

2011 Continues Significant Changes in e-Learning Companies (Jan 11)

By Bill Brandon
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The New Year started with additional acquisitions of e-Learning-related companies.

This continues the trend in M&A in the e-Learning business seen in 2010. In February, [SSI acquired SkillSoft PLC](#) and [SAIC acquired Forterra Systems](#). In March, [Kaplan IT Learning acquired Atlantic Link](#). In July, [Blackboard Inc. acquired Elluminate and Wimba](#). In August, [Hybrid Learning acquired ImpactGames](#), both companies part of the world of serious gaming. In September, [Taleo acquired Learn.com](#).

SumTotal buys GeoLearning

On Wednesday, January 5, 2011, talent management software leader SumTotal acquired managed services and on-demand learning management software (LMS) provider GeoLearning. The acquisition extends SumTotal's string of mergers with other software companies, and places SumTotal firmly in the lead among LMS and talent management companies, further distancing Saba, the nearest in size.

But the next day, there was another acquisition that will affect many organizations that deliver synchronous e-Learning.

SalesForce.com has acquired Dimdim

On Thursday, January 6, 2011, enterprise cloud computing company SalesForce.com announced that it had completed acquisition of Dimdim for approximately \$31 million in cash. Dimdim supported hosted Web conferencing, including Webinars for up to 1,000 participants, on its platform. Dimdim enjoyed some popularity as a platform for synchronous e-Learning, in part due to its collaborative features and hosting of free online meetings for groups of up to 10 participants.

SalesForce.com, in the official press release, indicated that it intends to use Dimdim's real-time communication technologies to extend the Chatter collaboration platform which SalesForce.com released in June 2010.

In a communication to customers, Dimdim stated that it will remain fully operational during the transition. Free and monthly accounts will remain in operation until March 15, 2011, and annual accounts will be available until their current subscriptions end. Recorded sessions and uploaded documents will no longer

be available after accounts expire. Dimdim had placed its Open Source code on SourceForge.net, where it will remain available, although Dimdim will no longer contribute to the project.

Stay tuned – there's bound to be more change to come in 2011!

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