



NEXT EVOLUTION OF THE LMS

If you were in the training industry in the mid-1980s, you may remember one of the earliest learning management system (LMS) products to hit the market, a standalone computer program called Registrar. It was a great example of the early market LMS, or what I call the first evolution of the LMS. Developed as a training administration package, it was designed to assist the administrator with pre-registering students and tracking attendance.

With the introduction of IT networks in the early '90s, LMS design evolved to multi-user platforms networked among training administrators. The idea was to allow administrators to share information about training activity. But information for information sake wasn't good enough, so LMS design quickly evolved to a resource management environment, allowing administrators to track the utilization of resources, including instructors and classrooms. It was about efficiency and utilization.

The Internet quickly changed all of that. Learning content management systems (LCMS) were created in the mid- to late-'90s, allowing students to register online for a course, immediately participate, and return later to pick up where they left off. In the early 2000s, the LCMS brought the administrator, designer, student and content all together into one environment. It allowed learners faster access and administrators more information about what was happening in the business.

From where I sit, we now are entering an era where the LMS/LCMS is now a part of something bigger. The Learning Portal provides an integrated platform of social media, administration and Internet technologies that allow learners much greater access to intelligence than ever before – access that includes other learners. They can learn from structured content, but also from readily available media outlets, research, and thought leaders. It's an exciting time – one where the learner is in more control than ever.

So what comes next? We'll have to wait and see, but this industry's rapid pace of change tells me we won't wait long!

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