

## Academics warm to e-learning but fail to recognise its cost and productivity benefits

### Latest research from IMC looks at perception and reality of e-learning in higher education

*Saarbrücken/Sevenoaks, 20 May 2009 – New research launched today by learning technology and content provider, IMC (UK) Learning Ltd, found that while nearly eight in ten (79%) academics and university staff agree that e-learning increases flexible and repeated access to learning content, they do not see it as a cost-cutting or time-saving tool.*

The survey, 'Examining e-learning in higher education: perceptions and reality', surveyed 125 academic and operational staff in universities, business schools and university colleges and seeks to establish their views with regard to e-learning, how it is currently used within universities and the perceptions of its benefits and shortfalls.

The research found that while the majority of respondents agree e-learning provides academic benefits, only 27% believe e-learning saves money and 18% that it saves time. For those questioned who use e-learning, the figures increase considerably with nearly nine in ten (88%) agreeing that e-learning increases flexible and repeated access to learning content, 40% believing it saves money and just over a quarter (27%) stating it saves time for teaching staff.

Commenting on the research, Dr Dirk Thissen, managing director at IMC (UK) Learning says: "With the recent news that university budgets will be slashed by £150m next year, it is becoming imperative for higher education to cut costs and improve productivity wherever possible. E-learning offers universities a cost saving solution without compromising academic quality and substance. This is something everybody in higher education is going to have to grasp very quickly.

"While e-learning has business advantages, it is the benefits it brings to the classroom that is most important. Taking a blended approach to learning by using e-learning in support of existing face-to-face courses can significantly augment the learning experience," continues Thissen.

In terms of e-learning uptake in universities, three quarters (74%) of respondents use a virtual learning environment, while just over half (53%) use bespoke e-learning content. Significantly fewer (35%) state they use off-the-shelf e-learning content, and only 39% record lectures with an e-learning 'lecture/presentation capture tool'.

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Thissen concludes: "This research shows that while an increasing number of university staff and academics believe e-learning is an advantageous tool academically, the numbers using lecture capture tools and bespoke e-learning content are still relevantly low. The perception still seems to be that e-learning content is expensive and time consuming to produce, which is not always the case. Inexpensive e-learning content produced through rapid authoring tools allow lecturers to easily record and post their lessons, along with lesson notes, on a multitude of platforms such as virtual learning environments, podcasts and the web, quickly and easily."

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#### Editor's Note

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With CLIX®, IMC's learning management system, LECTURNITY®, IMC's interactive rapid authoring tool, and SLIDESTAR®, an open content platform, IMC is able to provide an integrated and efficient solution framework for learning life cycle management. Using POWERTRAINER®, IMC can set organisations on the path to creating their own eLearning and blended learning solutions. The Start & Learn package® delivers some real eLearning content, an award winning easy-to-use rapid authoring tool and the support and training to create future in-house eLearning content. The success of any ERP, CRM, SCM or software implementation is measured by the effective use of the system, by the end users. With its Electronic Performance Support System (EPSS) LIVECONTEXT® IMC provides pinpoint information to improve quality and increase productivity and speed to competency.

IMC solutions not only cover the operation and design of training and learning processes, the management and distribution of learning content, the management of human capital and the development of skills and competencies, but also the planning and improvement of training resources. All these aspects are complimented by a strong focus on learning management processes, including a full range of management activities, such as design and planning, operation, and analysis and assessment. IMC focuses strongly on business processes and therefore regards learning management as an integral part of today's business needs. IMC clients place great value on IMC's consulting expertise and excellence in building and implementing learning solutions in the fields of technology and content development.

IMC was founded in 1997 by Dr. Wolfgang Kraemer, Frank Milius and Dr. Volker Zimmermann, together with Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. mult. August-Wilhelm Scheer, business expert, university professor and founder and chairman of the supervisory board at IDS Scheer AG. The company's head office is located in Saarbruecken (Germany) and there are further offices in Freiburg, Munich and Berlin (Germany), Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), and subsidiary companies in Zurich (Switzerland), Graz (Austria), London (Great Britain) and Sibiu (Romania).