

Abstract

The costs of eLearning projects resulting from content development and technology provision are sometimes prohibitive for institutions intending to offer new educational services on the Internet. This presentation suggests that Open Content and Open Source do offer a solution for a low cost initiation phase for eLearning services and allow the focus on what eLearning projects make successful, which is service development and capacity building of the stakeholders.

In this presentation a generic project model based on Open Content and Open Source will be presented. It will be shown how teaching staff can become enabled very cost efficiently when utilising an Open Source and Open Content approach. Lessons learnt in higher and further education for teaching professionals will be presented.

The presentation is based on the experiences gained in multi-country capacity building programmes and projects with about 200 educational experts of about 50 educational institutions in Africa and Asia between 2003 and 2005 using an Open Source eLearning Management System and an Open Content framework. The technology as such has not been in the foreground of these large-scale projects, as it is the case in many “technology driven” projects. The applications had just been a provision on which the building of skills e.g. in instructional design and distributed content publishing or the development of services, e.g. introducing processes for instructional content production and marketing could become based.

Today the project model that had emerged from these large scale field projects is rather comprehensive and has become the basis for new services. It enables teaching professionals to manage the necessary organisational change process with regards to

- building an eLearning service organisation
- setting up the technical infrastructure
- implementing eLearning capacities for distributed subject matter experts and expert networks e.g. to produce re-usable instructional materials cost efficiently
- and exploiting legacy content already existing within the institution and on the Internet.

Here are some guiding principles that will be further explored:

- Capacity building needs to be action oriented and tasks to be designed in accordance with the employee’s job profile. Applicants for capacity building must pass an assessment center.
- A “Standard Operating Procedure” for building eLearning organisations is delivered in a blended learning format. Deliverables of participants are used within the employee’s organisation first, become embedded in the service portfolio and field tested in internal staff development.
- The participants apply what they learn immediately by setting up a local eLearning service at their institution step-by-step as part of the programme.

This Open Source and Open Content implementation model proved to be a very efficient and sustainable approach. The presentation will provide insights into its implementation as well as a strategic outlook. .

Provide a 500 word abstract of your presentation stating clearly the content area to be addressed and its relevance to the chosen theme.

Short Synopsis