# New Trends in E-learning

Mike Alcock

As spring arrives and temperatures heat up, business at e-learning provider Kaplan Learning Technologies (KLT) is heating up as well. With two major releases coming out within just a few short months of each other, Mike Alcock, VP of KLT, provides some insight into the latest happenings with STT Trainer and Atlantic Link.

SO, WHAT'S GOING ON AT KLT THESE DAYS?

Last year, we increased our development team by over 50% and we've been able to really speed up development across both of our frontline products. We have two large and focused teams working on
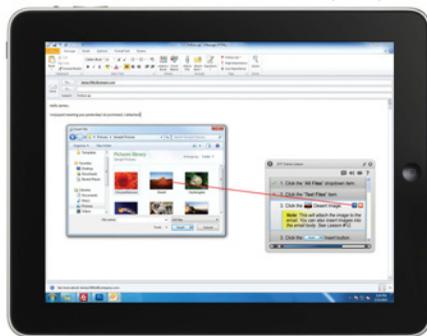
STT Trainer content on the iPad

Atlantic Link for general purpose rapid e-learning authoring and STT Trainer for specialist software simulations.

We have two major releases in the next couple of months – Atlantic Link Version 2.0.4044 and STT Trainer Version 6.0.

Both of these offer major boosts in terms of functionality and usability and should keep us at the forefront of the e-learning authoring tools market.

WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED ABOUT IN THE NEW RELEASES?

In Atlantic Link we have a new multilingual framework which will allow users to make multilingual courses much more easily and quickly. This includes a whole array of new multilingual Flash assets such as quizzes, content display, buttons and games. We also have a series of templates for the new Android tablets such as the Samsung Galaxy Tab, making portable e-learning a reality for devices with great screen size and usability.

In STT Trainer 6.0 we have a brand new cross-browser player with a new and improved user interface. This allows our users to deploy their content on almost any device, including the Apple iPad. The player has been designed with direct learner and user input to provide the smoothest possible learner experience while still ensuring the same high level of knowledge retention that's always been offered by STT Trainer.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE TRENDS YOU SEE IN RAPID E-LEARNING?

Both of our products are server based, collaborative systems. We've always been ahead of the game in this area and it allows

us to deliver cloud-based solutions and "software as a service." We expect to see a lot more growth in this area as our customers take advantage of the benefits that the cloud offers, such as truly team-based authoring, convenient access to the tools from anywhere in the world, and low IT overhead.

We also believe that mobile e-learning is starting to come of age with the new generation of tablet computers. We've always seen interest in mobile learning but never much take up from our customers. We suspect that screen size has always been an issue. The new generation of tablets with fantastic touchscreen interfaces and excellent screen size and resolution really seem to be game changers for e-learning. The content deploys beautifully on a screen that's big enough to be interacted with accurately, making mobile e-learning a reality.

HOW ARE YOUR DIFFERENT PRODUCTS USED ON MOBILE DEVICES LIKE THE SAMSUNG GALAXY TAB AND IPAD?

Atlantic Link produces highly interactive content, with lots of drag and drop capabilities. These play back really nicely on the Samsung Galaxy Tab, so we expect to see lots of content that leverages these capabilities. Our new video encoder also allows any type of video to be easily embedded into a

Atlantic Link content on the Galaxy

course, so we're also expecting to see lots of courses featuring heavy video content.

STT Trainer courses fit beautifully on the iPad, which is the perfect size for training people on the use of software. We expect to see lots of IT training being deployed on the iPad and intend to continue enhancing our abilities in this area. The ability to take intensive training with you on-the-go adds an entirely new level of efficiency to our products and to the training world as a whole.

WHERE IS KLT HEADED?

We believe that we have two 'best of breed' e-learning products, Atlantic Link and STT Trainer. It's our intention to come up with new and innovative ideas and functionality to keep them ahead of the competition. **e!**

ASSESSMENTS HAND-BUILT

The Test Factory hand-builds online assessment solutions for an array of blue-chip clients in various industries.

Because the company believes that only their clients can truly understand how their business operates and their requirements, its online assessments are hand-built from provided content. It provides tailored solutions that match and meet the needs of customers. However, it also provides simple authoring tools in a user-friendly platform that allows clients to build their own tests.

The Test Factory's assessments are currently being used to: identify skill gaps, accredit training, deliver certification programs, ensure and demonstrate compliance, carry out inductions and on-boarding, and engage in e-learning.

More info: www.thetestfactory.com/hme/aspx

REDUCING IT TRAINING COST

TrainIT4less.com from United Training is now the largest single source of public and distance learning IT courses available on the Internet. The simple, user-friendly Website offers many options and guides users in making informed decisions on their training needs.

The new site features a national network of leading certified and specialist IT train-ing organizations and brings together multiple delivery methodologies. Users can select from public and private courses, through live, instructor-led training from the home or office, which is widely described as distance learning. TrainIT4less provides students with unequalled access to training schedules delivered from throughout the U.S.

TrainIT4less Corporate Services galvanizes the expertise of industry leader United Training, helping HR and training professionals get the level of service they need when dealing with more complex training procurement and logistics.

More info: www.TrainIT4less.com

SOCIAL SOFTWARE UPDATED

Mzinga has announced the general availability of the latest release of its flagship social software suite, OmniSocial.

An enterprise-class solution, Mzinga OmniSocial enables businesses to connect, interact and share knowledge with their employees, customers and partners from anywhere, at anytime. As a result, customers will recognize significant business improvements, including increased productivity, efficiency gains, improved employee and customer satisfaction, and revenue growth.

Delivered in a flexible, cloud-based model, the latest version of OmniSocial can be easily branded, configured and deployed to match customers' unique business needs in creating a seamless social experience: either as private or public community sites, or as integrated applications within existing web environments.

The new release also introduces greater interoperability.

More info: www.mzinga.com

SAAS GAME AND INTERACTION BUILDER

Rapid Intake's new Flash-based game and interaction builder works with any rapid e-learning program. The new Rapid SWFMaker doesn't require any knowledge of Flash or Flash development.

Unlike other e-learning game and interaction templates, with the Rapid SWFMaker no additional software needs to be installed. Because the tool is housed on the Web through a browser, interactions can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection, by any developer on the account.

More info: www.rapidintake.com

simply, in less than five minutes. Knoodle delivers:

>> Easy Content Creation –Create basic presentations, audio and video all through your desktop or laptop within five minutes. Knoodle any type of course creation.

>> Dual Panel Display – View synced video and presentations in a dual panel, embeddable player for more effective engagement. Don't have all that content? Knoodle's panel automatically shrinks to host video-only, or presentation-only content as well as a downloadable player for offline viewing.

>> Social Features – Engage with your audience through chat, comments, notes and annotations within each presentation or course.

>> Testing and Measurement – Know how effective your course is in real-time with embeddable testing and surveying as well as real-time analytics that track each student and course.

>> Usage-based Pricing - Save money with Knoodle's viewer pricing. Know exactly how to budget for courses and curriculum with pricing based on course viewing minutes instead of expensive seat fees.

More info: www.knoodle.com

SCALABLE ONLINE LEARNING

By combining customizable, engaging content and scalable applications, the DuPont eLearning Suite enables organizations of all sizes and in all industries to standardize training across multiple locations and job titles and measure results.

The DuPont eLearning Suite, which includes the Learning Management System (LMS), Interactive Courseware and the Authoring Tool, simplifies and accelerates the delivery and management of online and classroom learning. It provides role-based access, a multi-language interface and customizable reporting. Training administration is centralized and provides global reporting from any browser at any location.

More info: www.coastal.com/dupontelearning

IN INSTRUCTORS' HANDS

On March 8th, Knoodle launched its cloud-based learning and training platform that puts flexibility and control back in the hands of instructors so they can deliver any type of course easily and

REVOLUTIONARY M-LEARNING SOLUTION

Enabling organizations to create and access learning content on mobile devices, Upside2Go will not only help training departments to reach out to their mobile workforce easily, but would also allow a mobile-based approach to real-time sharing and collaborating, within and outside a team.

Upside2Go has been designed to cater to the unique requirements of L&D departments and managers — delivering training and improving performance while allowing the workforce to also share knowledge in real-time using the all-powerful mobile device. Designed to work with or without an LMS, currently it comes with a ready plug-in for Upside Learning's learning management system.

More info: www.upsidelearning.com

TURNING VIDEOS INTO E-LEARNING

OpenSesame, an open marketplace for e-learning, has developed an e-learning standards-compatible video player that unlocks millions of hours of high-quality video content for use in enterprise learning management systems (LMS). The new video player enables content owners to easily convert their videos into professional e-learning courses delivered and tracked in learning management systems. As a result, millions of videos on internet sites such as YouTube are now convertible into sharable content object reference model (SCORM) e-learning courses. With the OpenSesame video player, training managers can now simply deploy existing videos into their LMS and track their employees' professional skills development.

Courses purchased through the OpenSesame marketplace automatically work on any learning management system. In addition to unlocking access to existing video learning content, the OpenSesame video player will enable people with minimal software design experience to make e-learning courses.

More info: www.opensesame.com

AFFORDABLE SIMULATION TOOL

NexLearn has launched its newest custom simulation authoring software, SimWriter Simplicity, which is designed for small-

and mid-sized businesses and provides training departments with an unprecedented option for integrating immersive learning simulation into their curriculum.

The new product is a scaled version of the company's flagship product, SimWriter Professional. Simplicity incorporates a version of Professional's interface and is designed specifically for developing customized in-house simulations that blend instructional design with experience design to create highly immersive and interactive learning simulations. Through this unique story-telling system, users build interactive sims to recreate real-life events with real-time results for the purpose of shortening the experience curve.

To prove the product's ease of use, NexLearn is hosting a contest and will award the best sim created from the Simplicity software with a $10,000 grand prize. Official rules are available at http://www.nexlearning.com/simwriter/new/images/nexlearn20k_contest_rules.pdf.

More info: www.simwriter.com

APP FOR THE IPHONE, IPAD

Brainshark, Inc., has made available the Brainshark App for the iPhone and iPad, downloadable for free from Apple's App Store. With this new application, iPhone and iPad users can take advantage of advanced features —designed to enable easy navigation and convenient access to important information — when they view Brainshark presentations from their mobile devices.

Brainshark lets users add their voice, music, video clips, attachments and more to PowerPoint decks and other documents to create trackable, online video presentations. Brainshark presentations are already accessible on leading mobile platforms, including the iPhone and iPad, BlackBerry, Android-based phones and Palm Pre, with one Brainshark presentation viewed every 2.5 seconds in locations all over the world.

When Brainshark enterprise customers and myBrainshark users download the app, they have the ability to log into their Brainshark account and access their own content at their convenience.

To download: http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/brainshark/id412495352?mt=8

NEW INTERACTIVE WHITEBOARD

The eBeam Engage interactive whiteboard device combines more than 10 multimedia and navigation tools in one sleek console to make lesson delivery effective and fun. Key highlights include:

>> Plug and play
>> Makes lesson delivery fluid
>> Puts frequently used tools within arms reach
>> Keeps focus and attention on content
>> Improves navigation with customizable links to commonly used applications, folders, files and URLs and scroll knob
>> Wireless keyboard eliminates need to toggle between computer and interactive surface
>> Simple installation requires no special skills or tools
>> Records sound and video in real time with one-touch recording button, built in microphone and line in/out ports
>> Provides two built-in USB ports to attach additional peripherals to the console

More info: www.luidia.com