ABSTRACT

Bridge-eLearning is a consortium aiming to bring together human resources professionals from large companies and experts from training organizations (internationally recognized business and engineering schools). The consortium provides a framework that enables its partners to share best practices in e-learning for management and technology, and to share e-learning content of a high technological and educational quality, innovative online learning experiences and approaches, and e-learning opportunities and needs. The basis of the project’s business model is the development of a shared catalog of e-learning courses enriched by partners over the years. Bridge-eLearning is administered by a steering committee, together with the e-learning committee at the operational and functional level. This paper presents the objectives and functioning of Bridge-e-learning, the achievements of the first year of existence and the perspectives for the next years.

Keywords: distance education; human resources; IT capability; learning communities; multimedia applications; organizational learning; transformational innovation; virtual campus; virtual enterprise; Web-based learning

PRESENTATION OF BRIDGE-ELEARNING

Bridge-eLearning is a consortium aiming to bring together human resources professionals from large companies and experts from training organizations (internationally recognized business and engineering schools). The consortium provides a framework enabling its partners to share best practices in e-learning for the management and technology fields and, to share e-learning content of a high technological and educational quality, innovative online learning experiences and approaches, and e-learning opportunities and needs. Bridge-eLearning’s main objectives are to

- Share knowledge and know-how in the field of online learning;
- Capitalize individual achievements for the benefit of all; and
• Share future developments of e-learning content in the fields of both management and engineering.

The consortium comprises seven founding members, each corresponding to one of three profiles: academic partner (École de Management de Lyon, Institut National des Sciences Appliquées de Lyon, École Polytechnique de Montréal and École des sciences de la gestion de l’Université du Québec à Montréal), corporate member (Alcan, Bell and Mouvement des caisses Desjardins) and technology partner (Technomedia Training Inc.). A brief description of each partner is provided at the end of this paper.

The development of a shared catalog of e-learning courses enriched by partners over the years, with new partners joining the consortium along the way, is the basis of the project’s business model. When joining Bridge-eLearning, partners agree to contribute online courses to the catalog every year. The courses fall within the two following categories: developed courses and contributed courses.

Developed courses are online training courses created specially for Bridge-eLearning. The themes of such courses are defined at the beginning of the year by the consortium’s steering committee, while the courses themselves are developed by the academic partners in collaboration with the corporate members. Academic partners are required to develop 3 hours of bilingual (French-English) content each year. The durations specified are the time required for a learner with an average learning speed to cover and complete all of the content in a satisfactory manner.

Contributed courses are not developed specifically for Bridge-eLearning. They are taken from partner catalogs and imported as-is into the consortium’s shared catalog. The annual contribution of each academic and corporate partner must represent 3 hours of bilingual (French-English) content or 6 hours of French-language content.

Corporate members pay an annual membership fee, part of which is used to finance courses developed in collaboration with academic partners. The remainder of the membership fees is used to cover the consortium’s management and infrastructure costs. Specifically, these are

- ASP access, delivery, management and development of online courses, using the LMS and LCMS modules of the TM SIGAL platform;
- The user license for the Macromedia Breeze virtual classroom solution; and
- The project management costs incurred by technology partner Technomedia.

Bridge-eLearning is administered by an executive committee (Steering Committee), which includes one representative for each academic, corporate and technological partner. Committee decisions are made through a simple majority, with the exception of the following, which must be reached unanimously:

- The addition of new partners;
- Modification of the Steering Committee’s constitution; and
- The Project’s financial rules.

The principle responsibilities of the Steering Committee are to define the rules of revenue distribution for content production, to authorize an expenditures budget and to approve project specifications for courses to be developed. Management of the con-
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