

Swapping notes? From Google with love... (Feb 07)

If you've been logging on to the Kineo site for a while, you'll know there's plenty from Google that has excited us for its potential application to the world of learning.

Now there's a new tool on the block called Google Notes and we're swooning again - we think it has a lot to offer in the performance support and knowledge sharing space.

One of the real challenges in any formal learning is the disconnect between the act of learning and the application in the workplace. Even with desktop e-learning there are challenges in ensuring transfer of learning into performance as the learning can be divorced from the day to day work activities or even get in the way of them.

We already know that much of learning goes on informally. One of the paradoxes of that is how to capture and reuse that informal expertise without turning it into formal courses and thereby requiring unrealistic amounts of expert's precious time.

One common informal learning technique is sharing URLs of sites that you find useful with others who might find the same. But how do you share it? If you're like 90% of people, you copy and paste the URL into an email, then send it around. Quick, but not very useful for the recipient - especially if you want to discuss it and use it as a launch-pad for further discussion. They respond with an email, you respond with another email, useful learning content emerges, but it's buried in your inbox and invisible to others.

Google notes could be an the way forward. It allows you to annotate and bookmark any webpage, save your notes and share with anyone else with a Google-mail account. Once installed this simple tool is accessed with a mouse click and can amended or edited instantly and shared with others.

What's in it for learning?

Sales team

Take a call centre-based sales team. An intranet page captures the end to end sales process or script. High performing sales people could annotate each stage of the process with their successful strategies (e.g. how they open the conversation, how they identify need, how they close etc.) allowing others to access their know-how.

Product knowledge

A product manager could maintain and update product specs with market data and success stories or competitor information and instantly share that with the sales force. Likewise the sales force can feed in market intelligence as they receive it and share it with people in different territories.

Health and safety

A health and safety manager could inform her team of safety champions about any urgent legislation or changes in practice. Best practice sharing could be done quickly through the notes.

Leadership

A leadership action learning set could use notes to document issues and success stories to share with the group or on a one to one basis with a mentor.

The originator can control who sees the notes so it could be used as a learning diary linked post

training event learning activities.

So Google Notes could offer a quick and pain-free way of capturing good practice in organisations and act as complement or follow-up to quick, disposable rapid e-learning courses. And they could also act as a way of attaining the holy grail of learning: ensuring sustained performance improvement.

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