ITtraining

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Summer 2008 **www.bcs.org/ittraining**

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Editor's intro

Training flies into discussion areas



A frequent grumble from the training arena is that it isn't taken seriously enough, so it was in a sense refreshing to see it catapulted into the limelight with the Heathrow Terminal 5 opening debacle.

Whether lack of training was the root cause of baggage chaos made for a wonderful debating point, as shown by various bloggers tackling the subject, including Jooli Atkins on the BCS website. It was a topic that drew in not just training folks, but the wider IT community. It led to Jooli writing a whole new entry on whether IT training should be replaced by system and process training. You can see more of the debate on p8 of this issue of *IT Training* or the whole blog at **www.bcs.org/blogs/training.** Alan Bellinger also looked at the subject of Heathrow T5 in his April column online at **www.bcs.org/ittraining.**

Perhaps we could argue that the message that training is a good thing is getting through and that is why the IT training market has seen four years of growth in revenue, according to IT Skills Research's figures – see the new top 50 training provider list and accompanying article on p20-29.

I suspect, alas, that the growth is more a reflection of the IT industry and economy at large having thrived, rather than a sudden recognition that training pays dividends. The rise in popularity of service management and project management has helped keep the punters coming in for training, while leadership and management courses are tipped as the next big area for IT professionals to tackle.

Part of the IT training spend of course relates to the roll-out of new systems or upgrades to them. Network Rail has run one such programme, upgrading its systems so that its signalling maintenance engineers could use handheld devices to receive work orders while out on the track. As part of the project 3,000 staff were trained. It's one of those examples which shows the difference that IT, and appropriate training, can make. See p14.

Another example of a current large IT programme is HM Prison Service's roll-out of Oracle to move transactional work from prisons to a shared service centre. Jacquie Rayner talked to me about what her job entails, which gives a fascinating insight the specific considerations needed in a more unusual environment. See article on p12.

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IT training

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Update

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

Security tops skills' needs: but wireless will oust it



The importance of security skills are expected to decline in the coming years. The skill expected to grow most over the next five years is RF mobile, wireless technology, according to a CompTIA study in which 55 per cent of respondents thought it would become more important.

Security was rated as the most important IT skill to organisations, according to a global survey, commissioned by the Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA).

Seventy-four per cent of the 3,500 respondents rated it 6 or 7 in importance on a 1-7 scale. But just 57 percent said their IT employees are proficient in these security skills, a skills gap of 16 percentage points. Among organisations surveyed in nine countries (Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, UK, and USA), 73 per cent identified security, firewalls and data privacy as the most important IT skills for their organisation.

Respondents rated the next most important skills as general networking and operating systems, in joint second place, with 66 per cent apiece of ratings at 6 or 7.

The importance of the above skills is expected to decline in the coming years. The skill expected to grow most in importance over the next five years is RF mobile, wireless technology. 39 per cent say it will be important one year from now versus 55 per cent saying it will be important five years hence.

When asked what their organisations should be doing to enhance employees' IT skills, the top two answers were sending employees for professional training externally (42 per cent), and providing incentives and rewards (41 per cent). Sending employees for certification (36 per cent) was the third most important.

Another global survey also highlighted **a dearth of IT skills**. Thirty-eight per cent of 749 CEO/CIO-level executives worldwide reported having problems relating to IT skills shortages, according to a survey by the non-profit, independent IT Governance Institute (ITGI). It found that the most common problem experienced in the last 12 months was insufficient numbers of staff, a difficulty which affected 58 per cent of respondents. This compares to 35 per cent in 2005.

Back in the UK, IT skills for flexible working are lacking in SMEs, according to a report released by BT Business. 62 per cent of SMEs surveyed said that they lacked the appropriate IT skills and training to properly exploit existing technology and high-tech flexible working, according to the report, researched by independent forecasting think tank, the Centre for Future Studies.

The research found that 75 per cent of SMEs do not provide specific IT training for remote workers. Yet 25 per cent of managers are dissatisfied with the basic IT skills of their workers and 41 per cent with the advanced IT skills of their workers.

The latest move announced by the government to tackle the skills gap is to **replace the Learning and Skills Council** (LSC) by 2010. Government proposals set out in a white paper would spell the end of the LSC, and direct £4

billion a year through a new agency to provide training and skills for adults. Local authorities would pick up the responsibility and £7 billion to offer young people in their area the new diplomas and apprenticeships alongside GCSEs and A levels.

Secretary of State for Innovation Universities and Skills John Denham, said: 'If we are to meet the targets we set out in World Class Skills then we need a FE and skills system which is even more flexible and responsive to both learners and employers.'

The proposals are published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS) in a white paper, 'Raising Expectations: enabling the system to deliver'.

For adult learners, a smaller agency, the Skills Funding Agency, will replace the LSC to streamline the funding process to colleges and training providers. It will also manage the creation and management of the new England-wide adult advancement and careers service.

Sector skills council **e-skills UK has released a consultation** for its five-year strategic plan for England, seeking input from employers, educationalists and other stakeholders with an interest in the UK's IT and telecoms skills base.

The consultation invites comment on a range of topics including: improving access to learning for IT professionals; making the best use of public funding for training provision and deepening links between industry and higher education.

The consultation will run until 27 June. To contribute, see **www.e-skills.com/strategy**

Supplier briefs

KnowledgePool acquires BTP

Managed service training provider KnowledgePool has bought Business Training Partnership (BTP), another vendor independent learning outsourcing specialist. In 2007, knowledgeably turnover was £14.2 million while BTP's revenues were £8 million. BTP co-founder and former sales director Craig Hyslop will join KnowledgePool, while Kevin Senior, the other co-founder and former managing director of BTP, will be leaving the company.

DNS Arrow ups ante in IBM training

DNS Arrow, a specialist IT distributor, has acquired Anix's Training Services Division, making it the UK's largest IBM-authorised training provider. DNS Arrow has offered specialist IBM storage training as a value-add service for its reseller partners for over ten years. In 2007, it bought InTechnology's training business.

BroadSkill and Bray Leino join forces

BroadSkill, provider of IT and business process training, performance and learning solutions, has joined forces with communication services Bray Leino, which has a turnover of more than £52 million. The new business will be called Bray Leino BroadSkill. David Harman from Leadership Development has been appointed as CEO, reporting through the group board, on which Henry Jodrell of BroadSkill will also sit.

PPi makes a purchase

PPi Learning Services, the successor to bankrupt PPI, has acquired the Projects Group, a specialist project and programme management support organisation. The acquisition includes training brand TPG Academy, which provides integrated blended learning courses in the classroom, online and through CD and paper based media.

NHS revamps qualifications

A new IT qualification, NHS ELITE (NHS eLearning IT Essentials), has been introduced for NHS staff. The qualification, accredited by the BCS, aims to consolidate the IT skills from using a keyboard and mouse, through to email, web and file management skills. The new qualification complements the revamped NHS Health Unit, now known as NHS Health, which trains staff to comply with rules on information governance, data protection and patient confidentiality when using health information systems implemented locally through the National Programme for IT.

ISEB introduces online ITIL v3 examinations

IT professionals can now take the ISEB ITIL v3 Foundation Exams online. The new facility offered by ISEB allows students to sit their exam and receive their results on the same day.

Yahoo! engineers trained

Yahoo! engineers were amongst the first candidates to take a new BCS-developed qualification, the Accredited Course for Tutors and Trainers (ACTT), delivered by Matrix FortyTwo. The qualification offers professional trainers an independent validation of their competence and has been developed to support best practice among training professionals. It consists of a five-day workshop followed by portfolio completion.

Academy28 offers training type assessment

Newly founded Academy28 has launched an online 'personal style and behavioural preferences tool'. Its 10-minute online assessment, called 'Your Preferences', generates an instant report on an individual's personal style and behavioural characteristics. The company has also developed five 'type packages' (two particularly related to trainers), which give individuals guidance on the implications of their preferences in areas such as teamwork, training and influencing.

QA-IQ launches .net 3.5 curriculum

QA-IQ has launched its new .net 3.5 schedule with courses from beginner to expert levels. The courses range from an introduction to .net through language courses for both Visual Basic and C#, to application development and skills for those working with enterprise technologies.

Microsoft Business Certification

Xpertise has started offering the new Microsoft Business Certification Programme, the result of an overhaul of Microsoft's certifications. Xpertise has added Office 2007 and Windows Vista to its portfolio.



Alan Bellinger

The six sins of client contact

I've noticed the emergence recently of six sins of client engagement, where the client is the business manager rather than the learner. Here they are:

1: Lack of common goals

Your focus will be on skills whilst the business managers' will be on outcomes. But you do have common ground – and that is performance. If the business managers can see that you're building the capability of their staff, they'll see that it will provide them with a way of meeting their objectives. You will need to be able to clearly demonstrate that the skills you are proposing to transfer relate to increased performance.

2: One size fits all

A large, risky, costly skills development programme will require a different engagement process to a small, simple, tactical programme. The core issue to convince the manager about is that long-term gain is worth the short-term pain; in the case of simple projects, the pain is likely to be minimal, and the discussion shorter.

3: Prioritising meetings over dialogue

There is a tendency to view engagement approaches in terms of meetings – but since most of the business unit managers will have different agendas as far as skills development is concerned (unless there is a common issue such as a new system roll-out) then one-on-one discussions are likely to be far more productive than big meetings.

4: Prioritising process over outcomes

There may be a few managers that are interested in details of your processes, but, in the main they won't care how you're going to do it. Their interest will be 'what's the impact on my current schedule' and 'will it work?'

5: Failure to measure

Don't get sucked into a conventional ROI argument; there's only one key question to answer and that is how much business (or public) value will the programme generate? ROI calculations take place after the training intervention; business value calculations are made beforehand.

6: Ownership

Engagement processes raise a fundamental question of ownership – and that needs to be addressed both upfront and continually. The normal culture is that the business manager is responsible for the output goals of their operation, and therefore responsible for ensuring that their people have the skills they need to do their job. But if you agree a specific programme with the manager, you would normally be responsible for the execution of that programme. Good engagement practices can be both a pain and a gain for most L&D organisations. They take time, but can change the stakeholders' perception of L&D.

BCS Information & Technology Training Specialist Group

Who's to blame for the Heathrow T5 debacle?

The chaos surrounding Heathrow's T5 launch got keyboards clicking on the blog written by Jooli Atkins, chair of the BCS I&TTSG.

Jooli kicked off the discussions with her post entitled 'Terminal 5 Scapegoat?'

She wrote: 'Willie Walsh, chief executive of British Airways, said… it's not so much a problem with equipment failures (although a few of those have been admitted) but of poor staff training.'

Comments on her post, however, suggested other factors were to blame. One person wrote: 'The root cause of the failures was the "big bang" introduction with no fall-back plan in the event of problems. A phased switch from the existing terminals to T5 would surely have been more sensible and more successful. I can't help thinking that the big bang approach was a media stunt that went horribly wrong.

'Nowadays stuff like training is seen as a cost not an investment... and you can just pick it up as you go.'

Another suggestion from someone was to minimise the risk of big bang projects by rehearsing the go-live.

Jooli has also recently blogged on topics including:

- Adapting training to fit with agile project management.
- Does IT training fall under the IT or HR function?
- Should we move from the idea of IT training and consider system and process training?

www.bcs.org/blogs/training
www.bcs.org/ittsg



I&TTSG chair Jooli Atkins

Profile

Jooli Atkins has been working in the IT profession for more than 25 years, mostly in IT training. She runs a training company, Matrix FortyTwo, delivering bespoke IT training solutions to clients, as well as providing consultancy and project management.

Her personal passion is developing others and Matrix FortyTwo runs a trainer development programme, which is endorsed by the BCS for ACTT.

As chair of the BCS I&TTSG, she gives much of her time to promoting the interests of IT training both within and outside of the BCS, as well as writing and presenting. She is author of books and articles for online sites and printed magazines.

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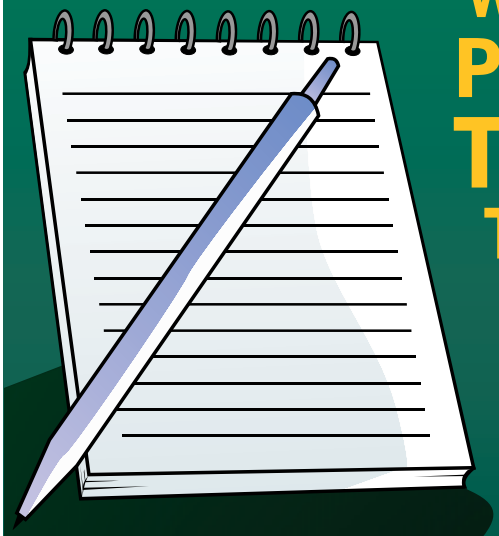
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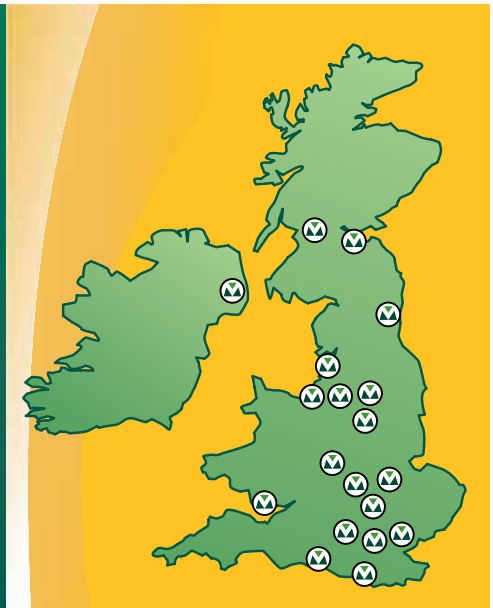


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On the ground

What advice would you give on using visuals in training, such as PowerPoint slides? We asked trainers to share their advice and guidance.

Sometimes people seem to treat PowerPoint presentations as a personal art form. Remember it is about imparting information and understanding – not about showing off technical ability or a passion for lime green.

However, technical shortcuts can help. Use PowerPoint Viewer to list files so you can load presentations for seamless back-to-back shows.

All eyes and focus can be drawn back to you for added emphasis by using the blackout key B, or W for a… yes, you guessed it.

If the session is interactive, time might become an issue, so be prepared and practice skipping slides.

If you fear under-running, have some slides with summaries or perhaps questions and answers from a previous session to fall back on and give you complete confidence.

Anne Harkness, Alpha Training

In Paul Jagger's piece on sharing slides in the *IT Training* e-monthly, he mentioned using PDFs as a way to distribute presentation content so that it can't be easily modified by recipients. However, there is also another major benefit of creating a PDF from your presentation. A PDF created using the Acrobat plugin for PowerPoint can be used to actually deliver the presentation via any version of Acrobat including the free Adobe Reader. This delivery is full screen with animations, transitions and navigation retained; it's hard to discern a difference between delivery via PowerPoint and Adobe Reader.

Having a PDF in addition to the PowerPoint file is a great way to ensure you can deliver your content on any platform.

Elaine Giles, Roseway Giles

Next issue

How do you make sure you retain learners' concentration when delivering IT training courses?

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

Trainers: this is your page – please send in your views for the next issue to the editor:
helen.boddy@hq.bcs.org.uk

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

Breaking developments

What opportunities are there to use podcasting in training? Are these currently exploited to their full and is it likely to form part of the training mix long-term?

Podcasts are particularly effective when teaching blind and visually impaired learners. Try listening to the artificially generated voice of a screen reader for any length of time: you'll soon appreciate how tiring this can be.

Microsoft Narrator is the basic utility manager for most PC users. Make sure your speakers are working, then hold down one of the Windows keys and tap the letter 'U' to start it talking. Compared to this, a recording of a real person speaking, especially when it is the familiar voice of a good teacher with a carefully scripted item, is so much easier on the ear.

Podcasts can be produced quite easily, using free software (such as Audacity) to edit together different sources, sound bites, music and other audio material. They are best viewed as mini radio programmes – variety, quality, imagination and brevity being the keynotes. Good podcasts enliven an otherwise dull soundscape of synthetic voices.

Peter Bryenton,
New College Worcester

My research at the Open University is looking at mobile learning and particularly podcasting. I'm focusing on the higher education sector, but these sorts of developments could be used in the training arena too.

The main uses of podcasting in higher education are course lectures, pre-class listening material/extended course material, and coursework feedback.

The main use to date of podcasting has been in the recording of class lectures. Uses here have concentrated on simply recording lectures for review, however there are some examples where lectures have been completely replaced by the use of podcasts. For example, the Central Queensland University in Australia has used podcasting to help support distant learners on a procedural programming course.

Another example is the Open University providing students with audio and video podcasts to support and complement course material on their undergraduate computing course.

Brendan Murphy,
Glasgow City Council

Next issue

How can you help your organisation or customers create spaces to stimulate informal learning and knowledge sharing?



The best bar none

HM Prison Service took home three gongs from the IITT awards in the categories of internal project, department and manager. Jacquie Rayner was crowned Training Manager of the Year and told Helen Boddy more about her role and its success.

How did you get into training?

My first training job was with Warwickshire County Council where I trained social workers on how to interpret financial information and manage their budgets.

I was brought into the Prison Service in 1994 to conduct finance training and develop courses for senior management. I then moved to manage a team of trainers who were delivering training for roles that supported the running of the Prison Service – for example administration, finance, IT, personnel, and professional training, such as chaplaincy or construction.

Until 2000 there was little IT connectivity across the Prison Service.

Jacquie Rayner

How did you make the move into IT skills?

I was inspired by the first IT course that I went on. I was very impressed with the trainer and the skills I acquired. I was really keen to ensure that once the Prison Service was investing in new technology that I was part of it to ensure staff received the best possible training.

Until 2000 there was little IT connectivity across the Prison Service. However in 2001 EDS was contracted to provide our IT infrastructure and services. When the Prison Service contracts team was setting up the contract with EDS I moved to a role where I provided advice to the team regarding training. I then worked with EDS to produce a training strategy for the first part of the contract – installation of new IT and telephony infrastructure for 38,000 staff across England and Wales. I assessed and evaluated the training that EDS delivered.

What is your role now?

I work for the Programme Management Services Group as training manager on e-enabled business change programmes for the Prison Service.

Currently most of my time is spent on training strategy and management for a programme called Phoenix – so far the largest Oracle implementation in Europe – introducing an IT solution to move transactional work (procurement, HR, inventories) from prisons into a new shared service centre.

Training for the finance and procurement change has now been completed with 2,500 and 8,000 staff respectively trained. Next is HR training, which we have just started delivering for 20,000 staff.

The job includes managing the development of training materials, managing a team of freelance and Prison Service staff and conducting regular evaluation of the training provided. Stakeholder engagement is key and I spend a lot of time on this.

I also provide a quality assurance role for commissioned training and delivery, working with the Prison Service's quality assurance team and industry leaders.

What about IT training for staff and prisoners?

EDS provides ongoing basic IT skills training to prison staff and delivers the technical training for IT support staff.

After any implementation is completed the training is handed over to the Prison Service's Learning and Development Team to oversee – it writes policies and the curriculum – and to Training Services to deliver for business as usual.

Prisoners' IT training is delivered through the Learning & Skills Council.

Do you go into prisons regularly?

During the implementation phase of a programme I go out to prisons a lot – to oversee the training. Prior to that I talk to staff about what the business change programme is going to deliver and about the training.

Otherwise, I'm mainly based in London where I sit on various boards.

How do you find the prison environment to work in?

Prisons are all very different from each other. The first one I went to was Wakefield, which is a high security prison. I did feel intimidated that first time, but actually, a prison can often be an inspiring place where the staff take a keen interest in the welfare of the prisoners and want to see them equipped to lead successful lives.

What does winning the IITT awards mean to you?

It helps show the Prison Service that we are trying to deliver to a high standard. It shows that quality training is important if change programmes are to deliver their benefits. It helps us when we go in to talk to stakeholders – we are perhaps taken more seriously, I think.

Jacquie Rayner's career timeline

Birmingham City Council, South Warwickshire Health Authority and Warwickshire County Council

1981-1994: Variety of finance related posts, including training managers to manage their budgets

HM Prison Service

1994-5: Finance training coordinator

1995-7: Head of management services training

1997-2001: Head of specialist training

2001-4: Quantum training manager

2005-7: Phoenix Programme training manager

Dec 2007-present: training manager

What do you think makes a good training manager?

You need to have empathy for the end users, and always have in mind the end product, and the impact on other departments.

One of the skills that a training manager needs is to balance the requirements of the staff and the management, delivering the right training, in the right location at the right time. Consideration also needs to be given to other projects being implemented and the likely impacts on your programme, and vice versa, so keeping a bird's eye view of what's happening across the business is important.

You need to be a good communicator with stakeholders, including internal departments and external contractors, and be clear, honest and tenacious. For example an outside consultant working on one of our major projects could not understand why we needed training on iProcurement as it was similar to using Amazon. I had to explain that training was necessary as the prison context had to be taken into account – users had to know about which prison codes to enter, which contracts they could use, and be made aware that, as they were not spending their own money but public funds, they must follow certain procurement procedures.

Having a finger on the pulse of the business is essential. I try to look across the Prison Service at what the business is doing, and to wear a commercial hat. I always do a cost benefit analysis of any training.

Having a finger on the pulse of the business is essential. I try to look across the Prison Service at what the business is doing, and to wear a commercial hat

Jacquie Rayner

A good analytical mind is useful to look at a plan and change it quickly. If, for example, a project slips, you need to be able to re-plan. And you need to look at challenges and provide a number of solutions.

Good management skills are necessary to manage poor performers and reward good team members.

Finally, not letting go of your enthusiasm is important. You can't let yourself be demoralised if there are problems that may impact training. They are just challenges to overcome.

What advice would you give to someone looking for a similar job to yours?

Get as close as possible to someone doing the job already. Try to get a training manager to mentor or coach you. Get a training qualification – one that teaches you best practice. Keep abreast of industry news. Learn from other organisations – I talked to NHS, RAC and KPMG about how they went about starting up learning centres. Seek lots of views and make up your own mind.

Institutes have some very useful members. You can learn a lot from them and membership doesn't cost a fortune. There are also some fabulous training networks around.

More details on HM Prison Service's training for the Oracle implementation are at: **www.bcs.org/ittraining**

Handheld devices fast-track rail maintenance work

To move the administration of maintenance work on the railways from paper to computers, Network Rail had to train 3,000 staff to use new handheld devices and systems. The programme scooped gold in the external project category at the Institute of IT Training Awards, as Gary Flood reports.

Inconvenienced as many of us may have been by over-runs on maintenance on Britain's railways this year, no one can deny that it has underlined how vital a part of UK national infrastructure the rail network is. So any innovation that could help speed up the work of the engineers who constantly work at keeping the 20,000 miles of track ready for use should be welcomed.

Step forward, then, a decision by Network Rail to improve trackside processes with the introduction of IT as a way to clear up the paper trail and improve efficiency. Network Rail owns and operates the UK's rail infrastructure, having being created by the government to replace Railtrack in October 2002.

The work involved immense amounts of training and project management around the delivery of that training, as well as the design, testing and implementation of the technology solution itself. But a year in, the system has been bedded down, and has seen the successful adoption of handheld technology by staff with minimal IT skills as an integral part of their working day.

The project won the Institute of IT Training's Gold award for External Training Project of the Year 2008, recognition that the system's introduction and associated training wasn't exactly something that got done in a weekend.

It's the project management aspect that Network Rail's project manager for the handheld project, David Burnet, one of the organisation's information management team, believes was a key factor in the judges' decision. 'In terms of training, you're talking about 3,000 key staff working a three-shift a day pattern in 15 areas nationally,' he told *IT Training*. 'The project encompassed 241 separate physical locations, all of which had to be technologically assessed to see if their network infrastructure needed updating, as well as the staff there being surveyed and polled.'



We had to work with the diaries of 3,000 busy people who might be on shift, on holiday or off sick when we wanted them

Corrina Jorgenson, managing director, Afiniti

Why was contact and in-depth research of user attitudes so important? 'There were a lot of stakeholders here that had to be satisfied,' he points out. 'There were the technology suppliers to manage but the workforce, which is heavily unionised, had to be brought on-message too.'

Plus, Network Rail sets itself high standards and has its own specific culture and ways of doing things – some of which manifest themselves at the regional level, where there can be slightly different work practices that the project managers and trainers needed to be aware of too.

Network Rail's implementation and training partner was Afiniti, with the company's managing director Corrina Jorgenson acting as project manager herself.

To meet Network Rail's requirements, Afiniti had, in as short a time as feasible, to change established work practices and retrain staff in a different way of working. The project's deployment time was just under six months in the end, but work on this idea was underway for two and a half years prior to start date.

'We wanted to replace as much paper as possible in order to increase efficiency and reduce headcount – we don't want to have data-entry clerks, we want maintenance people,' says Burnet. 'This was a key organisational

Details of the project to make the switch

Network Rail's signalling maintenance technicians have switched from a paper-based to computerised field administration when out looking after the track in the UK. The £4m project took under five months to design, and build and then six to complete business implementation, including the training of 3,000 staff. It delivered 1,200 ruggedised handheld devices to the relevant engineering and maintenance Network Rail staff working in teams nationally. The project was completed in May 2007.

Prior to the adoption of the handhelds, 50,000 pieces of paper – work orders – needed to be printed every week and delivered to these staff by managers (scheduling teams and supervisors). Once the job had been completed, the paper was passed back for manual data entry at the depot into the main Network Rail database.



priority for us. To get it right we spent a lot of time assessing if it could work and a lot of time getting the right technology.'

Rail track maintenance specialists work in gangs on a 24/7 basis, but important job information was getting lost because key data was jotted down manually, plus there was an inevitable time lag of getting that data into the company's core IT scheduling and work schedule systems.

Backlog reports might show work as overdue even though the technicians had completed the task; the relevant paperwork was somewhere 'in the system'. As a consequence management then lacked the ability to get a timely and realistic view of overdue or incomplete work due.

Communication was key

The demand for a better way of working was clear – and key to that was communication and dialogue with the target users to make sure they saw the benefits of this way of doing things. 'Few of these guys have computers,' notes Burnet. 'And it's a business change involving a unionised body, too.'

Afiniti was the training partner tasked with dealing with all of these issues. Burnet was pleased with its approach and responsiveness to the problem: 'A communication plan from director all the way down was quickly in place and was very effective,' he says.

'This was a large, dispersed workforce in a non-IT, engineering-oriented organisation,' acknowledges Jorgenson. 'We had to work out a plan to sell the benefits to very non-typical IT users.'

If communications were tough, training deployment wasn't a walk in the park either. 'Network Rail is a large organisation with each area having its own "flavour" and way of working,' says Jorgenson. 'It is also working across literally the whole country, from Land's End to John O'Groats. We had to therefore work with the diaries of 3,000 busy people who might be on shift, on holiday or off sick when we wanted them.'

The rollout of the training involved careful coordination and planning – and a lot of travel. 'There were also the usual fun things such a travel intensive project can throw up, logistically,' says Jorgenson.

The project in training terms meant designing, developing and delivering an instructor-led programme for those 3,000 non-IT users nationwide. There were four different courses, all one half-day in duration, with the exception of a special one dayer, the focal point (FP) module, which was how the local expert in a region was trained.

Courses were designed from the start as very delegate centred, featuring hands-on experience with the new handheld technology for end-users and the server based application for supervisors. The group sizes varied from small groups for FP modules to eight to ten delegates for technicians. Mobile training rigs moved around the country with the instructors.



We have got a standardised process, one way of working, better data quality and overall greater efficiency

David Burnet, Network Rail

Each training session was rigorously evaluated by the delegates and by the project team as agreed in the quality plan, says Afinti, which also used its in-house learning management system to get real time reporting to track training feedback, progress against plan (how many courses, delegate attendance, comments, and results from a quantitative and qualitative view, and so on) and trend analysis to help focus where changes or improvements to training were required as the programme progressed.

Proficiency evaluation

In addition to straight delegate feedback, their proficiency in the new system was also evaluated and recorded using Network Rail benchmarks; when ready, proficient users were provided with access to the live system.

Now the system is in place, how have things changed? There are some clear return on investment criteria: depot based data clerks are basically gone, a direct cost saving in reduced headcount of 30 staff – a return of over £1m annually to the organisation. And the 1.5m-plus sheets of A4 paper generated each year have been replaced with an electronic audit trail.

'We have made real progress using this system,' says Burnet. 'We have got a standardised process, one way of working, better data quality and overall greater efficiency.'

In terms of next steps, planned developments are to add support GPS for location tracking, give the staff the capacity to do video/photo capture and extend wireless connectivity to the devices so real-time data transfer can be done.

Moves to choose a game provider

It's important to think about how a game aligns with the business before shelling out hard cash, according to John Neston, global learning director, NCR Corporation. He was drawing on his game buying experience, as Helen Boddy reports



If you have a software team based across Scotland, India and Italy and you want to decrease defects through better teamwork, traditionally you could have flown them all to the same place for some teambuilding.

This sort of activity could be a prime candidate for games based learning, according to Neston, when he spoke at the World of Learning Conference. He suggested that instead of actually getting people together, for example, to build bridges, it's possible to build a game that is a metaphor for a team activity.

Not only can that cut down on the cost of bringing together a global team physically but there are other advantages. A junior person may feel more empowered to take higher level decisions as an avatar in a game than they might have done in person, and it's easier to get a team to 'work' together on a more regular basis. Plus, there are the environmental savings from not flying your workforce around the world.

Neston, however, warned that it's important to think how a game aligns with the business before shelling out hard cash. A game should also ideally provide an environment in which it is safe to make mistakes, is immersive, and learning is by doing. It is definitely worth assessing whether a game is effectively just recycling other training material, or actually adding value.

'There are some good providers out there of games based learning, but some will sell you old wine in a new bottle,' he said. 'Some haven't got past turning pages on a screen since authoring tools came out.'

Nevertheless, Neston emphasised that you do need to engage a solution provider as it is hard to create a game yourself, given the need for graphics. Having gone through the process of looking at games providers for NCS, he shared what he had learnt.

'As an L&D manager you need to think what your killer application is and ask the right questions of the salesmen,' he said. 'Are they thinking about a business-oriented game or just trying to sell you a box?'

Neston demonstrated what he meant through the example of his killer application, which would be to train his sales team: It would:

- be role-oriented – for sales to take time out from selling it has to be very relevant;
- have engaging content;
- be based on agile software – so it can be adapted;
- be a performance improvement model – to help salesmen get inside the mind of the buyer.

Neston suggested a provider should:

- demonstrate it understands your business needs;
- be driven by your business objectives;
- have the credentials to meet budget and deadline;
- be able to design and build learning programmes;
- have its own platform to build the programme on;
- be able to deliver a learning programme;
- integrate with your LMS.
- have a portfolio of games-based learning.

As an L&D manager you need to think what your killer application is and ask the right questions of the salesmen

John Neston, global learning director, NCR Corporation

The supplier's platform should ideally be low end and internet-enabled, according to Neston. It must be modular so that it's possible to adapt the game easily if necessary to fit a changing marketplace. It should have the capability to support remote multi-players, and offer remote facilitation. It needs to provide performance assessment, so, for example, it's possible to assess when a sales force is sufficiently trained to go out and talk to customers.

So once your game is developed, how do you get buy-in from staff? Neston said he would first focus on getting the team's 20 top performers involved. Once they have used it and improved their skills with it, that leaves a performance vacuum behind them. The next batch of people will be keen to catch up and therefore take part in the game. Neston reckoned 10 per cent are likely not to want to take part, but they would risk being left behind their colleagues, and would therefore ideally then be managed out of the business.

Having used the game, it is then of course important to assess how successful it was – how meaningful were the outcomes and how relevant were they to the context of the original problem or training need? 'For example, a flight simulator would score high on both,' said Neston. That said, it's worth taking into account that building a bridge would not score high in the context of eradicating software bugs either.

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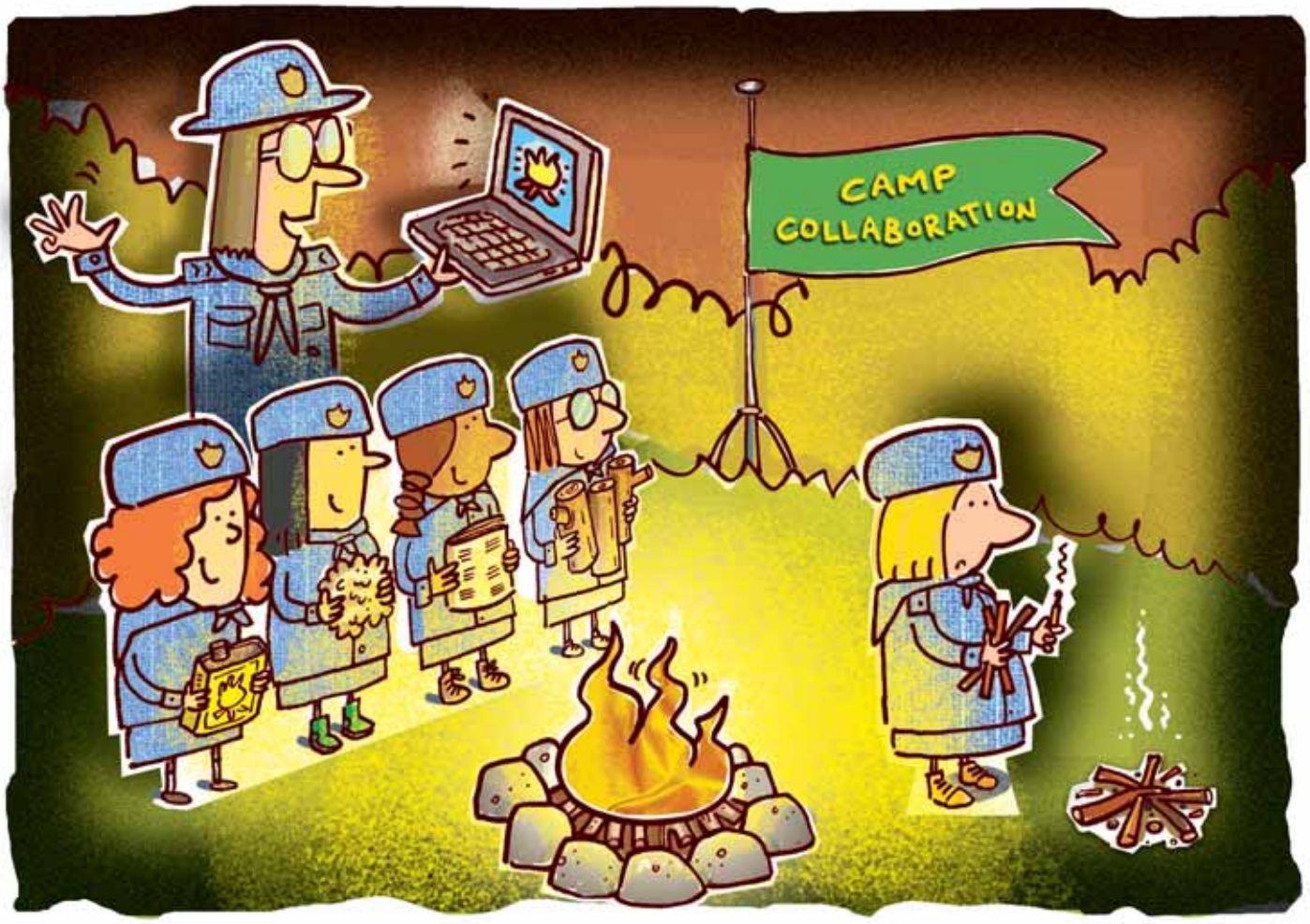
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Be prepared to lend a hand in facilitating collaboration

Any situation requiring the combined intelligence of several, as opposed to the superior insight of one, is a candidate for collaboration, says Alan Bellinger. There's risk involved but the L&D manager can help cultivate success by taking on the role of facilitation.

Just spend a moment pondering this scenario:

- There's a high probability that you'll be involved in a collaboration project within the next 12 months.
- Collaboration projects are high risk.
- Management is risk averse in the present economic circumstances.
- Job security at the present time is not great.

Being well prepared for a collaboration project makes good sense. Collaboration within a department (for example setting sales targets) does not have too much risk associated with it, although the same best practices still apply. It is when the collaboration project crosses functional boundaries, or even enterprise boundaries (for example bid development for a major project), that the issues become substantial.

At the start of a collaborative process, participants must be brought on board

Alan Bellinger

The key point is that there are personal and business skills involved in collaboration; it's not just an issue of familiarity with the tools. So the most likely scenario is that an organisation will try a collaboration project and underestimate the skills issues involved. They may argue, it's easy, we'll soon pick it up, or they may request training just on the tools. In either event there is a high probability of failure. Where the

team participants are highly motivated towards the collaboration goal, and there is a sharing culture, the risk of failure will be reduced; but don't let that blind management on the next collaboration project.

The core issue with collaboration – especially across functional boundaries – is that it is barely compatible with our predominant management culture of top down responsibility and accountability. In an enterprise with a strong collaboration culture, functional management's accountability and responsibility is reduced.

Understanding collaboration

Collaboration tools have been with us for some time, but increasingly they are merging with content management tools and with portals, enterprise applications and enterprise social software.

Each of these different areas that are now merging (collaboration, content management, enterprise applications and social networking) will have their own specifics. Collaboration projects are more concerned with authoring, exchanging, debating and modifying content than on how to store it. In contrast, content management projects focus on the content in its final, or at least stable, state. Enterprise applications focus on processes, and social networking projects focus more on mutual support, shared experiences and short-term interaction.

The functionality you should expect from such applications will include membership management, access controls, user profiles, shared workspaces, document sharing and discussion forums. In an ideal world, it would also include calendar integration, task allocation, task tracking, workflow, basic project management, wikis, blogs, social tags, social bookmarks, social network analysis, social network visualisation, content feeds, people search (expertise location), team decision support, content rating, reputation management and alerting.

The more complex your collaboration project, the more of these features you should expect to find – and the harder the task if they're not there. For example, developing a major new business initiative will require a far more robust collaboration environment than the allocation of carpark spaces.



L&D almost certainly won't have any content expertise to contribute, but its role should be facilitation – to enable the group or community to work together effectively

Alan Bellinger

The L&D role

In my experience, most IT departments feel that they own the collaboration strategy, and mainly feel that it's a done deal, except that people aren't using it very well. But it is increasingly recognised that its acceptance is a skills and culture issue, and that is where L&D come in. Whilst it could be feasible to give the responsibility to an individual business unit, it really does need to be at a cross-functional level in order to send the right messages to the organisation.

The best pay-off from collaboration is on cross-functional activities (that is where harnessing collective intelligence really creates value), and therefore responsibility for the collaboration process cannot be at functional level.

L&D almost certainly won't have any content expertise to contribute, but its role should be facilitation – to enable the group or community to work together effectively.

At the start of a collaborative process, participants must be brought on board; they must be invited to participate and must understand the reasons for their involvement, and the expectations of them. Once convinced (or mandated to participate), their initial connections must be tested, and there should be a governance system to update future connections.

One of the most critical aspects of team collaboration is getting the roles right, and here we can borrow many community management concepts from the knowledge management community. One of the best established principles on roles was that people could be domain champions, contributors, and users. The domain champion was the ultimate arbiter on what was accepted within that domain and regarded as an expert by his or her peers. Domain contributors were people who were able to contribute their knowledge and experience either in the form of documents, verbal content, or through IM, feeds etc. And the role of users is to access and use that intelligence.

Of course, within a project, there will be multiple domains, and so each individual would have a different mix of champion, contributor, and user roles as the project evolves. Whilst it may be advisable to have an overall leader, it is not essential, especially where there are sensitivities to the collaboration. If there isn't an overall leader, the individual domain champions will exercise a joint leadership role or one person may take on a facilitator role if that is deemed the most effective approach.

The other critical point at the start of a project is to determine the criteria for success. When you dig behind projects atrophying, you typically find that there was a short-term critical issue, and a number of people are brought together in a collaboration project to resolve it. The participants are invariably the ones most affected by the issue and, once it is resolved, they no longer need to meet. So, in fact, such a programme should be regarded as a success.

Six practices

Once the project is underway, make sure that you follow the IITT's six best practices for collaboration; they cover capturing the benefits, monitoring potential breakthroughs, collecting the outcomes, comparing the contributions, learning the lessons and keeping management informed. For details of these, see full article: **www.bcs.org/ittraining**



Leaders of the pack

The top 50 training companies have had a financially successful year overall, with the market having gradually recovered. Helen Boddy finds out what factors have made the industry buoyant and improved the fortunes of individual companies.

'The IT training market in the UK is now back to the size it was before the slump at the start of the decade,' says David Pardo, managing director of consultancy IT Skills Research. 'We estimate it was worth £530 million in 2007, up 10.5 per cent year-on-year. However, it was only really in the last quarter of 2007 that the training companies did really well, and not all of them have seen growth last year. It's not the sort of stable growth we were seeing in the 1990s.'

What has led to the industry's reviving fortunes? 'The IT industry has been gradually recovering from the slump in the early 2000s and the training market tends to follow that trend,' says Pardo. 'The less financially stable firms have disappeared from the market during the lean period and the companies that are left are now profiting from streamlining during harder times. After a low in 2003, the market has seen four years of year-on-year growth.'

The IT training companies have also benefited from the rise in popularity of the so-called best practice and professional courses, such as Prince2 and ITIL. They are also now claiming to be selling more management and leadership courses. Read the article on p24 for more detail on 'what's hot' subject-wise.



To succeed, firstly offer a range of solutions that meet market needs

John Kauffman, managing director of QA-IQ

Why do individual companies do well?

The health of the market as a whole has clearly helped individual training businesses, but not all have seen revenues grow this year. So *IT Training* asked companies what they see as the factors for financial success.

Not all companies agreed on what makes a good business, generally believing their model to be unique. A unique selling point is of course known to be an important factor in business, so we'll look at that in more detail later, but first, there were some common factors that this year's high-flying companies viewed as underpinning a training company's success.

Firstly, most firms highlighted the need to be customer-focused, an important part of which is listening to what your customers want.

Melanie Franklin, CEO of Maven Training, says: 'Listening to clients and potential clients, and giving them what they want is important. I talk to delegates at training centres and at exhibitions, and I deliver training. I ask what problems they want solving.'

The next related issue is how to meet the clients' needs. The general consensus seems to be that means offering high quality courses in the right subjects at the right price, in the right place at the right time.

In order to get quality, one point agreed on by companies is that a training business needs good trainers. Eddie Kilkelly, managing director of ILX Group, says: 'Training is a people business. You have to have the right people in the business, and be focused on people. If don't get that right, you can lose customers.'

Paul Stevens, managing director of Assima (DACG), agrees: 'Companies who tried out bringing in their own contractors are now coming back to consultancies like us because it is a safer option and we can vouch for the quality of the trainers that we supply.'

Seeking to tap into the public finance stream

QA-IQ is currently looking at creating some public-private partnerships, so that customers can use them as a vehicle to access public funding.

'This will mean that our customers can take advantage of funding that the government is prepared to offer,' says John Kauffman, managing director of QA-IQ.

'We are working on several projects with government bodies and government-funded agencies. I expect we'll be able to make two announcements about these in the next six months. By the year end I'd expect to have three of four state-funded projects.'

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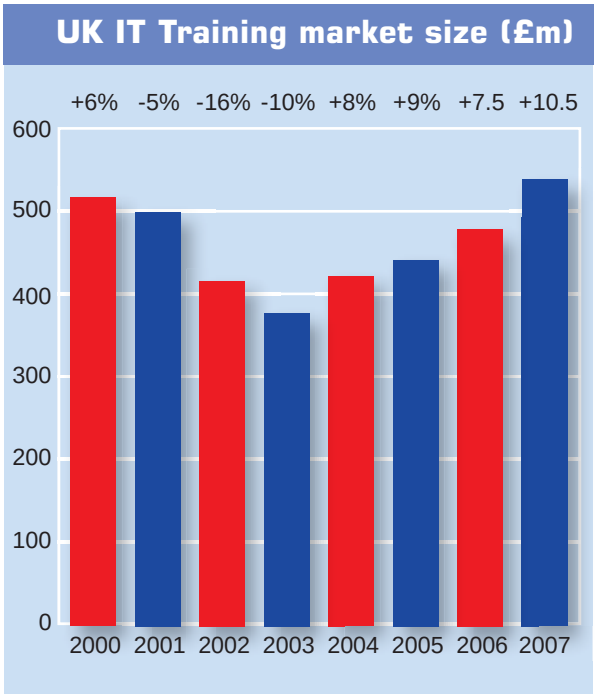
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Franklin also stressed that good venues were essential. She also attributes much of Maven Training's success to increased flexibility in locations with more regional delivery, and courses being offered at evenings and weekends to suit contractors and project-based staff.

Being customer focused is the essence of the first three points that John Kauffman, managing director of QA-IQ outlines in his summary of what a successful business needs:

- Offer a range of solutions that meet market needs.
- Deliver the highest quality possible.
- Do number 1 and 2 to create value for the customer.
- Do all of the above and make money for yourself.

Concerning his fourth point, one important element for their bottomline, training businesses tend to agree, is high attendance figures on public schedule courses.

'Having the highest attendance possible is one fundamental point in doing well,' says Ian Johnson, managing director of Xpertise. 'Related to that is making sure that you have classes to suit your audience.'

Richard Chappell, UK MD, Learning Tree International, agrees that offering the right subject areas can make a difference to a company's fortunes: 'Last year we benefited, like other companies, from the popularity of the Prince2 and ITIL curricula.'

In the enterprise resource management field, Stevens says activity in training solutions depends on systems' roll-outs and upgrades, and last year, there was a lot of SAP and Oracle activity, which helped drive business.

To be flexible to industry demand and keep costs down, Kilkelly suggests it is important not to own too many fixed assets (ie training facilities). He also thinks that being innovative and investing in new products is important for a company's success

Landing long-term large contracts also help a training company's finances and stability. Xpertise's revenue increased by 40 per cent last year, which Johnson thinks is due in part to the company increasingly having large customers and longer contracts. He says having sound finances helps win bigger customers and longer term contracts.



Having the highest attendance possible is one fundamental point in doing well

Ian Johnson, managing director of Xpertise

One training companies' customer which has an overview of the market is independent managed service provider Knowledge Pool, which contracts a range of training providers. James Cook, partnership director, says: 'From our point of view as a customer with clients who have a variety of needs, we see two sort of companies that work well: ones with a broad range of generically available courses – good quality, run at a competitive price,with a good schedule and spread of courses. These suppliers have volume. The second model is to specialise in a subject area, such as project management. These companies don't have a broad offering, but add value in certain subjects. They increase quality, focus on good trainers, and sometimes have different sorts of venues (eg with more break-out areas), or they can be specialist, for example with Cisco certification you need to invest in its servers.'

What are the niches?

As well as companies specialising in subject areas, some focus on a delivery method or other unique selling point. Firebrand Training, for example, offers a fairly wide curriculum, but has specialised in boot camp style learning. Last year its revenues rose by 35 per cent.

Then there's Learning Tree, which uses 'real world' trainers and non-vendor courseware.

'Learning Tree is for people who don't want Gospel according to Gates,' says Chappell. The company bounced back in the year ending September 2007 when operating income increased by 100 per cent, which so far has increased again in FY08 by around 50 per cent. Chappell thinks the company's strategy of sticking to high quality training and steering away from managed services is now paying off.

'I think there is no one reason for our change in fortunes,' he says. 'We have been focusing on the basics. For a few years when people kept falling off the edge, we stuck to our guns.'

Add-ons to classroom training, such as e-learning, is another arena that training companies see as a way of gaining an advantage.

Stevens says: 'E-learning aspects of our business are strong, as more companies are looking to move in that direction. They see it as a cost-effective way to replace and support users. Most people are wise enough to blend it – they are mixing it with ILT. There is more maturity in that area as users have become used to it via e-learning programmes at work or applications at home.'

His view is echoed by Kilkelly: 'If you offer truly blended solutions, the market is not so commoditised. We develop our own e-offerings, which is about 40 per cent of our business. We're incredibly profitable because it's not just classroom interventions. We provide a range of

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consultancy, interventions, classroom and e-learning.'

Another popular extension of the business is to offer a managed service, with companies such as QA-IQ and Xpertise in the arena, as well as KnowledgePool.

Johnson says: 'Our managed service business has been important for our growth – I think customers are now looking at outsourcing with more gusto.'

Paul Jefferson, CEO of KnowledgePool, too thinks it is a growing market: 'I have no doubt the managed service market has accelerated in last few years. Learning managed services are still in their infancy in the UK, compared for example to HR outsourcing. All the drivers are there to influence L&D managers to outsourcing. The pressure on L&D departments is to be more strategic, and support business objectives. By outsourcing they can free up their team. They will also be looking to manage costs if there is a downturn'

They see e-learning as a cost-effective way to replace and support users

Paul Stevens, managing director of Assima (DACG)

Companies such as Assima DACG occupy a slightly different niche again in the market. Stevens explains: 'We offer an entire solution for a large programme, including a training programme. We provide trainers and technology, and post-go live support etc.

'Our solution is for event-based projects, such as a roll-out of a new system, which can mean we work with a company for two, three or four years. It's not really a managed solution, as we don't meet all of a company's training needs.'

So last year was a pretty good one for the industry, but what of the future? So far, most training companies say they have seen no impact of the credit crunch, partially due to cushioning from longer term contracts.

'The crunch point for the training industry will come once contracts are up for renewal and will depend on the state of the economy and IT industry at that point,' says Pardo. 'We also know from our research that training buyers' budgets will be tight this year. However, I think, having been through lean times at the start of the decade, this time round training companies ought to be in better shape to withstand a possible downturn.'

Sizzling subjects are on the soft side

ITIL and Prince2 continued to star as growth subjects in the IT training arena last year. Leadership courses aimed at IT professionals are also becoming a more frequent part of the mix on offer, while technical certification remains fairly steady overall.

As the IT landscape matures and become integrated into businesses, IT roles are shifting with an increasing emphasis on the grey area where technical knowhow meets business needs.

'Five years ago, training was very software specific,' says Melanie Franklin, CEO of Maven Training. 'Now, IT staff need more general management, change management and leadership skills.'

Over the last year, ITIL and Prince2 are cited by many training companies as generating growth for them, while demand for technical courses is relatively steady and leadership courses are tipped as the next growth area.

'Demand for technology training is fairly constant,' says James Cook, partnership director at KnowledgePool. 'Microsoft has fallen as a percentage of the training business, but it's stayed fairly constant overall while subjects such as Prince2 and ITIL have grown and are still increasing. The amount of providers offering theses subjects has risen dramatically. Almost every organisation now offers them.'

Service management (for which ITIL has emerged as a leading best practice standard) and project management (where Prince2 is prominent in the UK) tend to form a category of their own, sitting between the hard core technical subjects – the Microsofts and Oracles of the world – and subjects that are purely 'soft skills' such as time or people management. They are often classified as best practice or professional qualifications. Both ITIL and Prince2 had their origins in the UK IT industry and have a natural association with the IT training providers. Both involve skills that many people in the industry require – service and projects being bedrocks of the industry, so their dramatic growth is perhaps not so surprising.



A course is one way of breaking the circle of not having experience

Melanie Franklin, CEO of Maven Training

ITIL has flourished with almost half a million people worldwide now having sat the certification since its start in the 1980s. In May last year, the ITIL core guidance was updated to version 3 and accompanying qualifications began to be developed. Foundation courses were launched almost immediately but the gradual introduction of higher level syllabuses slowed growth in ITIL last year, according to certain training companies.

However, in the case of ITIL, weakness is all relative. 'ITIL was the weakest part of our business last



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year but it still had 15-16 per cent growth,' says Eddie Kilkelly, managing director of ILX Group, where revenue increased by 24 per cent in 2007. 'We have trained huge amounts of people in ITIL Foundation version 3. Once the intermediate level qualifications are ready, we expect the floodgates to open.'

In the project management arena, Prince2 is also still strong. Launched in 1996, by the middle of last year more than 200,000 people had taken Prince2 foundation level worldwide with around 80 per cent in the UK, according to the OGC.

'There are no signs of project management, nor ITIL, waning,' says Richard Chappell, UK MD, Learning Tree International.

There is also a new related star in the arena: project management's big brother, the OGC-launched programme management certification, Managing Successful Programmes (MSP).

Kilkelly points out: 'There's been significant growth in MSP but the market is nowhere near the size for Prince2 or ITIL.'

Others think it could really take off. Chappell, for example, believes MSP is a growing sphere, while Franklin says Maven Training's programme management business increased by about 40 per cent last year and she sees further room for a lot more growth.

'Many people have now got project management qualifications and are thinking "what next"?' she says. 'Programme management and change management are the logical next steps.

'When people who work in project management attend courses in programme management it widens their horizons and puts what they do into context. They see how their job fits into the strategic picture, which they need to understand if they want to progress. Programme management gives them perspective.'

Franklin thinks change management is another upcoming subject to watch.

'The growth of change management is due to people in IT seeing that projects do not deliver because there is no change management,' she says. 'A lot of people going on change management courses are interested to see why people resist change.'

A recent Gartner report sounds a similar note. It claimed that experienced IT practitioners need to acquire some non-IT business unit management experience if they wish to viably pursue new CIO opportunities.

'Professional qualifications and competence are still necessary for those wanting to become CIOs, but these qualities will not be sufficient in coming years,' says Ken McGee, distinguished analyst and Gartner Fellow.

To help IT professionals make the move into management roles, Franklin thinks leadership courses are set to flourish.

'If a person is technologically competent, that does not mean the company would let them automatically go into management. But if that person has done a course, you would be more confident they know the basics. A course shows that they are ready for a move. It's one way of breaking the circle of not having experience.'

Training companies certainly foresee more demand in this area, with Xpertise and QA-IQ having made recent announcements of new courses. Xpertise has launched a range of 'intensive development programmes', which include a course entitled 'Soft Skills for IT Professionals'.

QA-IQ meanwhile this April launched a new accredited programme for management development in partnership with Middlesex University's Institute for Work Based Learning. Together they are offering a certificate, diploma and advanced diploma in management.



There are some pretty good technologies coming out at the moment. They are not add-ons or tweaks, and not plug in and play – you need to learn them

Richard Chappell, UK MD, Learning Tree International

New entrants to top 50

- **EMC**
- **SAS Software**
- **Maven Training**
- **Ideal Training**

John Kauffman, managing director of QA-IQ, says: 'We are looking for accreditation for the areas of soft skills, management and personnel development, as there is not much there at the moment. It's important for us to look at how to create third party accreditation.'

All this talk of soft skills does, however, not spell the end of technical courses. In fact their strength depends very much on who you talk to. Ian Johnson, managing director of Xpertise reported that the company's core IT skills business was up by 18 per cent last year while professional skills (project and service management) rose by 15 per cent. For ILX Group, however, Kilkelly says the opposite is true with best practice courses stronger than pure technical subjects.

Chappell points out: 'There are some pretty good technologies coming out at the moment. They are not add-ons or tweaks, and not plug in and play – you need to learn them. Sharepoint is one to watch, as is SQL Server 2008.'

Johnson of Xpertise agrees about SQL Server and adds .net, and visualstudio to the list.

Kauffman is backing virtualisation as a large growth area for this year, which ties in with findings from an NCC survey in March which predicted that virtualisation and storage area networks would feature prominently on IT organisations' shopping lists n 2008, as would Microsoft purchases.

In the enterprise resource planning arena, Assima found that last year SAP and Oracle were strong and expects them to remain so this year.

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Top 50 IT Training

Top 50 The full list

Rank 2008	Rank 2007	Company	Revenue £m	Change %	Website
1	1	**QA-IQ**	63.5e	5	www.qa-iq.com
2	2	**Learning Tree International**	23.6	5	www.learningtree.co.uk
3	8	**Xpertise Training**	22.3	40	www.xpertise.co.uk
4	3	**SAP**	21.6	10	www.sap.com/uk/education
5	4	**IBM Training**	19.5e	3	www.ibm.com/services/learning
6	7	**Logica**	19.2e	16	www.logica.com
7	5	**Global Knowledge**	18.7e	1	www.globalknowledge.co.uk
8	6	**Parity Training**	18.6	3	www.parity.net/training
9	11	**SkillSoft**	16.5e	17	www.skillsoft.com
10	12	**Oracle University**	15.5e	19	www.oracle.com/uk/education
11	10	**Computeach International**	14.9e	5	www.computeach.co.uk
12	22	**RWD Technologies**	12.6	64	www.rwd.com
13	14	**New Horizons**	12.5e	9	www.nhtraining.com
14	26	**ILX Group**	12.4e	24	www.ilxgroup.com
15	13	**Assima (DACG)**	12.2e	12	www.assima.net
16	21	**ThirdForce**	12.0	6	www.thirdforceplc.com
17	18	**Remarc Group**	10.5	9	www.remarc.co.uk
18	16	**Sun Microsystems**	10.0e	0	http://uk.sun.com/training
19	20	**HP Education Services**	9.0e	0	www.hp.com/uk/education
20	15	**Training Synergy**	8.3	-22	www.trainingsynergy.com
21	24	**Business Training Partnership**	8.0	56	www.btp.uk.com
22	25	**Firebrand Training**	7.7	35	www.firebrandtraining.com
23	27	**Steria Learning Services**	7.6e	17	www.steria.co.uk
24	–	**PPi Learning Services**	5.7e	–	www.ppilearning.com
25	39	**Fast Lane**	5.5	90	www.flane.co.uk
26	29	**BT Training Solutions (NI)**	4.6	13	www.bicsystems.com
27	19	**KnowledgePool**	4.5e	45	www.knowledgepool.com
28	30	**Red Tray**	4.4	10	www.redtray.co.uk
29	32	**Symantec Education Services**	4.0e	7	www.symantec.com
30	28	**Afiniti**	3.9	-13	www.afiniti.co.uk
31	33	**Red Hat**	3.9	9	www.redhat.com
32	36	**Sage**	3.8e	15	www.sage.com
33	37	**iTrain**	3.7	16	www.itraineducation.co.uk
34	34	**WDR**	3.6e	0	www.wdr.co.uk
35	–	**EMC**	3.5e	30	www.emc.com
36	47	**PremierIT**	3.5	52	www.premierit.com
37	38	**BroadSkill**	3.2	3	www.broadskill.com
38	–	**SAS Software**	3.0	18	www.sas.com/uk
39	41	**DNS Arrow**	3.0	11	www.dnsarrow.co.uk
40	40	**WWP Training**	2.9e	12	www.wwp.co.uk
41	35	**Kaleidoscope Training**	2.8	-18	www.kcct.co.uk
42	–	**Maven Training**	2.8	19	www.maventraining.co.uk
43	48	**FDM Group**	2.6	13	www.fdmgroup.com
44	–	**Ideal Training**	2.5e	40	www.idealtraining-uk.com
45	31	**Key Training**	2.5e	-34	www.keytraining.co.uk
46	42	**Northgate Information Solutions**	2.5e	13	www.northgate-is.com
47	43	**Happy Computers**	2.4	0	www.happy.co.uk
48	50	**Interskill Learning**	2.4	3	www.interskill.co.uk
49	44	**StayAhead Training**	2.4	-1	www.stayahead.com
50	45	**Host Computers**	2.4e	11	www.hostcomputers.co.uk

How the top 50 was compiled

This table of the top 50 training companies in revenue terms was compiled by Pardo Fox / IT Skills Research. The revenues shown in the table are for each company's financial year ending in 2007 or cover the calendar year 2007, and relate to IT training delivered in the UK. Eligibility is open to companies with revenues derived principally from the sale of training to employers for their staff, excluding colleges, universities and firms selling to private individuals or delivering publicly funded training.

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

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

Footnotes to Top 50

Logica was formerly **LogicaCMG**. **SkillSoft** completed its acquisition of **NETg** in May 2007, and its revenue figure includes NETg's revenues from that date. **ThirdForce** acquired **MindLeaders** in May 2007. **Business Training Partnership** was trading independently throughout 2007, and so is listed separately here, but was bought by **KnowledgePool** in March 2008. **Firebrand Training** was formerly **The Training Camp**. **Steria** acquired **Xansa** in October 2007; the figure shown is for the combined revenues of their respective training businesses. **PPi Learning Services** was a new company in December 2006, when it acquired the assets and staff of **PPI Learning** from the receiver. **KnowledgePool** is a managed training service provider across a broad range of subject areas; the revenue figure listed is for IT training only. **Interskill Learning** was formerly **Ajilon Learning**.

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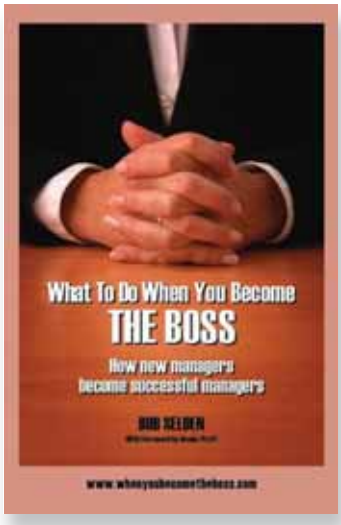
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Book reviews

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What to do when you become the boss

Bob Selden, 288pp

Outskirts Press, £18.95

ISBN: 978-1432714284

Rating ★★★★☆

Your team manager has resigned unexpectedly and immediately. The boss has asked you to step up and fill the gap for a while with a chance to make it permanent if it works out. Your new team are now giving you lots of 'why you and not me' looks. You have never managed anyone in your life, and you don't have a clue what to do next.

This is a recognisable scenario, and one that many people may have encountered during their working career.

Bob Selden's book is a management guide aimed at being a handbook for new managers to help them come to terms with their changed role. In this respect, the book is somewhat different to many of the other management development books on the market, as it covers not only people who find themselves in a management position, but also those individuals who are looking to move organisations to attain their first leadership role.

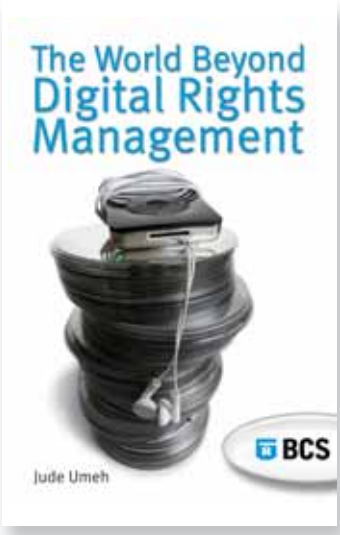
By taking a holistic approach to the way a person should behave when leading a team, the author covers not only the techniques to use when managing other people, whether these are subordinates or superiors, but also looks extensively at personal management and development.

This includes very useful guidance on practical and often forgotten matters such as managing the large increase in email one may experience in a new role, or how to properly manage meetings to ensure efficiency. It is these areas, coupled with the more traditional approaches to business and people management, which make this book invaluable to someone with no previous experience.

The book includes lots of examples. With well laid out chapters it is an easy book to dip in and out of, especially should someone wish to quickly reference a particular management situation in which they find themself.

Experienced managers would probably find this book a little too elementary in approach. However, for a new or prospective manager, this book is an excellent purchase.

Reviewed by James Poxon
MBCS CITP



The World Beyond Digital Rights Management

Jude Umeh, 285pp

BCS, £34.95

ISBN: 978-1-902505-87-9

Rating ★★★★☆

Digital rights management (DRM) means different things to different people. Intellectual property owners talk about business models which maximise their ability to sell and license their content; technologists on the other hand talk about the mechanisms which encrypt, secure, and transport digital media material.

There is a tendency for these business and technology domains to be treated independently.

Indeed, this fragmented approach could be seen as one of the key reasons that many parts of the entertainment and content industries struggle to realise the value of their media assets in the digital environment or - as in the case of the recent closure of pandora.com to UK markets a blunt refusal to adapt.

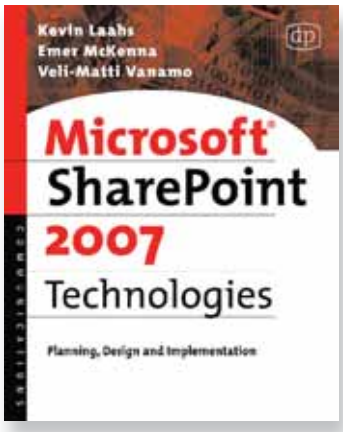
Jude Umeh's book takes a holistic view encompassing both the business and technology arenas and does so with both structure and engagement. Drawing on an evolutionary theory of communication (and becoming perhaps the first ever technology tome to reference the Gutenberg Bible), Umeh places the need for DRM on the development of new technologies which enable the easy transfer of digital assets.

Conversely, he discusses how the failure of large corporations to embrace and exploit these technologies through new business models has led to some unease in the industry.

Umeh succinctly explains how the IT, business models, and standards combine and interact, and how the industry is now maturing to take account of such rapid change. He furthermore outlines the key vendors, products and organisations along with relevant legal actions and mechanisms in major markets.

IT specialists may overlook this book as it is inevitably light on the technical details. But, in fact, Umeh presents a superb example of how technology is developing to fulfil a business requirement, and how it can adapt and innovate to drive transformation and change in an entire industry.

Reviewed by John Beaver
MBCS CITP



Microsoft SharePoint 2007 Technologies – Planning Design and Implementation

Kevin Laahs, Emer McKenna, Veli-Matti Vanamo, 688pp

Digital Press, £39.99

ISBN: 978-0-12-373616-1

Rating ★★★★★

This book describes the latest iteration of the SharePoint platform. The book covers everything from introducing the technology to developing your own applications. What is apparent from the outset is the complexity of the platform and this is reflected in the amount of information the author wishes to impart through the high density of the text. The book is squarely aimed at server administrators and SharePoint developers, rather than the end users who will be generating content.

The book is well organised across 18 chapters which cover everything you would need to know to implement SharePoint in your organisation. The early chapters introduce the SharePoint concepts, of which there are many to grasp. The text is interspersed with examples demonstrating the relevance of a particular SharePoint feature and there is plenty of background.

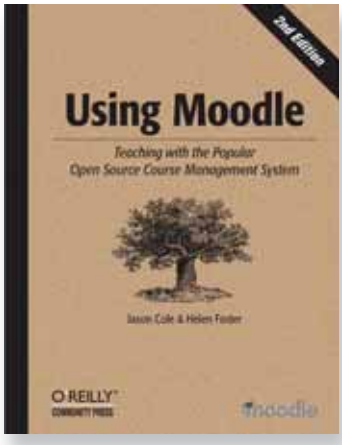
Chapter 10 covers planning the deployment of SharePoint. The content includes coverage of the network impact and the disk subsystem planning. This chapter alone is indicative of the depth of this book. It really does cover everything you would need to consider for a SharePoint implementation.

Later chapters include coverage of extending the platform for your needs by writing your own web parts.

If you are not familiar with SharePoint, this book will be invaluable in helping you through the learning curve. I suspect that in practice you will need to sit down with your implementation and try things in order to fully understand what the author is describing.

This book provides more than enough information to enable an organisation to put SharePoint at the heart of their operation.

Reviewed by Adrian Hibbert, technical manager



Using Moodle, Second Edition

Jason Cole, Helen Foster, 282pp

O'Reilly, £24.99

ISBN: 9780596529185

Rating ★★★★★

This book is about Moodle (Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment), an open source, flexible course management system – the main target group being the teaching community.

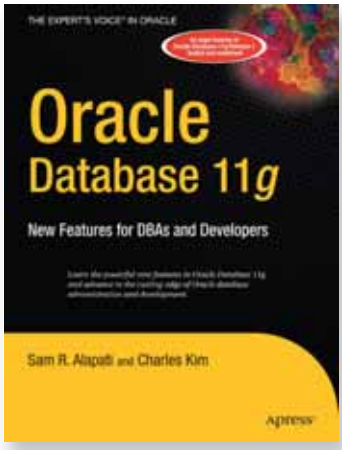
Moodle has become a very widely used application, not only because it is open source, but also thanks to it being conceived by a computer scientist (Martin Dougiamas) who was also an educator who had grown frustrated by the software applications he had to use in teaching.

Consequently, he designed a learning environment centered on educational needs, and now, after the success of his work, a community of open-source developers is helping him, aiming to make Moodle the best course management system available.

The book is written for use by any kind of teacher or instructor who desires to use a learning environment, regardless of the level of teaching and without needing a special skill in computer science; the style is clear and easy to read. The book has 16 chapters that include a description of Moodle capabilities, and suggestions for course structure, case studies and best practice. These include: the basics of the Moodle interface, adding static content to a course, course management, quizzes and assignments, forum, chat and messaging skills, wikis, blogs, the database module, grading and scales, feedback, and Moodle administration.

The book is a very useful tool for teachers and instructors, and, as well as offering a reference manual for Moodle, provides the reader with additional educational information, case studies and best practice examples, all in an easy-to-read style.

Reviewed by Mihai Caramihai



Oracle Database 11g: New Features for DBAs and Developers

Sam R. Alapati, Charles Kim, 602 pp

Apress, $44.99

ISBN: 978-1-59059-910-5

Rating ★★★★☆

If an experienced Oracle professional is looking for a good supporting book to help them transfer their applications to the Oracle 11g environment, this is a very good starting point.

It is not the 'missing manual', nor a quick fix reference guide. The book provides a well compiled set of chapters that guides an experienced database administrator or an Oracle developer through the new features. It does so by highlighting key differences from previous versions of Oracle, offering useful tips and small samples of code at places where they appear to be most useful.Overall this is very good value for money, especially for a technical manual.

Reviewed by Elias Pimenidis MBCS CITP

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IITT National Trainers Conference & Exhibition



Training 2008, the Institute of IT Training's annual conference and exhibition, will take place on 18 September. The conference theme this year is professional development at work.

With the opportunity to network with some of the leading speakers and practitioners in the field, including winners of IT Training Awards 2008, the BCS-sponsored conference will be a valuable event to attend for all training professionals. And if you book your place online before 30 June, you will receive a free copy of our survey, The Changing Role of the IT Training Professional.

Aimed at all training professionals, from training managers through to developers, consultants and trainers, Training 2008 is designed to introduce delegates to new technologies and new ways of thinking that can be taken away and implemented into the workplace. There are two separate streams covering training strategy and management, and learning technologies and training delivery, each with four exciting and topical presentations by specially selected and exceptional presenters.

The conference also includes workshop sessions, as well as a rapidly growing exhibition where you can discuss your requirements or talk through the latest products and services with the suppliers.

Stream A: Training management & strategy	Stream B: Learning technologies & training delivery
Session 1: Changing your team to work smarter, not harder	**Session 1:** Learning materials creation – by all and for all
Session 2: What is the value of learning and how do you show it?	**Session 2:** Using social networking to your learning advantage
Session 3: Managing an end-user roll-out with 'total learning'	**Session 3:** Mobile learning that works for you and your organisation
Session 4: Panel: Prove you're a professional	**Session 4:** Building a successful learning community online

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The event moves to a new home this year allowing the popular welcome reception and networking evening on the 17 September to take place at the same venue, the Oxford Belfry.

The new venue will also allow the exhibition to open early, giving delegates the opportunity to browse the stands and meet the exhibitors at the networking evening. Donald Taylor will again chair the conference and the final programme and speakers will be announced over the next few weeks. To keep up to date with Training 2008 conference news, visit the conference website at **www.trainersconference.co.uk**

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We have introduced online booking for this year's conference where you can book and pay for the conference via the conference website using your credit/debit card. You can access the online booking form from the conference website at **www.trainersconference.co.uk**

The conference and exhibition is always sold out, so book today to avoid disappointment and we look forward to welcoming you and your team at the Institute's flagship conference event, Training 2008.

IT Training Awards 2009 closing date for entries

The IT Training Awards 2009, the IT training industry's celebration of excellence, will once again take place at the Dorchester on 5 February 2009.

Due to the increasing volume of entries we have received over recent years we are this year bringing the closing date forward by one month to 30 September 2008.

Visit the awards website at **www.ittrainingawards.co.uk** for information on categories and how to enter.

The IT Training Awards 2008 was a great success with some exceptional examples of high quality IT training demonstrated by the winners and finalists. Details of the winners can be found on the IT Training Awards website or you can order a Book of the Night by contacting the Institute of IT Training on 0845 006 8858.

Regional group survey

Networking and learning with other members is a significant part of the Institute's membership benefits package. One of the best ways to enhance the networking experience with like minded fellow training professionals is to meet up on a local basis.

The Institute understands that after a busy day's training most people probably don't want to go out and travel any distance for a networking meeting, so we are introducing online meetings for the regional groups. Some regional groups are already successfully running online meetings and we would like to expand this throughout the membership.

To help us develop our online networking opportunities please take five minutes to complete our online survey which you will find on the home page of the IITT website at **www.iitt.org.uk**

IITT Price Poll Q2

The Institute is monitoring the price of IT training. This is research for the IITT Learning Directors Network and we are asking individuals to complete a small survey for us.

It will take a maximum of five minutes to complete. All responses will be kept confidential; no participant or company names will be associated with the aggregated data.

The results will be published in May. If you would like to take part in this survey please go to the home page of the IITT website **www.iitt.org.uk** where you will find a link to the survey.

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