



## Five Trends in the LMS Market

Brandon Hall

Organizations are looking for ways to manage the entire prehire-to-retire employee lifecycle.

Rapid changes in learning technologies, an increased focus on talent management and new system integrations are a few of the many issues faced by CLOs.

We spoke with several LMS providers to see how they're responding to these and other challenges organizations are facing. Naturally, the comments are often reflective of their solution, but we agree with the validity of the following trends:

1. **Software as a Service (SaaS):** SaaS is catching on as a way for organizations to acquire access to business applications without relying on in-house resources. Frank Russell, president and CEO of GeoLearning, said that often the functions available in a traditional, on-premises suite are more limited than those available from a Web-hosted solution. Adecco Group North America is one organization that went with a SaaS solution. Rich Thompson, vice president of training and staff development at Adecco, said, "With over 6,300 Adecco colleagues across six vertical industries and multiple brands under our corporate umbrella, a SaaS solution helped reduce overall training costs, improve time to competency and offer consistency of delivery."
2. **Talent and Performance Management:** Organizations are looking for ways to manage the entire prehire-to-retire employee lifecycle. Sanjay Dholakia, SumTotal Systems' senior vice president of corporate and business development, maintains that the profile of learning and development within talent management is increasing dramatically because organizations cannot recruit their way out of the acute skills shortages that they will soon face. "In real estate, when you can't build out, you build up," he said. "Savvy employers will build up by increasing their focus on developing their internal talent."
3. **Emerging Technologies:** Don Cook, senior vice president of marketing at Learn.com, sees the use of mobile learning "escalating as cell phones become more powerful. Blogging

will grow as students employ it as a collaborative tool for sharing resources and discussion." Eric Rogers of Standard Chartered in Singapore is using technology to implement a "global learning services approach rather than a corporate university model. Learning comes to the learner rather than the learner going to it."

4. **Mobile Learning (M-Learning):** The market for anytime/anywhere m-learning involving cell phones is growing at an unprecedented rate, especially in developing countries and economies where these tools represent the only viable access learners have to online learning, said Robert Gadd, president of OnPoint Digital Inc. "With almost 3 billion mobile phones deployed worldwide, the wireless phone network — with just standard voice services and SMS messaging — is emerging as a highly effective and cost-efficient mobile-training solution, using spoken-word content, keypad and IVR-assisted testing/surveys and integrated two-way messaging to connect mobile learners with their teachers and managers."
5. **Social Networking/Collaboration:** Social networking is all the buzz in the learning community. Michael Skinner, president and CEO of Operitel Corp., sees networks such as Facebook continuing to increase virtual interaction on a social level. Skinner says new functionality will "encourage the sharing of information, knowledge and industry events while staying within a secure framework, addressing the many privacy and security concerns that organizations have." Marilyn Mitchell, director of professional development and enterprise learning at Konica Minolta Business Solutions USA Inc., said her organization is planning to implement social collaboration. "We have been looking to move in this direction, providing our learning audience with opportunities to share learning experiences, knowledge and other valuable information in an environment conducive to social interaction." ■

Brandon Hall, Ph.D., is CEO of Brandon Hall Research, publisher of the new study "Emerging E-Learning: New Approaches to Delivering Engaging Online Learning Content." He can be reached at [editor@clomedia.com](mailto:editor@clomedia.com).