Making Assessment Count

Learning content management systems (LCMS) are designed to allow curriculum stakeholders to share, reuse, manage and deliver educational resources electronically while encouraging collaboration.

LCMS offers significant advantages over traditional e-learning functionality:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional Functions of E-learning</th>
<th>Learning Content Management Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Document upload</td>
<td>Document versioning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject site templates</td>
<td>Meta-tagging schemas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Searching by filename</td>
<td>Meta-data based searching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor only notification</td>
<td>Workflow management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispersed content</td>
<td>User-based notification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject-centric curriculum</td>
<td>Distributed content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mirrored site delivery</td>
<td>“Always on”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Session lifetime</td>
<td>Whole of curriculum lifetime</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Learning Content Management Systems and current e-learning platforms can be used as complementary technologies, seamlessly, to help educational stakeholders achieve their goals. Here is what each offers:

- **e-Learning Package (e.g. Blackboard)**
  - Discussion board
  - Private email
  - Content (e.g. lectures)
  - Online quiz
  - Assignment submission
  - Online grading
  - Chat
  - Journal
  - Whiteboard
  - Personal homepage
  - Subject outline
  - Subject maps

- **LCMS (e.g. The Learning Edge)**
  - Degree Roadmap
  - Modular design of content
  - Learning objects
  - Assessment tool mix
  - Ongoing support
  - Curriculum mapping
  - Embedded graduate qualities
  - Accreditation mapping
  - Professional guidance
  - Tertiary literacy mapping

### Objectives of Implementing the LCMS

- A whole-of-curriculum philosophy where students can connect the dots between assessments over their whole candidature and develop a purposeful set of diverse skills that will help them attain graduate positions.
- An online environment where staff can share assessment resources they have created securely and re-use material focusing on modular educational designs.
- A mechanism for accountability by teams, coordinators and executives in the ongoing curriculum review process using structured workflows to ensure quality management and enhance transparency between stakeholders.

### Methodology

The research is being conducted at a regional Australian university, using a case study of a recently amalgamated information systems and information technology department. The researcher is a participant observer who is taking part in action research.

The first stage of data collection included 35 interviews with relevant stakeholders. Archival documents were also gathered, mainly in the form of policy and accreditation guidelines (e.g. Australian Computer Society, ACM/IEEE).

The second stage of data collection included the in-depth analysis of over 100 subject outlines in the amalgamated school into a Microsoft Access database. This database contained information on subject objectives, lecture schedules, assessment tools and descriptions, and practical skills development.

### Preliminary Results

A content management system has been adopted in an interim phase called ‘The Subject Resource Kit’ by two of the four schools in the faculty.

### Future Work

The next phase of deployment in 2008 will see the LCMS rolled out potentially to the whole faculty as a curriculum management tool.