

Industry News from IT Skills Research (Aug 06)

EUROPEAN ROLE FOR ALEX KEAY



Alex Keay has been promoted to a new role as Microsoft Learning Area Sales Manager for Western Europe. Alex will be working in the Western European subsidiaries – including the UK – with the objective to grow the Microsoft Learning business through the CPLS channel.

Alex has worked for Microsoft for 7 years, and earned an excellent reputation in 2002-2004 when he was responsible for the Training & Partner Readiness team in the UK. He told IT Skills Research: "I look forward to working with our subsidiaries and our CPLS partners again and being a champion for them. I will be working with UK training companies looking to expand their Pan-European Microsoft businesses. I will also continue to champion the European Union Grants Advisor program that provides funded IT training for public/private sector partnerships". Alex will officially start his new role on 2 October. [Aug 2006](#)

MEADOWS JOINS JAMES THORNTON ...

James Thornton Group, a Microsoft Gold CPLS with a national network of training centres, has appointed Les Meadows to be its Managing Director. Meadows is an IT training industry stalwart, having previously held senior roles at Oracle, Nortel and Computeach [Aug 2006](#)

... AS ZADEH LEAVES PARITY

Ebi Zadeh, Business Unit Director at Parity Training, has left the company [Aug 2006](#)

ADVAL TO DISPOSE OF BUSINESSES

AdVal has announced that it is to sell off all but one of its various businesses as "the Board has concluded that the cost to the Group of being listed on AIM in its present form is unsustainable". Results have been disappointing since the recent acquisition of Maxim, so the company has taken the unusual decision to sell its core business and acquisitions, leaving the accredited generic product business carried out by AKK as AdVal's only trading activity. [Aug 2006](#)

WE NEED YOUR HELP WITH 'PERCEPTIONS'

As well as the new Top 50, this is the time of year when IT Skills Research launches its 'Perceptions' study. This measures how each of the leading training companies is rated by the buyer community, using ten criteria including awareness, quality, value for money and flexibility. If you are a buyer, this is your chance to tell us who you rate as the Good, the Bad and the Ugly of the IT training industry – and you could win a bottle of champagne! Or if you're a Training Provider, please encourage your customers to participate. [Aug 2006](#)

QA INTERQUAD WINS MICROSOFT AWARD



QA InterQuad has received a Microsoft Partner award for exceptional delivery of Microsoft Dynamics training programmes. Announced at the recent Microsoft worldwide partner conference in Boston, the UK award of excellence recognises the outstanding design and delivery of a bespoke technical training programme. The programme, for Turnkey customer

Hilton Hotels UK, provided tailored training to over 400 staff across five sites in the UK, via a blended solution of instructor-led training and training available online. This meant that all users could be trained within the timescale, as those who were unable to attend a training centre could complete the course through the e-Learning programme. [Aug 2006](#)

ONE VOICE FOR THE SOFTWARE INDUSTRY?

The lack of a unified and clear voice and a growing shortage of high level skills are among the current threats to the future of the UK's software industry, according to 'Develop the Future', an initial report by a working party that included the BCS. The aim of the working party is to help maintain the UK's £20 billion software industry so that it does not follow in the footsteps of manufacturing and go into decline. The report proposes a series of actions. It says technical innovators must develop better business skills to

attract venture capital, academia and employers must communicate more effectively, and IT must re-establish itself as an attractive career. [Aug 2006](#)

ELEARNING NETWORK SAYS 'NO' TO LEARNING LIGHT

The eLearning Network says its committee has resolved unanimously not to accept a proposal from Learning Light to transfer the membership of the eLN into Learning Light Membership Services. [Aug 2006](#)

NIIT TO ACQUIRE ELEMENT K



Indian-owned NIIT has entered into an agreement to acquire US-based Element K. Together, NIIT and Element K will have more than 3,000 employees, over US\$250 million in revenue, and a presence in 32 countries. Element K's \$80 million learning solutions business is based on its product KnowledgeHub and a suite of more than 3,500 courses. NIIT's learning services combine instructor-led and online delivery, custom content development, learning technologies and managed services. [Aug 2006](#)

TRAINER BOOT CAMP FROM MATCHETT

Matchett (formerly The Matchett Group) is running a 4-day Trainer Boot Camp. The company says its ambitious objective is "to develop trainers as critical to your business as your top sales performers", and it guarantees that "your trainers will return as top performers delivering powerful learning experiences that will support sustainable and transformational change". [Aug 2006](#)

MORE LINUX FROM STAYAHEAD



StayAhead Training has launched its own independently developed Suse Linux courses, and now offers both public and customer training for all the major Linux markets. StayAhead says this spread of Linux courses is unique in the UK training market, and highlights its commitment to supporting Linux and Unix professionals. StayAhead now has specific curricula for Red Hat Linux, Suse Linux and LPI Linux, plus a suite of general Linux courses. StayAhead's Red Hat courses help prepare delegates for the official RHCT and RHCE exams, the Suse courses help prepare for Novell Certified Linux Professional (Novell CLP) and the LPI based courses help achieve the LPIC-1 & LPIC-2 certification status. [Aug 2006](#)

NEW HORIZONS RAISES \$4 MILLION INVESTMENT

New Horizons Worldwide Inc has raised a \$4 million loan, which it says will be used "primarily for general working capital". The loan has been provided by Camden Partners, who were the purchasers of the Series A Convertible Preferred Stock issued by the Company in February 2005: Alkhaleej Training and Education Corporation, which is New Horizons' franchisee in Saudi Arabia; and Mr. George Rich, a private investor. [Aug 2006](#)

MORE VACANCIES FOR NEW GRADUATES



Graduates are experiencing the best chance for a decade of finding a job with a top employer according to a new survey from the Association of Graduate Recruiters, which shows a 16.7% increase in vacancy levels. There were 28 applications per vacancy - down from 33 last year. The median starting salary among AGR members was £23,136. Most employers thought the calibre of recruits had held up, and more than a quarter said it was better this year. The sort of skill most in evidence to the employers was computer literacy, while the most lacking were project management, enterprise, leadership and commercial awareness. *(Reported by BBC News)* [Aug 2006](#)

CERTIFICATION SAVES MILLIONS

Qualcomm, a San Diego-based wireless technology provider, achieved excellent results when it created a certification programme for employees involved in the review and verification of chip quality. The programme included process improvement, tool use, hands on labs, on-the-job testing and mentoring. After training, chip manufacturing time decreased and the company saved more than \$2 million. *(Reported by Inside Training/VNU Business Media)* [Aug 2006](#)

INFOBASIS SUMMIT

InfoBasis is holding a summit in September to analyse how total capability management can make organisations more productive and more efficient by connecting key HR processes. Drawing on both theory and practical experience, the summit will highlight how HR and operational processes such as selection and recruitment, performance reviews and appraisals, and resource deployment can be moved from 'siloed' activities to integrated practices. The InfoBasis Skills Summit will take place on September 19 at the LEWIS Media Centre, Millbank. [Aug 2006](#)

'PROOF OF THE PUDDING' FOR NEW ACADEMY



The first graduates from the Accelerated Trainer Academy (formerly the Spearhead Trainer Academy), are now delivering training on behalf of the ATLAS consortium to help it supply Increment 1 of the Defence Information Infrastructure (Future) project. The Academy course equips delegates with skills to deliver IT end-user training, coaches them through the ECDL syllabus with accredited testing and aims to achieve the ITQ Level 2 qualification on completion of the three-week programme. The Academy is a joint venture between BroadSkill and Training Synergy. [Aug 2006](#)

ATLANTIC LINK LEADS EUROPEAN CHARGE

A new survey from e-learning consultancy Kineo on Rapid E-learning Authoring Tools shows Atlantic Link is the only European company making significant progress in an industry dominated by US vendors. The survey measures the products that are most widely used by respondents, the factors which are important in their purchase and some of the key issues surrounding use of rapid authoring tools. Atlantic Link is the only European company to achieve a significant share of usage in the survey, and shows itself to be one of the leading products specifically designed for rapid e-learning authoring. [Aug 2006](#)

OXFORD PRINCETON PROGRAMME CHOOSES COURSEBOOKER



The Oxford Princeton Programme has selected CS Group's CourseBooker software to manage its Training Operations in both the UK and the USA. The Oxford Princeton Programme was formed by the merger of the College of Petroleum Studies in Oxford and the Princeton Energy Programme in the US. The company supplies specialist energy training solutions to the energy industry and elsewhere. The solution will run from the Programme's office in the UK, from where it will also be used by the US office and sales representatives in Canada and Singapore. [Aug 2006](#)

BOOKS24x7 LAUNCHES FREE EXECUTIVE PODCASTS

Books24x7, the online referenceware specialist, has launched a complimentary podcast series featuring top business leaders. The series will be broadcast monthly, and will include excerpts from Books24x7's ExecBlueprints Referenceware collection. Aimed at senior executives and business managers, the series will examine best practice and offer practical hints and tips on a variety of critical business issues. Each podcast can be downloaded to a laptop, CD, iPod or other portable device. Books 24x7 is a subsidiary of SkillSoft. [Aug 2006](#)

BRIGHTWAVE E-LEARNING FOR THOMSON HOLIDAYS



Brightwave is developing an interactive e-learning programme for Thomson Holidays. The programme is designed to increase employees' knowledge about European city destinations that Thomson offers so that they are better able to match customers with suitable short breaks. Thomson said: "We challenged several e-learning companies to come up with innovative suggestions that would really catch their attention. Brightwave stood out as being creative, we liked their collaborative approach and they are a good cultural fit with us". [Aug 2006](#)

BOURNE DEVELOPS E-LEARNING FOR ENGINEERS



Bourne Training has completed the development of the inaugural e-Learning module for Star Refrigeration Group, the largest independent refrigeration engineering company in the UK. The Vapour Compression Cycle module is the first module in a series of e-Learning courses that will build towards an international exemplar programme for HVACR engineers. Further modules are currently in production and will be available in early September. [Aug 2006](#)

ONLINE STAFF INDUCTION FOR GLOS CC

Gloucestershire County Council is supplementing its face-to-face induction process with an online induction training course, so that new employees can gain information about the council and feel valued as soon as they join. Developed by blended learning specialist Balance Learning, the two-hour course features graphics, animations and interactive quizzes, and also includes welcome messages from the Chief Executive and elected members, as well as essential IT and health & safety information. [Aug 2006](#)

TATA'S EPSS BOOSTS WORKPLACE PRODUCTIVITY



Tata Interactive Systems is providing a more efficient and cost-effective method of delivering induction programmes using its Electronic Performance Support System (EPSS), which it says is helping new employees at leading financial organisations to achieve 'week-one productivity'. TIS's EPSS integrates all the support that a claims handler, sales executive or customer service executive needs, within a single interface. Tools including process maps have helped to reduce cycle times and eliminate inconsistencies in decision making; encyclopedias offer quick and authoritative reference material; calculators help with rapid and accurate claims calculations and real-life scenarios give all of this information a relevant context. [Aug 2006](#)

IT VENDORS 'MORE HONEST' THAN ESTATE AGENTS

A poll of silicon.com readers says that given a choice of five of the most common kinds of salesmen, voters backed the IT vendor as the least dishonest, with estate agents far and away the least trusted. 36% of the people polled said they believe estate agents to be the most dishonest salesmen, followed by used car salesmen (24%), double glazing salesmen (17%) and mobile phone salesmen (13%). The honest IT vendor was ranked fifth with just 10%. (*Reported by silicon.com*) [Aug 2006](#)