

What will 2013 bring for L&D? (Dec 12)

December is here, and of course that means it's time for some future-gazing. Don Taylor gets the crystal ball out.

What will the coming year bring for L&D? This year more than ever I think this is a question worth asking. There are some important trends that will either start or reach the main stream over the next 12 months.

I'll return to some of these points in the future, but for the moment, here are eight things which I believe will make 2013 a major year for our profession:

- Integration – we know that informal and social learning are crucial. We are familiar with the technologies and practices that support them. Other once-emergent technologies and practices – such as mobile delivery – are now commonplace. The challenge in 2013 will be to make them work coherently together.
- Globalisation – yes, it really does affect us all, both in whom we supply, and in the provision of services to us. Ignore globalisation in the shrinking world of 2013 and you risk being badly blind-sided.
- Learning-as-a-service – what happens when learning systems become cloud-based? The immediate impact of SaaS on the LMS and other learning platforms will initially be to reduce licence fees and speed software updates, but I predict a secondary impact – a shift towards learning platforms being seen as utilities like the online provision of rack space or CRM systems. In turn that will create some important tertiary effects on how LMSs are bought and sold.
- Wider provision – workplace L&D can expect competition from Higher Ed and college providers both nationally and internationally. (See What Price MOOCs for more.) And 2013 will only be the beginning of a major blurring of the boundaries between these two fields.
- Performance – what can L&D do for maximum impact, fast, and how does it show that it has worked? We say this every year, but in 2013, unless we do this, we'll find ourselves bypassed by others with an operational and performance focus who implement learning solutions as a means to an end.
- Assessment – assessment will grow in 2013. Why? Because with a focus on multiple ways of learning, and on performance support for rapid business impact, managers and executives are going to want to know who learnt what, from where, how, and when. Enter multiple methods of assessment to provide some of the answers.
- Data – not necessarily 'big' data, just data. L&D needs to find, understand and use data effectively to do its job well, including demonstrating the impact of learning (see 5 and 6 above). Not everyone finds it interesting. It's not hot and sexy like mobile or social learning. But it might just save your job, and help you do it better.
- L&D's new role(s) – does some of this list sound a bit new? Much of it is. We are no longer the place we were 25 – or even 5 – years ago. We have a new role that demands an agile department with multiple skills which includes everything we used to do, and a whole lot more. The [LPI Capability Map](#) is providing some analysis of where we are right now – expect the first research results in Q1, 2013.

In summary, as I expressed it in a recent vox pop for Suzie Finch on Training Zone:

The big workplace learning trend for 2013 will be a continued blurring of boundaries. L&D will find its turf increasingly encroached on by other departments – sales and operations in particular – using easy learning technologies for performance impact. We will see more workplace learning provision

from educational establishments, and the continued blurring of global boundaries, with more online course provision across cultures and countries. And pervasive technologies will mean the further spread of informal learning and user-generated learning that requires no input from the training department.

The biggest change for L&D in all this? Adapting to this new world and stepping up to a new strategic role to manage it all.

Are you ready for 2013?

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