

University lecturers failing to embrace full potential of e-learning

New research reveals universities are slow to adopt e-learning solutions

Saarbrücken/Sevenoaks, 20 May 2009 – An independent study launched today by e-learning and advanced content solutions provider, IMC (UK) Learning Ltd, revealed that although three quarters (74%) of universities have virtual learning environments (VLE) to support teaching and learning, only 14% of lecturers publish their recorded lectures on them.

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

The research found that even though a large percentage said their university had a VLE, very few use it to its full effect. Only 16% of the whole sample recorded their lectures, with 14% publishing these to a VLE for students to access at a later date. In addition, only three in ten (29%) of those who use e-learning frequently/always add questions or documents to their lectures and only 15% frequently/always post-edit lectures and content, despite 48% acknowledging that e-learning is popular with students.

Dr Dirk Thissen, managing director at IMC (UK) Learning comments: "Using e-learning to support face-to-face courses can enhance the learning experience of students. Producing content by recording lectures and post-editing or adding documents and questions will add value to the material and can be used to populate a VLE effectively."

When asked which elements of e-learning respondents found the most useful, three in ten (31%) commented on the automatic synchronisation of recorded data, with the same number stating the combination of video, audio and annotation. Slightly fewer (29%) highlighted the variety of output formats. Smaller numbers pointed to 'one-click' publishing to a VLE (19%) and full text search in published recordings (17%) as useful when recording lectures.

Thissen continues: "It is clear from the high number of universities that have a VLE that e-learning is on the agenda at higher education institutions. The issue is how much e-learning is used by lecturers as part of their teaching and learning programmes.

"From the research, the popularity of e-learning among students and academics is clear to see. Despite this academic staff do not necessarily recognise the productivity and cost

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saving benefits of e-learning. Rapid authoring tools provide lecturers with a means to record, edit and add documents to their lectures quickly and easily in order to enhance the learning experience of their students."

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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).