

Advantages and Disadvantages of eLearning Management System

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Abstract

The basic facilitator for eLearning is triggered by the exponential growth of internet and thirst for information to make smooth decisions at all spheres. The primary purpose is to help people all over in making their lives easier. eLearning creates a network consisting of every being who desires to share and use information. It is very crucial to researchers, professionals and policy makers who require information at the correct time for their work and development.

Communication forms a major part of our lives which can be enriched by sharing information. eLearning management system must be set up effectively with the help of domain experts and professionals so that the correct representation of information can take place. On the other hand, security and quality consideration is very vital in eLearning. It is a priority as any form of abuse would affect quality of the content.

Special care must be taken with regard to knowledge depository so that it can be successfully implemented in practice to render effective services to masses for their prosperity.

Introduction

The world is fast entering the Information Age. Transactions and commodities may be packaged through data. There is a disintegration of the concrete to give way to what is abstract and digital. The digital and information for that matter are equally shaping and determining the contemporary world.

Paul Jackson, Lisa Harris and Peter M. Eckerseley (2003) believe that any business in the world today cannot survive without online services. Online services are essential for its role in making communication convenient and cheap significantly. It allows information transfer in an efficient and fast rate. Cost is reduced and communication is even improved and disseminated better. Online services made it possible for people in great distance to be closely linked together and allow them to truly convene with each other. Transactions and agreements can be arranged swiftly without having to spend much. What online services bring, however, is a new way of operating and managing a business, and that is through data transfer. In this new approach to business, one may expect new problems and issues that the e-commerce organization must decide to confront.

The two authors differentiate E-Business from E-Commerce. E-Commerce is strictly focused on the selling and buying of goods online. This includes the materials and tools that assist such transactions. E-Business in the meantime is the use of electronic data and gadgets in the transmission of information used in business. This includes the usage of devices and databases. It is more centered on man's usage of the many machine and data benefits and advantages in the operation of a business.

The adoption of a digitalized approach in business procedures however has its own pitfalls. Communications arranged in a digital environment would certainly lessen personal relationships and reduce the participation of human elements. Internet communication is complex and will not be comfortable to the inexperienced. It calls for a new approach to communication that relies on computer languages instead of the basic telephone alternative.

The Internet is an open environment that may be used by anyone with a computer and a modem. Therefore transactions must be made secure from outside interventions. Security is very fragile as users capable of data manipulation in the Internet may just as easily do so unless steps are undertaken against fraud among other threats. An open environment would also mean that it would cater to all computer users in the world allowing the electronic medium to be the universal means of communication. Internet allowed the bridging of the gaps that has been limiting individuals to gain access to a larger network of market and opportunities. The Internet continues to expand daily as web sites are continuous in their erection.

The biggest issue of Internet transaction and communication is trust. This is a necessary ingredient in the completion of business agreements. They are the medium

and the connection of which two parties arrange bargains and settlements.

As part of e-based business development in the current era, eLearning becomes essential. Actually, eLearning is not only for staff in which their companies are engaged in e-business practices but also to any individual who wanted information from the electronic medium. eLearning occurs in businesses, schools, health organizations and others.

Perceptions

In lieu of the present developments in society, there have been significant visions of learning that evolved. A majority of these learning visions are based on the idea that learning is a social process where knowledge is denied instead of being acquired passively. Learning, then, transforms into an interactive process. The interaction is being verified through the help of the participants in the learning process such as instructors and learners. In this framework, high quality of education would mean the continued guidance and support of the active learning process of every learner. Obviously, this would call for an intensive and phased guiding strategy.

Due to the current development in technology, the recent flow of information would definitely make learning easy for every individual who desires to do so. In addition, it sustains the need for systems capable of storing and handling this information. The growing impact of information technology (IT) fits in with the larger transformation towards a knowledge-based society. Most professional environments are already being adapted to IT. Being able to handle e-mail and databases is necessary in the professional world. Nowadays, technicians are more and more using artificial intelligence systems in

order to determine and solve problems (Ferraiolo, 1992).

In line with this development, a certain survey was conducted to determine the advantages and disadvantages of eLearning system. Basically, 30 respondents were asked pertaining to the said system and 30% of them are system administrators. Based on the results of the survey (see appendix A), it is found out that majority of the subjects agreed on each statement. According to them, internet technologies provide learners interactive environments. Basically, internet technologies provide learners authentic environments as viewed by the majority justified by 4.10 mean responses. Based on the perceptions, eLearning enables learners to actively search for and explore solutions instead of receiving standard interpretations and construct their own knowledge. Most of them also believed that eLearning increases the motivations to learn and it offers updated information to help learners solve real-life problems. It also fosters better collaboration between learners. The 4.27 mean response also shows that majority agreed on the statement that internet offers a worldwide learning environment that makes distance communication fast and affordable. As seen in the paper of ChanLin, L. J., Huang, R. F., & Chan, K. C. (2003) and from the survey result, eLearning actually built up cross-cultural cooperative groups since it contributes to the development of a person's social skills and relationships with others.

As part of the disadvantages of eLearning, Pantazis, Cynthia, 2002 stated that eLearning actually affects the training procedures within a certain organization. From the survey majority of the subjects responded that the training time is significantly reduced. According to them eLearning also increases the possibility of copyright infringements.

In addition to the survey results, the administrators of an eLearning management system were also asked. The summary of survey results are presented in Appendix B. From their perception, most of them agreed that eLearning management systems improve software control, enhance deployment and data management, minimize memory problems on the user desktop, increase scalability and of course the systems maintenance is easy to conduct. In spite of these advantages, majority of them also agreed that in some occasions eLearning management systems shorten implementation times. Actually, one of its drawbacks pertains to the quality of learning in an eLearning environment which is sometimes sacrificed since there is a high security risk in the system. Moreover, startup costs, including hardware, software, staffing and training, can be very expensive as viewed by the administrators. Aside from this, majority of them also believed that eLearning management systems are prone to viruses and hacking and generates resistance.

Discussion

In business context and as for example, Cathay Pacific Airways invested more than \$250 million in e-business, and a part of that change in the company's strategic direction was to implement an eLearning environment called the "Learner's World". The eLearning environment would help Hong Kong-based Cathay Pacific deliver learning to more than 14,000 employees. Graham Higgins, the manager of the Learning and Development Group at Cathay Pacific, said that the training function at the company is made up of eight physical training centers, which are autonomous, with each training center based on a different department. The focus of the program is to ensure that employees reach high levels of professional performance as well as to build a culture of innovation and collaboration. In addition, when the airlines

started focusing on its e-business strategy, it also began implementing its eLearning strategy within the company to build the airline's learning management system. It manages the employees learning process, from enrolling learners and tracking their progress through delivering tests and reporting costs, and through Learner's World, the airline employees have open access to a wide range of learning options, from online tutors and virtual classrooms to in-class training (Hollis, 2006).

Moreover, this program will be beneficial for the airline's employees for the design of their learning experiences are consistent with the service experiences for their customers, such as their choice, control, customization, and community, and have reengineered every aspect of employee experience the company can leverage, including their benefits, performance management, career development, learning, and many others. It also defines a culture of self-responsibility to get courage to innovate and openness to collaborate, for a more effective communication and success (Hollis, 2006).

This strategy of Cathay Pacific is surely beneficial for the company, for the program will not only add learning and knowledge to the employees, but also enable them to communicate effectively with each other. In this type of industry, communication is one of the best strategies to develop and improve, for without effective communication, it would be hard for the company to function. In addition, with effective communication brought about the program, the company can ensure that their employees have the first hand information in training and development, which would be useful in rendering services to their customers. With the use of the program, the company can properly and effectively assess and evaluate the need for improvement in the company, such as identification of internal and external

problems, conceptualization of marketing projects and plans, and implementation of new production strategies and regulations. Moreover, with the eLearning program, the company can effectively apply some key strategies related to advertising, direct marketing, promotions, public relations, sales and online marketing. With advanced technology, the company can endorse and introduce their innovations more openly to the consumers, which would lead to increase in sales and profit of the airline company.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The recent flow of information would definitely make learning easy for every individual who desires to do so. In addition, it sustains the need for systems capable of storing and handling this information. The growing impact of information and communications technology fits in with the larger transformation towards a knowledge-based society. Most professional environments are already being adapted to eLearning. Being able to handle e-mail and databases is necessary in the professional world. Nowadays, technicians are more and more using artificial intelligence systems in order to determine and solve problems (Ferraiolo, 1992).

Apparently, the new vision of learning as well as the developments mentioned cannot be isolated from the organization as a whole. Learning processes among organizations are being influenced by the interaction of two major factors. On the one hand, the instructional factors: the learning concept and its conversion into didactical ideas. On the other hand, organizational factors: the staff, infrastructure and organization policies related in this area. It is obvious that organization must possess a sound vision of staff policy and the efficient use of the operating budget in order to effectively perform its role in society.

Nevertheless, these organizations' policies need an interaction between both factors. This is because in order to respond to the new visions of learning, these organizations will eventually transform into a model together with the various aspects of the eLearning environment. In return, organizations engage in e-based development will have to continuously monitor their limitations and along the process introduce innovations.

On the other hand, the source of an appropriate model of eLearning systems must lie with the potential to foster skills that are transferable to new situations and thereby relevant to us all in the society in which people live. This must imply that specific bodies of knowledge and skills are not fundamentally taught as ends in themselves but contribute to the means by which pupils may engage in creative decision making and whereby outcomes to projects are made in order to make visible and test that decision making.

It is seen that there is considerable commitment to the view that the capabilities that this educational process has the potential to foster are transferable to new situations if our teaching aspires to encouraging pupils to be increasingly 'self-conscious' about how they are approaching the challenges inherent in their projects. As the processes engaged in when 'designing' are at the heart of fulfilling our aspirations for e-based learning for all, instructors must ensure that the challenges this necessarily implies are sufficiently open to allow learners to exercise their decision-making skills. In managing those challenges, however, teachers must ensure the risks are not overwhelming.

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Appendix A

Perception of the Overall Respondents pertaining to eLearning

Statements	5	4	3	2	1	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
Internet technologies provide learners interactive environments.	9	13	8	0	0	4.03	Agree
Internet technologies provide learners authentic environments.	10	13	7	0	0	4.10	Agree
eLearning enables learners to actively search for and explore solutions instead of receiving standard interpretations.	12	9	7	1	1	4.00	Agree
eLearning enables learners to construct their own knowledge.	13	8	9	0	0	4.13	Agree
eLearning increases the motivations to learn.	15	11	1	3	0	4.27	Agree
eLearning offers updated information to help learners solve real-life problems.	16	11	3	0	0	4.43	Agree
eLearning fosters better collaboration between learners.	12	10	6	1	1	4.03	Agree
Internet offers a worldwide learning environment that makes distance communication fast and affordable.	13	12	5	0	0	4.27	Agree
Through eLearning cross-cultural cooperative groups can be built up.	14	14	1	1	0	4.37	Agree
eLearning contributes to the development of a person's social skills and relationships with others.	15	12	2	0	1	4.33	Agree
Training time is significantly reduced in the eLearning environment.	8	18	3	1	0	4.10	Agree
eLearning is tailored for every learner.	12	14	4	0	0	4.27	Agree
eLearning increases the possibility of copyright infringements.	11	13	3	2	1	4.03	Agree
Some learners/trainees prefer means other than eLearning.	10	12	8	0	0	4.07	Agree

Appendix B

Perception of the System Administrators Pertaining to eLearning Management Systems

Statements	5	4	3	2	1	Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1. eLearning management systems improve software control.	3	4	2	1	0	3.90	Agree
2. eLearning management systems enhance deployment and data management.	4	3	3	0	1	4.20	Agree
3. eLearning management systems minimize memory problems on the user desktop.	3	4	2	0	1	3.80	Agree
4. eLearning management systems increase scalability.	4	4	2	0	0	4.20	Agree
5. Systems maintenance in eLearning management systems is easy.	2	5	2	0	1	3.70	Agree
6. eLearning management systems shorten implementation times.	3	4	1	1	1	3.70	Agree
7. The quality of learning in an eLearning environment is sometimes sacrificed since there is a high security risk in the system.	5	3	2	0	0	4.30	Agree
8. Startup costs, including hardware, software, staffing and training, can be very expensive.	3	4	3	0	0	4.00	Agree
9. eLearning management systems are prone to viruses and hacking.	1	6	3	0	0	3.80	Agree
10. The adoption of eLearning management systems usually generates resistance.	1	7	2	0	0	3.90	Agree