Abstract

The 2nd Wave in eLearning

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The present approaches to e-Learning are inadequate. Most of the educational institutions and corporate bodies use proprietary and packaged virtual learning environments to manage their e-Learning content and their learners. E-Learning is an “after thought” as well as something done to “catch up” with the Joneses. Content is still being developed in a monolithic fashion and is usually for one particular learning track. The delivery mechanism is still slow and with the greater use of multimedia clips, much of the content is very appealing but pedagogically e-Learning content is still a “one-way” traffic. Although it is possible to set up rich educational environment (e.g. multi-party simultaneous discussions), but the organisation will have to pay high fees for synchronous communication. Consequently, it is difficult to achieve “just-in-time” teaching and learning. Above all, both teachers and learners are not very enthusiastic about eLearning.

The 2nd wave in e-Learning is a more enlightened approach. Firstly, through the work of international organisations like the IMS, the IEEE LTSC and the ADL, many people are now aware that they need to develop content in the form of learning objects and incorporate standards for reusability and interoperability. In addition, the metadata will be the central hub of all educational learning objects. Application profiles, such as the SCORM specifications, will have been widely accepted and adopted by many companies and educational institutions worldwide. Digital libraries and learning object repositories will have been widely used. Instructional designers are now able to factor in the sequencing of different learning objects for different levels of learners. In addition, experienced teachers and trainers will be able to encode their best practices in teaching and make them available to
future teachers. Different teaching / learning modes (e.g. Problem-Based Learning, Self-Paced Learning) can be arranged. All these lead to making teaching and learning more meaningful, enjoyable and less painful.

Overall, there is much optimism in the 2nd Wave in e-Learning.