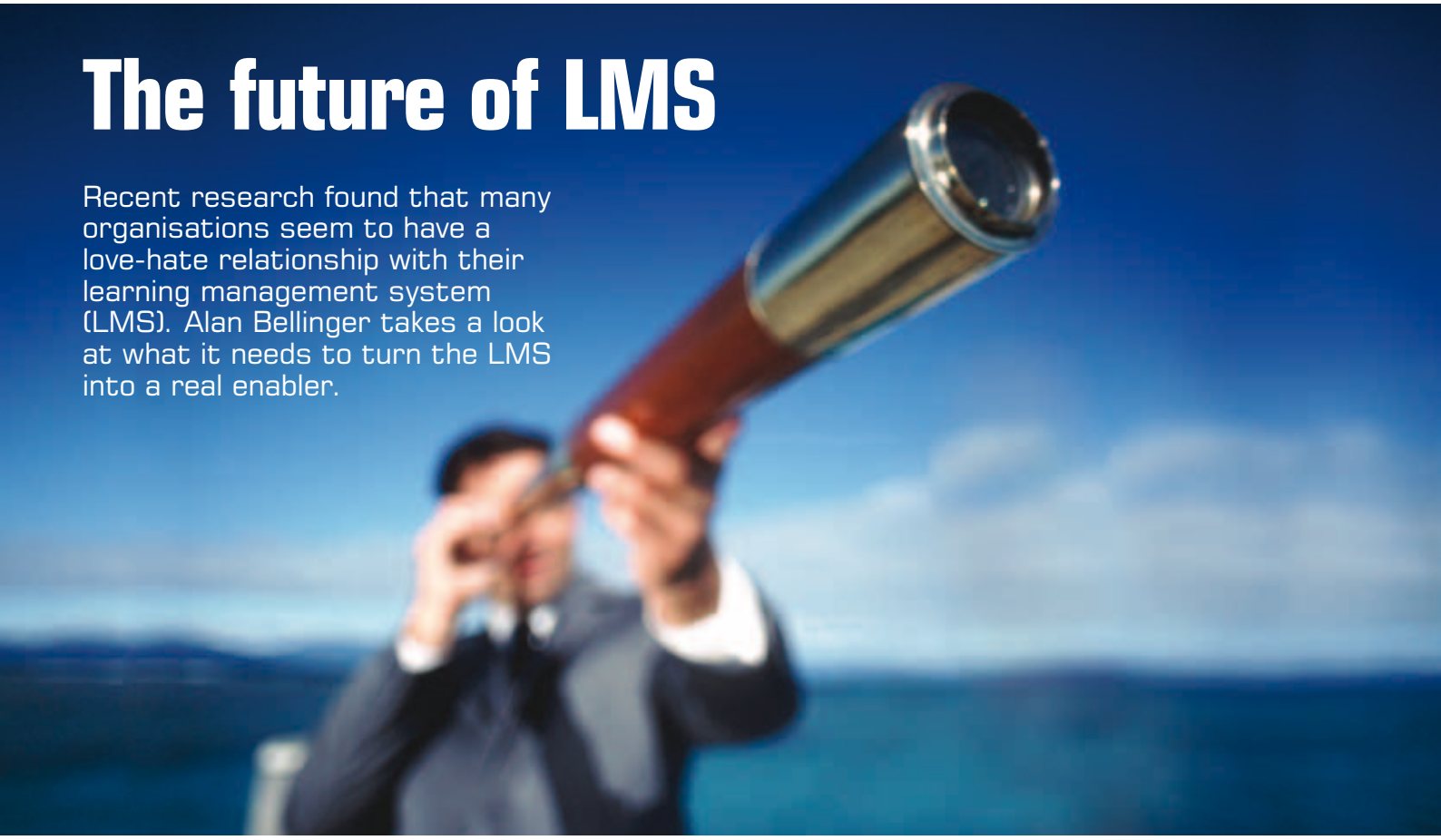
*Arabic • Brazilian Portuguese • Chinese Cantonese • Chinese Mandarin • Chinese Traditional • Dutch English (UK) • French • German • Greek • Hindi • Italian • Japanese • Korean • Polish • Russian Spanish (European) • Spanish (Latin American) • Turkish

Not all learning assets available in all languages.

skillsoft

© Copyright SkillSoft, 2010.

The future of LMS



Recent research found that many organisations seem to have a love-hate relationship with their learning management system (LMS). Alan Bellinger takes a look at what it needs to turn the LMS into a real enabler.

In my experience there's no subject (apart from compliance or the England soccer team) that generates such a polarised and heated discussion among learning and development (L&D) professionals as their expectations of the LMS.

When I chaired a recent session at the Learning Technologies Conference, one speaker referred to their LMS as an enabler, whilst another referred to it as an inhibiter. In the subsequent discussion it was clear that it all came down to the way they were using it – and their expectations.

User dissatification

It's always refreshing when facts back up one's intuition, and recent research conducted by LMS supplier IMC did just that. It found that among larger organisations, most currently have an LMS, with over 90 per cent having been installed for more than two years (in fact, almost 50 per cent had been installed for five years or more). But when asked if they would recommend their current supplier only 23 per cent were in the 'very likely' category and the negatives totalled exactly 50 per cent. Now there are two aspects to the issue of recommending a supplier; either, you're completely comfortable with them, or you're reluctant to admit that a previous decision was questionable.

Future needs

When asked if they were completely satisfied with their LMS in terms of both current and future requirements, only 30 per cent agreed that they were; a 70 per cent level of dissatisfaction is really quite astounding.

An additional 30 per cent reported that their concerns were in relation to future requirements. After all, these LMS installations (other than Moodle, but that's another story) are high ticket items, and therefore you'd expect that the suppliers would be trend-setting innovators rather than lumbering giants. As such, they should be close to their clients and therefore able to anticipate their demands.

> **You'd expect LMS suppliers to be trend-setting innovators rather than lumbering giants**
>
> Alan Bellinger

The other figure that's staggering is that only two per cent said they were not satisfied and would discontinue with the LMS – that implies that 38 per cent of respondents weren't happy, but saw no alternative.

LMS uses

There's another chart in this report that is really illuminating, and that is the one that asks respondents how they use their LMS. The first issue is who really benefits from the LMS – L&D or the learner? Of course, learners and the L&D function have shared goals and objectives, and so there is an argument that this discussion is pointless; but it isn't.

There are really three beneficiaries; the learners (for example, 'course management'), the L&D department (for example, 'management reports' and the company (for example, 'talent management').

The good news from this chart is that the needs of the learner are clearly prioritised over the needs of the L&D function. But the bad news is that the LMS is such an under-used tool in relation to that third group – the company. If only 20 per cent are using the LMS for competency/performance management, and only 13 per cent are using it for talent management, then how on earth are they doing it?

Value

Another chart from this report shows the value respondents have derived from their LMS. It shows that there are really three groups. There is a substantial group (37 per cent) who feel they have achieved a good return from their use of the LMS – and, quite frankly, that's a good outcome. But 27 per cent didn't get much out of it and 36 per cent really don't have much idea.

So let's try and sum up these findings. Most medium to large organisations have an LMS installed. They are fundamentally using it to benefit their learners and they are capturing the benefits it brings to the L&D function as well. They have a remarkably low level of satisfaction with their current supplier, are under-using it for corporate benefit and most can't show a realistic return on their investment in the functionality.

IMC's Managing Director, Dirk Thissen, summed it up; 'This is a period of significant change and we have used this research data to verify that our development programme is truly aligned to the needs of our clients and prospects.'

Informal learning

One of the critical issues that the LMS faces is that it is fundamentally a tool that has been targeted at formal learning rather than informal learning. And from lots of material published recently, we know that formal learning typically only accounts for some 10 per cent of the skills gain; it's been a case of over-focusing on the area in which L&D has been most comfortable.



One of the critical issues that the LMS faces is that it is a tool that has been targeted at formal rather than informal learning

Alan Bellinger

The fundamental concept of the traditional LMS is to push content to situations in which skills gaps have been identified. Its traditional premise is that it can provide the identification of a skills need, deliver those skills, monitor the intervention and record that skills transfer has taken place.

But informal learning relies on the pull of content at the point at which there is a need. To exist in this world, the LMS must be able to capture the fact that a skills gain has occurred informally; that's critical in order to keep the skills database up-to-date.

Social networking

The inclusion of collaboration, social networking, community of practice tools and so on (not to mention the task of re-engineering the functionality for a software-as-a-service architecture) is a critical development area for those LMS suppliers that are evolving. But is it really possible to retrofit all of the new functionality that is required, and will the product that results from this re-engineering be deployable?

There is a case that it's easier (and better) to add some management capability to the social networking tools rather than retrofit all of that functionality to the LMS giants. From a development point of view that argument has weight, but from the aspect of data migration, there's a completely different perspective.

Compliance

Compliance will always provide a case for the LMS – compliance needs evidence and the LMS provides it. Whether it's evidence of training ('they completed the courses'), or evidence of performance ('they have the skills') may not matter – it's evidence.

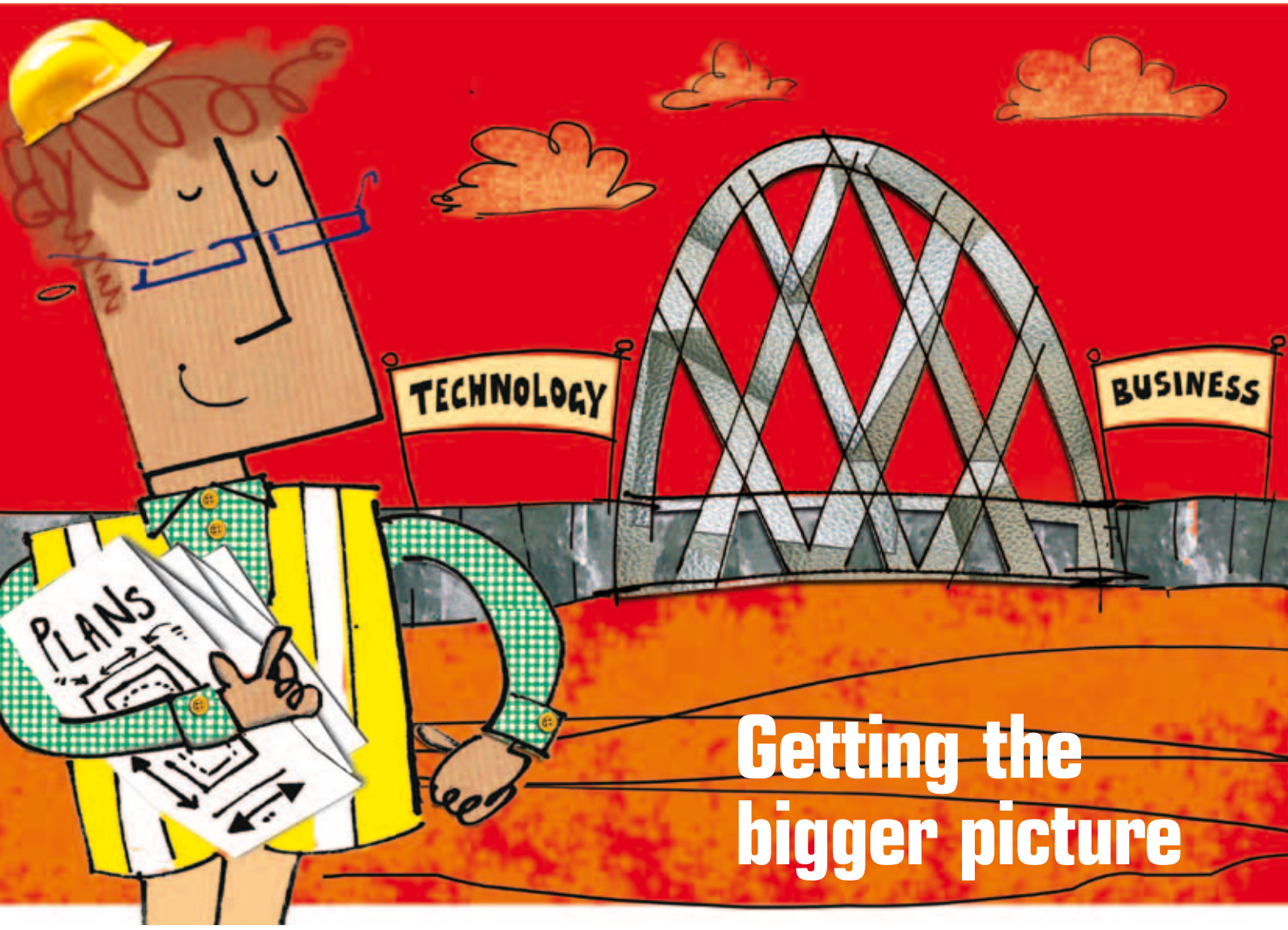
The recent launch of InGenius by SkillSoft has brought this whole argument centre-stage – just where do social networking tools belong? There are three competing areas here; the first is the traditional (albeit evolving) LMS, the second is the enterprise 2.0 architecture (blogs, wikis, chat etc) and the third is social networking and collaboration. Trying to integrate them is a real challenge as the LMS fundamentally is a top-down approach, enterprise 2.0 is a facilitation approach and social networking is a bottom-up approach. As a colleague recently said to me, can you imagine setting up a friends list in the LMS!

Now if we restrict the LMS to its assessment-delivery-recording role, then there is a case for keeping both enterprise 2.0 and social networking separate. The LMS becomes a planning/ recording tool whilst the latter become skills development tools. Co-existence then becomes an issue of recording and data transfer.

The more we go down the track of encouraging informal learning and embedding learning into work, the greater the issue that skills assessment and recording become. And that makes the case for keeping these two areas separate.

But that makes an assumption that we actually need to keep these records. In the world of social networking and collaboration, trust becomes a critical issue and the community is the overseer of trust. When the value of an individual is based on their contribution to the community, and the community controls trust, do we really need those records?

Go to **www.im-c.co.uk** for a copy of the IMC report titled 'Learning Management Systems: are organisations making the most of them?'



Getting the bigger picture

With the increasing demand of IT professionals who combine their technical knowledge with business and professional skills, Gary Flood takes a look at one of the roles that demands bridging the gap between technology and business – the enterprise architect.

Fancy earning around £80,000 – or even north of £110,000 for a lucky few – for a job that combines deep technical knowledge and real knowledge of how a business works? Then step forward all candidates for the demanding but rewarding role of enterprise architect (EA). 'EAs won't earn as much as a CIO – but they will make more than most IT professionals and often do very well working on a contract basis,' says Adrian Treacy, Director at Arrows, a specialist IT recruiter that places EAs.

EA is a job that in many ways you can't set out to get and it seems to be a role that really suits only a select few, provided they can manage the delicate balance of pleasing everyone, making sure their plans aren't seen as too airy-fairy by tech colleagues or too abstract by their business peers. 'To succeed in this role you need a combination of creativity and skills in things like communication and prototyping,' Treacy says.

'EAs can play a vital part in any project that's delivering new infrastructure, services and solutions,' explains Jason Gan, Solution Architect at Inatech. Gan sees EAs as taking on the hard but vital job of looking at the end-to-end solution, all the way from desktop environment to the business processes through applications and databases to the supporting infrastructure components of networks, servers and storage.

> **I think of an EA as being more of an IT 'artist' than an IT 'assembly line' role**
>
> Bill Estrem, Metaplexity

'You'll be a good EA if you are happy working with uncertainty,' adds Bill Estrem, President of US firm Metaplexity, which helps

train people in one of the main frameworks used, TOGAF. 'You need to be able to cope with lots of change. I think of it as being more of an IT "artist" than an IT "assembly line" role.'

'Sometimes EAs need a bit of help translating their insights for the rest of the business,' says Denise Plumpton, a CIO with extensive public and private sector experience, including being, until recently, the Director of Information at the Highways Agency. 'Not everyone understands what they do and they can struggle to sell the strategic concepts they have come to. The bottom line is they do make a difference, but they sometimes have to work at getting there.'

Career path?

EA is not a role that requires specific qualifications or even jobs to get to. Realistically it's going to be grey hairs gained from working on big projects mixed with insight gained from a willingness to not be 'boxed in' to your specialism that will get you the job. Being able to work with and understand what software providers, network engineers and hardware providers are up to is the best way to build up to the 360 degree understanding of the entire puzzle a business's total architecture represents. Note that EA are often 'home grown,' too, as opposed to externally, specifically recruited for an EA-type function.

Typically a fledgling EA would start with a technical role such as database administrator, applications developer or infrastructure architect. If they can demonstrate the ability to communicate with business leaders, they can then complete the move to the enterprise level.

The last point is very important: recruiters say that candidates who win such placements tend to be the ones who are happy to speak with the business and are genuinely interested in understanding the impact and solutions the architecture can deliver.



We just don't have enough people who are truly capable of looking at the whole picture

Jason Gan, Inatech

Yet all of this doesn't mean that training and qualifications are totally irrelevant – far from it. There are training courses that provide strong foundations in key aspects of the enterprise architect role, and these are mainly around the various frameworks (see box-out).

Being an EA

So what do the EAs themselves think? 'Being an enterprise architect doesn't suit everyone. But if you have ten years' experience or so, understand most aspects of computing and are able to communicate with the business, it can be a very satisfying job,' says Geoff Young, a senior EA now on secondment to the Ministry of Justice who also runs his own firm, EA Consulting.

With 30 years total IT professional experience, Young has combined a range of systems engineering, technical development and project management roles both with suppliers and in end-user contexts to get to his current position. But it was his growing involvement in the last five years or so with strategic and policy development for a number of government ICT programmes that has taken him into EA specifically, he says – cautioning that defining what an EA does can be a challenge, as it such a 'broad church' job role.

'The nearest parallel is probably being a PRINCE practitioner – this is PRINCE for projects,' he explains. 'You work with frameworks like TOGAF to help define the overall architecture for the entire business. Frameworks help by setting down the rules for designing, but that's not enough – you need a holistic view based on your own experience that will match the business requirements. This could be for as much as two to ten years out from where you are now. It's really about moving from the "as-is" state to the desired "to be" business-IT state.'

Young takes on board Plumpton's charge that EA terminology is unique to itself and not familiar to either IT colleagues, let alone the business, so that 'some people just don't get [what we do]'. But at the same time, it is very satisfying. 'It's about being able to think both conceptually, but always in the context of the real business. It could never be considered dull.'

And there is opportunity in this business-IT crossover role. 'We just don't have enough people who are truly capable of looking at the whole picture, who can see the way the whole thing works together, from desktop to network to WAN to business process,' says Gan.

EA frameworks

EA frameworks manipulate what in the trade are called artifacts, i.e. ways to model the logical organisation of the business in terms of its functions, business capabilities, business processes, people organisation and so on. Some are commercial, some are aligned with specific markets like government or defence, and some are more general.

In the latter camp, there is TOGAF (The Open Group Architecture Framework), though interestingly, this has roots in previous work by the US Department of Defence. It offers support for building system architectures in the sense of 'a formal description of a system, or a detailed plan of the system at component level to guide its implementation' combined with help modelling 'the structure of components, their inter-relationships, and the principles and guidelines governing their design and evolution over time'.

Other frameworks include the US government's DoDAF or the UK Ministry's of Defence's MODAF. There are also open source frameworks, but they all share roughly the same basic approach.



Innovative collaboration

In a bid to save both money and time and make training more efficient, in September 2009 the Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group awarded a contract to e-learning provider Brightwave to enable a joint venture of Scottish councils to make the most of technology in training.

The Clyde Valley Learning and Development Group (CVLDG) was set up in 2007 in response to the Scottish Government's Efficiency and Reform Agenda. The idea behind the initiative was to create a partnership of councils to deliver cost and time-effective training, learning and development across a number of local authorities with the objective to develop shared services around the design, development, delivery, commissioning and evaluation of learning and development.

The group currently consists of eight members, encompassing more than 100,000 employees, and five associate members. Members include the councils of East Dunbartonshire, East Renfrewshire, Glasgow City, Inverclyde, North Lanarkshire, Renfrewshire, South Lanarkshire and West Dunbartonshire.

From the word go I knew that technology should play a major role

Gerry Farrell, CVLDG

The CVLDG operates on a joint committee structure, to which each authority signs up. The day to day running of the project falls to the implementation steering group, which consists of project manager Gerry Farrell, who was seconded onto the project, and representatives from each authority. 'The implementation steering group looks at the general landscape, at common priorities and things that could be better done as a group,' explains Gerry. 'We define where the subject areas are and report on the progress of the various aspects of the project to the joint committee.'

The implementation steering group also oversees a number of expert sub groups, for example an e-learning sub group, a vocational qualification sub group and so on. The groups work together to identify necessary changes and suggest viable solutions by drawing from their own experiences and consultation with colleagues. They are the stakeholders for each council, and are responsible for providing expert input for each subject area.

Integrating technology

Moving from buying training of many private training providers to developing training internally as well as modernising service delivery by making best use of IT were two of the objectives on the CVDLG's agenda. By introducing e-learning technology for all members and creating a pool of resources, the CVLDG is looking to minimise duplication of effort, increase collaborative working and knowledge sharing and identify, develop and share best practice.

To achieve this aim, technology is an important element in the process. 'From the word go I knew that technology should play a major role,' says Gerry. 'We are a group of organisations with a large number of employees who are very spread out. We used to look at IT and L&D as separate things, but now we are looking to radically change the way we approach L&D by exploiting the benefits of technology more effectively.

'The project is about L&D in the broadest sense, and e-learning technology is only one aspect of it,' he continues. 'But many of us have the same training requirements, so this project is about sharing development costs and looking into specialism in terms of centres of excellence.'

The objective to save costs already showed signs of success at an early stage as councils joined together to adopt the new system. Charles Gould, MD at Brightwave, explains, 'The collaborative procurement process reduced time and cost of engaging with each individual council an their respective procurement departments. Hence substantial cost savings in the form of discounts were passed on. With all eight councils adopting the service, the price was discounted by 25 per cent, making a saving of over £170,000.'



This project is about sharing development costs and looking into specialism in terms of centres of excellence

Gerry Farrell, CVLDG

Requirements

One of the first steps in the adoption of e-learning was to find a provider that would meet the challenges of the project and be able to help with the implementation and the technical side. Together with IT, Gerry and his group developed the technical specifications prior to tendering. Gerry says, 'One of the challenges was that almost all our organisations have different HR management systems, and so one of the key requirements was to find a provider that would be able to work with all the different systems. The fact the Brightwave was able to offer this was one of the first reasons why we decided to go with them.'

Key requirements also included accessibility and hosting. 'We were looking for a system that was accessible by everyone from browsers everywhere, and one that was externally hosted,' explains Gerry. 'We wanted to offer the councils the chance to be more flexible with the workforce, to allow for learning at any time, from any web browser.'

Other important functions were the ability to track content, prepare and evaluate progress, run 360 degree appraisals and the inclusion of a tool for developing and publishing content. 'We wanted to be able to develop and use our own content, in addition to using anything that's freely available, commissioned pieces for common requirements across the councils and off-the-shelf content,' says Gerry.

Implementation

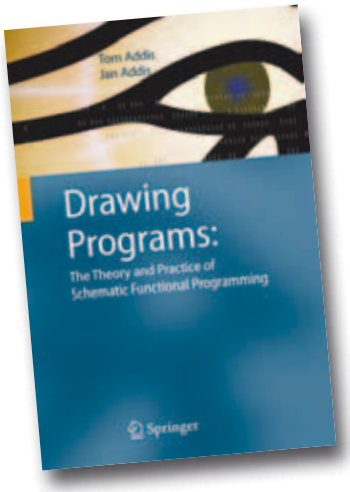
The first step then was to integrate Brightwave's learning management system 'Launch and Track' across the councils, starting from September 2009. 'We wanted to set up the platform first and create an infrastructure,' explains Gerry. 'There is no "one size fits all" solution as the councils vary significantly in size and structure. While some councils have a centralised L&D function with their own trainers, others operate with far more limited resources.

'For example one of our smaller councils only has about 4,000 staff, whereas others have more than 20,000 employees,' Gerry continues. 'This means that councils are all at different stages of implementation. Glasgow City Council already has the platform in place and now also has some content available. Quite a few are about to launch the platform, and I hope that by the end of the summer all will be up and running.'

At the moment, then, the CVLDG is concentrating on pushing forward the individual project plans for going live in each organisation. As a next step, Gerry and his team will evaluate the various pilot projects and soft launches before going to full roll out, which will also include identifying and developing content for e-learning. So far, feedback from councils such as Glasgow, who ran a pilot with Brightwave before embarking on the Clyde Valley project and has now been using a version of the system for over a year, has been very positive, both in terms of usage and response to the e-learning experience, says Gerry. The council is currently using a mixture of off-the-shelf purchased content, free content and some in-house developed content. 'This is our long-term aim, to be as self-sufficient as possible in terms of developing our own content, but to share it freely across the partner organisations, and possibly beyond,' explains Gerry.

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



Drawing Programs: The Theory and Practice of Schematic Functional Programming

Tom Addis, Jan Addis, 386pp

Springer Verlag, £49.99

ISBN 978-1-84882-617-5

Rating ★★★☆☆

Functional programming has historically appeared to have been more prevalent in the academic computing community. However, it seems to be gaining wider adoption with popular languages such as Python and Ruby supporting the functional paradigm, albeit in an impure form.

The main part of this book is about functional programming and in particular the use of the authors' graphical functional programming system 'Clarity'. In Clarity programs are expressed as schematics. The authors argue that functional programming lends itself to graphical schematic representation more advantageously than imperative approaches.

The book covers a wide range of computer programming-related topics, with a natural bias towards functional programming and Clarity. Much of this book is a practical demonstration of the Clarity system and of how the benefits of graphical representations of (functional) computer programs over their textual counterparts may be gained.

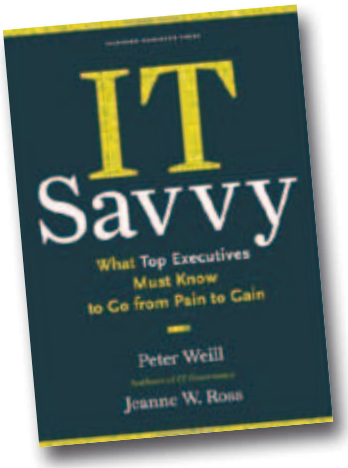
There are practical sections describing how to run and use the Clarity system, how to implement distributed systems using Clarity and how to develop extensions to the Clarity system. In addition, the authors describe approaches to the design and development of functional programs and functional programming concepts. These sections are supported by extended working examples.

Other sections discuss topics such as computer program semantics, functional thinking, artificial intelligence, Bayesian classification and programming systems that deal with uncertainty.

The book is an engaging read and is likely to be of value to anyone interested in computer programming, functional or not. The authors reinforce learning by lots of review questions, projects and examples. My only criticism is that, on occasion better signposting was required in order to make the purpose of some of the diversions clearer.

The Clarity system and examples from the book are available for free download.

Reviewed by Patrick Hill MBCS CITP



IT Savvy: What Top Executives Must Know to Go from Pain to Gain

Peter Weill, Jeanne Ross, 208pp

McGraw-Hill, £22.99

ISBN 978-1-42-218101-0

Rating ★★★☆☆

Understanding the role and the place of IT in an organisation is no simple task. This book looks to describe and discuss what the role of IT should be in organisations that want to be more successful, and it identifies the characteristics needed to utilise IT to maximum advantage.

The book is aimed at executive and senior mangers who recognise that IT is critical to their business and feel they need to understand how to exploit and mange it more effectively. This is now an imperative in highly competitive market places where success demands profit and growth at the same time.

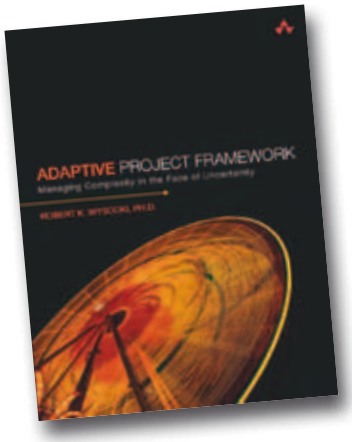
This book defines what IT savvy means and outlines the characteristics of organisations that are successful in their use of IT. Based on a huge amount of research, it introduces a model for assessing the degree of maturity an organisation has reached on its 'IT journey' and also includes a questionnaire to allow you to assess how IT savvy your own organisation is.

The chapters are well structured around core principles including: what is necessary to get IT under control; the importance of operating models; portfolio management and the steps to developing a digitised platform. It raises some pertinent questions surrounding the way we make IT decisions in a business compared to how we make other types of decisions (e.g. finance), and is thought-provoking throughout.

The books includes many case studies and the results of surveys with senior managers working in IT savvy organisations. More public sector examples would have been useful as a way of understanding how the principles apply in contexts where profit is not the sole measure of success and efficiency savings are the key driver for IT.

Some of the concepts discussed assume a level of knowledge beyond the non-IT executive, and for a book that attempts to demystify, it does not assume an 'I know nothing' approach. Quite a short book, but undoubtedly good value for money for anyone who wants to improve their understanding of strategic IT planning, management and governance.

Reviewed by Dean Burnell MBCS



Adaptive Project Framework: Managing Complexity in the Face of Uncertainty

Robert K. Wysocki, 384pp

Addison-Welsey, £32.99

ISBN 978-0-321-52561-1

Rating ★★★★★

This book is primarily aimed at project and programme managers, but also suggests benefit to software developers, product developers, process designers and business analysts, amongst others. In my view, it is of most use to experienced project and programme managers who have used traditional project management successfully for more straightforward projects. This, then, will take them to the next level.

Adaptive project framework (AFP) is an agile approach and an iterative process intended to be used for projects where goals are clearly stated, but little of the solution is known. The complete solution is discovered during the execution of the project. It is intended to bring greater business value compared to other approaches and aims to maximise business value under fixed time and budget constraints. It does not replace traditional project management, but adds to the project / programme manager's toolset.

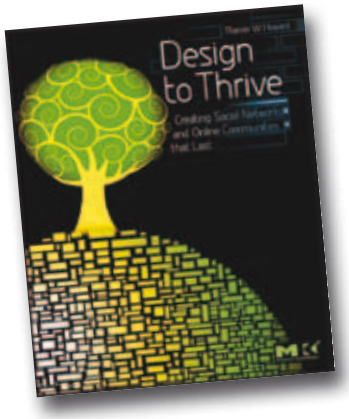
AFP is set in the context of other traditional and agile approaches to project management – both linear and iterative models.

Wysocki, who has more than 40 years experience as a project management consultant, initially explains the rationale behind AFP and then goes on to discuss the details of the five phases. This is followed by a discussion on how AFP can be adapted and how it can be used for the most speculative and high risk projects.

The method is illustrated by clear diagrams and templates with case studies highlighting its practical application.

This is a refreshing approach to project management, not suggesting that it is the complete answer but showing where it fits in with and complements other approaches. An excellent book.

Reviewed by Sheila Bullas
MBCS CITP



Design to Thrive: Creating Social Networks and Communities that Last

Tharon Howard, 248pp

Morgan Kaufmann, £24.99

ISBN 978-0-12-374921-5

Rating ★★★★★

Creating successful social networks and online communities depends on far more than just the technology used. We've all visited failed communities and we can all recognise the signs of success – a rapid churn of threads, interesting responses with a recognisable core of community members who interact with their wider audience. What is it that makes the difference?

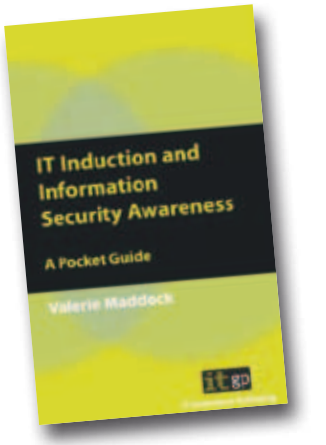
Tharon Howard believes the difference is in 'the design of the community'. He should know, as he's been in the business for 30 years. He describes five main groupings – internal project teams, communities of practice, networks across disciplinary boundaries, brand and user group communities and gaming communities. Also, he recognises that social networks and online communities can grow around software clients that are not web-based, such as World of Warcraft and Second Life.

Mix this with his four core design principles called RIBS, i.e. remuneration, influence, belonging and significance, and you have all the basics clearly presented.

The book's layout and presentation are extremely user-friendly with good use of colour, chapter synopses, subheadings, visuals, information boxes and index. There are lots of real-world examples, which are especially helpful in showing how to implement the RIBS principles.

This is a highly practical book that manages to achieve a balance between design and theory. It is full of ideas for building communities and is well worth the read whether you're new to designing social networks and online communities or want to organise your ideas better.

Reviewed by Angela Wheatcroft



IT Induction and Information Security Awareness: A Pocket Guide

Valerie Maddock, 54pp

IT Governance Publishing, £9.95

ISBN 978-1-84928-033-4

Rating ★★★★★

This is a gem of a handbook that covers just about everything an IT department needs to know about putting together an IT induction programme.

A clear distinction is made between the role of a SME providing content and the function that may end up delivering it, and good advice is offered on the respective roles of HR and IT. One important area that is also covered is refresher training, and the scope of induction also includes senior executives.

The author provides a comprehensive list of indicative content covering areas not often considered in a classical induction approach, and The Salvation Army's IT induction is included as a case study.

Reviewed by Peter Wheatcroft
FBCS CITP

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

Bob Mosher back at IITT National Conference

Bob Mosher, the global thought leader on learning performance and excellence, is to give the keynote address at the seventh IITT National Conference and Exhibition due to popular demand from delegates at last year's sold-out event.

This year's IITT National Conference and Exhibition takes place on 7 – 8 September at the five star London venue, Marriott Grosvenor Square. The conference is a must for all corporate and commercial trainers, training managers and L&D and HR managers who seek to expand and develop their skills and keep up-to-date with the latest developments in L&D.

The conference features eight conference sessions split between two streams titled 'Leading Learning', chaired by Nicola Pye, Ernst & Young, and 'Delivering Learning', chaired by Denise Hudson-Lawson, Houses of Parliament, and four workshops under the umbrella of 'Developing Learning'.

Keynote: Delivering excellence in performance and learning

Bob Mosher, LearningGuide Solutions

Effective training is about developing the skills for great performance and supplying the just-in-time support required at the front line. Bob Mosher will reveal why coupling learning to performance is crucial. Bob will draw on the forgetting curve and the five key points of learning needs to illustrate why training has to be about both capacity building and immediate performance support. He will question many of the principles that we have held in training – including those that Bob himself worked with in his many years as a classroom trainer.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS - LEADING LEARNING

Understanding your business and aligning training for success

Jonathan Kettleborough, Corollis

Times are tough. We all have to work harder for budgets and people, and we know it will get even tougher. Many learning professionals are under more pressure than ever before to deliver effective programmes. Jonathan Kettleborough maintains that true training success is based on thoroughly understanding your business and having a very clear picture of where learning programmes can have a positive impact upon success. Drawing on his experience across a wide range of industries and using highly engaging examples, Jonathan will take you through the key steps you need to ensure success in these challenging times.

Integrating rapid action learning sets into a learning programme

Dr Brian Sutton, Learning4Leaders / Middlesex University

Action learning sets (ALS) are a great way of learning – putting people in small, collaborative groups to assess problems and jointly come up with solutions, learning along the way. Brian Sutton believes that action learning is the best way to get from 'knowing that' to 'applying what I know to make a difference' and



to 'constructing new knowledge along the way'. Brian has made rapid ALS part of many substantial blended learning programmes, and will explore how they work and how you can make them work for you.

Delivering organisational change with great learning

Paul Jagger, IBM Learning Development Europe

Ever been given a few weeks' notice to set up training for a major IT roll out? Or seen the L&D department forgotten when a major change programme is underway? This habit of ignoring L&D overlooks how fundamentally important learning is to organisational change, says IBM's Paul Jagger. In this session he suggests practical ways of making sure its importance is appreciated.

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

Building a robust training department for challenging times

Tim Hunnybun, Information Systems Services, Leeds University

In the current economy, how can you build a resilient training department that delivers great learning with fewer resources? In this interactive session, Tim Hunnybun, who is IITT Training Manager of the Year 2010, explores ways of making your money go further, while revealing the tell-tale signs that cuts are on their way.

CONFERENCE SESSIONS - DELIVERING LEARNING

The new blended learning

Clive Shepherd, e-Learning Network

The new blended learning is different. It takes advantage of different social contexts for learning (self-directed, one-to-one, group) as well as different learning media (online, offline, face-to-face). It also seamlessly crosses formal and informal boundaries to harness the power of social media, rapid and mobile content to supplement formal approaches and deliver just-in-time performance support. This is blended learning that goes beyond simply adding e-learning to a classroom course.

The BBC model for content creation of e-learning materials

Nick Shackleton-Jones & Shane Samarawikrema, BBC Training & Development

How do you produce great e-learning materials at speed? The BBC could be a tough environment for this, with its creative individuals, high production standards and ultra-busy SMEs (subject matter experts). Nick and Shane describe how they've managed it with their six stage content development process, which covers everything from project management to great storytelling.

A practical guide to online synchronous events

Julie Wedgwood, Productive Ltd

Most of us have been on the receiving end of an online event, but have little idea what it's like at the sharp end. Julie Wedgwood, the award-winning learning consultant, turns the theory into practice and steers a course through the unexplored for the uninitiated. Get a behind-the-scenes look at what it's really like to teach in a virtual classroom and discover the skills required to make it work for you, your learners and your organisation.

Social learning – delivering online learning that works

Liz Cable, ReachFurther

Should social learning be hard work? Not according to Liz Cable. In fact, she says, when done right, it sells itself because we now have the experience to understand what's required to make it fly. Join Liz in this cafe-style session to get the benefit of three years' experience running social learning communities.

WORKSHOPS - DEVELOPING LEARNING

Undoing bad presentation habits

Sheena D Whyatt, Lightning Training

When you do anything regularly, you naturally accumulate habits, and not all of them will be good. In this workshop, Sheena Whyatt looks at the bad habits that classroom trainers often pick up and suggests practical ways of both identifying and overcoming them.

Getting your department listened to as a learning partner

Christian Janssens, Ricoh Academy & Recruitment Nederland

We are often told that we need to get out of the classroom and spend more time with the business. Christian Janssens was IITT Training Manager of the Year in 2007 and received Training Department of the Year Award in 2010, largely due to his ability to make his training department a true business partner. In this workshop, you will explore how to see training from the other person's point of view; how training contracts focus everyone's minds; how to make informal learning part of what you offer; the keys to becoming a successful business partner; and why the training department can never stand still.

Instructional design

Rob Hubbard, e-Learning Network

Developing great e-learning is about more than simply choosing a good authoring tool and learning how to use it. It is first of all about engaging your learners, and second about getting as close as possible to what you want them to do in the real world. This activity-based learning approach avoids dumps of information, concentrating instead on asking learners to think, make decisions and see the consequences.

Meeting training needs with 'just-too-late' learning

Neil Lasher, Learning Consultant

Today's learners have new needs and different expectations. In designing our learning materials we ignore this at our peril. In this intensive workshop, Neil explores the changing world of instructional design for the new styled user, for mobile delivery and new methods of working. He will introduce the concept of 'just-too-late learning' and the design concepts it requires.

Further information can be found at **www.trainersconference.co.uk**

NB: Workshop sessions are strictly limited on numbers so bookings are on a first-come, first-served basis.



Chartered IT Professional – an L&D perspective

Early in 2010, Paul D. Jagger, Business Area Manager for IBM Learning Development (Europe), embarked on the journey to requalify as a CITP under the new BCS Chartered IT Professional (CITP) process. In this article he looks at the changes.

In September 2009, the British Computer Society rebranded as BCS, The Chartered Institute for IT. In parallel, BCS announced a revised CITP programme, aiming to increase the relevance and recognition of CITP in the industry.

Having previously qualified as a CITP, I was keen to understand how the revised programme had changed, and what I might need to do in order to re-qualify – especially from the perspective of an L&D professional in the IT industry.

The revised CITP raises the bar in the following ways:

1. Candidates are required to identify an area of specialism.

This is an important aspect of the new CITP, since it not only makes the qualification more relevant to employers, but also helps BCS align candidates with suitably experienced interviewers.

2. The CITP application process requires the completion of a Breadth of Knowledge (BoK) test.

This test requires the candidate to successfully complete a 75 question computer-based test on a wide range of core IT subjects. It is structured into five topic areas, and candidates must pass not only the overall test with a score of at least 50/75, but score at least 8/15 in each of the topic areas. BCS provide a mock test free of charge on their website: **http://interact.bcs.org/citp-mock**

The revised CITP application is certainly more rigorous, and may take two or three months to complete

Paul D. Jagger, IBM

I took the mock test three times before getting a passing grade, and found the experience immensely helpful. BCS also provide a comprehensive syllabus on their website that I would recommend all candidates to study before attempting the real test. My own experience of both the mock and the real test is that they are certainly broad in the subject matter they cover, and hence every IT professional will find some common ground with the test content.

If I have any criticism of the BoK test, it's that there are no questions related to L&D in the context of the IT profession. I believe this is a glaring omission, given the focus on skills and the recognition of the importance of the people side of IT-enabled business change in our industry.

3. Candidates are interviewed by BCS volunteer assessors.

After the BoK test, candidates need to prepare a presentation focusing on their area of specialism and present it in a live/remote interview and video link-up with two BCS assessors.

At least one of the assessors is from the same area of specialism as the candidate, ensuring that he or she has the opportunity to be interviewed by someone who understands their job role.

The candidate's presentation lasts about 10 minutes, after which the interviewers ask the candidate questions about their career, achievements to date, evidence of continuous professional development and other matters related to the CITP application. Overall the interview lasts about 45 minutes.

4. Successful candidates receive a 'Certificate of Current Competence'.

Once CITP status is awarded, the successful candidate receives a Certificate of Current Competence, which is valid for five years. In order to retain CITP status, a light-touch revalidation process needs to be undertaken. Currently the thinking is that the requirement will focus on a review of the candidate's CV.

The revised CITP application process is certainly more rigorous, and consequently may take two to three months to complete. It's clearly making an effort to align candidates with an area of specialism, and then assess their achievements in that area against the SFIA level 5 requirements.

Overall I found the experience to be an enjoyable one, certainly a worthwhile achievement and it's certainly possible for L&D professionals in the IT industry who are operating at a sufficiently high enough level of autonomy, influence, complexity of work and business skill to achieve Chartered status.

I'm now proud to call myself a Chartered IT Professional (in L&D).

bcs
The Chartered Institute for IT

Enabling the information society



CompetITive

Could your IT team be doing more to keep you ahead of the competition?

Make a clear statement about your commitment to their training and development needs with BCS Professional Development Accreditation. We'll help you meet the professional standards demanded by a modern IT industry. Discover the competitive edge, plus other benefits BCS can bring.

For more info visit www.bcs.org/solutions
or call us on 01793 417747



Improve your People and Systems. Become an agile company.

Assima Training Suite

Build user competence through interactive, lifelike, simulation training

Assima Performance Suite

Improve user performance with direct, in-application guidance

Assima Change Management Suite

Support your users throughout the change process

Assima Multilingual Suite

Reach your users with systems in their own language

Assima Consulting Services

Realise your project goals, with expertly designed training solutions

Delivering award winning training and IT change projects for over 25 years

Institute of IT Training
Accredited Training Provider

Silver Award, Learning Technologies Solution of the Year 2010, Assima with Xerox

Silver Award, UK Trainer of the Year 2010, Solene Kremer, Assima UK Ltd.

IT Training Awards
www.ittrainingawards.com

Deloitte. Technology Fast50

For more information
tel: +44 (0)20 3328 3280
email: sales@assima.net

Assima
Innovate & Accelerate

www.assima.net