CELEBRATING, VILIFYING, AND ENVISIONING THE LMS

A 3-hour 30 minute tour of the technology we love to hate
Background

- Our team is the platypus of eLearning
Why care?

- The academic LMS was originally envisioned as
  - A revolutionary technology
  - Anywhere / anytime learning
  - A cure for educational problems
- The academic LMS became
  - A classroom management tool
  - A commoditized technology
  - A part of traditional infrastructure

Can the original vision be realized? Is the LMS important to the NSDL? What’s next for the LMS …
A CRASH COURSE

In LMS-ology

Don’t HATE Your LMS

Shamelessly copied from a postcard sent by Bluevolt.
What is an LMS?

Corporate
(managing online learning)

- Evolved from classroom management systems
- Primary function
  - Delivering and tracking self-paced web-based training
- Typical functions include
  - Skill gap analysis
  - Learning plans / catalogue
  - Certification & notification
  - 360° evaluation
  - Analytics

Academic
(managing online courses)

- Evolved from home grown Web pages
- Primary function
  - Administration of online courses and online educational tools
- Typical functions include
  - Grading
  - Online syllabi / resources links
  - Online testing
  - Discussion forums
  - Online assignment submission
How do they work?

The LMS 2000 - 2010

Presentation Layer
- User Interface
- Content Players

Application Layer
- Workflow
- Business Rules

Database
- People
- Content
- Results
- Objectives

LMS
What’s happening to them?

**Corporate**

- Some Name Brands
  - Plateau, Saba, Cornerstone, Geolearning, SumTotal
- Some major buzz words
  - SaaS / multi-tenant
  - Content-as-a-service
  - Talent management
- Some Challenges
  - Scale and integration
  - Content interoperability
  - Informal and social learning
  - Commoditized market

**Academic**

- Some Name Brands
  - Blackboard, eCollege, Desire2Learn, Moodle
- Some major buzz words
  - ePortfolio
  - Social media
  - Repository
- Some Challenges
  - Pedagogical innovation
  - Tools interoperability
  - Integration of social media
  - Commoditized market
They seem to be doing well …

If adoption is a measure, the LMS has been a success.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Millions of students (U.S.)</th>
<th>Higher Ed</th>
<th>K-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>2009</td>
<td>2009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2014</td>
<td>2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All in Classroom</td>
<td>15.14</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.14</td>
<td>40.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>Some Online</td>
<td>10.65</td>
<td>1.75</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.65</td>
<td>6.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Online</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>3.78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Not all online courses are delivered through an LMS but the LMS is the key enabling technology.

Source: Ambient Insight, “U.S. Self-paced Learning Market” as reported by David Nagel.
They seem to be doing well ...

Researchers say that online education is effective.

They seem to be doing well …

LMS vendors have demonstrated they can make money.

Blackboard FY 2009:
- $136M in revenues
- $41.8M in profit
- $1B - $2B market cap

Saba FY 2010:
- $111M in revenues
- $6.8M in profit
- $100M - $200M market cap

(Yahoo Finance)
Not everyone is happy with their LMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LMS</th>
<th>Overall Rating</th>
<th>Satisfaction in Government and Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eCollege Course Management</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire2Learn Learning Environment</td>
<td>7.79</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ANGEL Learning Management</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>SkillSoft SkillPort</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>CourseMill Learning Management</td>
<td>7.30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TotalLMS</td>
<td>7.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBM Lotus Learning Management</td>
<td>6.63</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Active Learner</td>
<td>6.57</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LearnCenter</td>
<td>6.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackboard Academic Suite</td>
<td>6.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saba Learning Suite</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CampusCruiser Enterprise Portal</td>
<td>6.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GeoMaestro LMS (includes Express)</td>
<td>6.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meridian KSI Knowledge Centre</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Plateau Learning Management</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Saba Enterprise</td>
<td>5.68</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>OutStart Evolution LMS</td>
<td>4.87</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>TopClass e-Learning Suite</td>
<td>4.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IntraLearn 5.0</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From Blog: Moodle scores very high in satisfaction, but we need to qualify that result a bit. I personally feel that Moodle is good at the limited stuff it does. It's free which improves satisfaction. But it's not really an enterprise LMS and has some very serious deficiencies when it comes to many of the needs of corporate training departments. However, I would be concerned if I was a starter LMS vendor because Moodle is going to cause you grief in the bottom of the market. If nothing else, it causes the perception that there's a free competitor.
What’s wrong?

The LMS has not revolutionized learning.

• “Advances” over the past 10 years have been
  • Single sign on
  • HR / SIS integration
  • (Limited) branding of user interfaces
  • Addition of analytics in the corporate LMS
  • Adoption of standards for content portability
  • Keeping pace with general trends in software (e.g. SaaS and the re-branding capabilities of Web content management systems)

• The paradigm of the academic LMS is an online version of classroom instruction.
What’s wrong?

The LMS has not lowered the cost of education

http://www.inflationdata.com/inflation/Inflation_Articles/Education_Inflation.asp
What’s wrong?

As a technology, the LMS just seems unsatisfactory

ID workspace
One Instructional Technologist’s Adventures Designing, Technologizing, and Adjunctifying in Higher Education

Hacking the Academy: Four Lines of Attack on the LMS
By RICHARD | Published: JUNE 3, 2010

So I’m starting a series in which I do my best to take a look, seriously, at Hacking the Academy (or at least the section on educational technologies), and I want to start with the various attacks on the LMS (especially Blackboard). This is just one of the themes (which include alternatives to the LMS, alternative diagnoses to the problem, and at least one partial defense of the LMS), but I wanted to begin by tackling the attacks and the arguments behind them.

http://me.rruane.com/idworkshop/2010/06/05/lms-and-its-discontents/

and academics generally view them as expensive for what they do*

*Personal observation

http://www.elearnspace.org/Articles/lms.htm

So What’s Next? (Keeping in mind that predictions are dangerous)

John Chambers, CEO, Cisco Systems, COMDEX, November 16, 1999

The next big killer application on the internet is going to be education. Education over the internet is going to be so big it is going to make e-mail usage look like a rounding error.

David Wiley, Open Content Blog, May 28, 2009

Even though I’m on vacation, things with the potential to completely transform the way we teach and learn come along so rarely I had to share. It’s called Google Wave.
The LMS Circa 2011+

Enterprise Systems

HR / SIS
Analytics
ERP / CRM
User Content
Content Services

Repository

LMS

Social Media
Web 2.0
Games
A few topics: *LMS Futures and Applications* group on NSDL community site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES?</th>
<th>NO?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the academic LMS Dead?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Is the academic LMS Dead?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It is just a tracking service</td>
<td>• It is a core function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rich content will be mashed up</td>
<td>• Publishers control content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Social media, games, and other innovations will dominate</td>
<td>• LMS is established and will be the platform for innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Will open source dominate?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Will open source dominate?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Licensing fees are outrageous</td>
<td>• If anything, it costs more</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vendors are inflexible</td>
<td>• Vendors provide services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The technology is just as good</td>
<td>• Commercial technology is better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do standards matter?</strong></td>
<td><strong>Do standards matter?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• SCORM saved billions</td>
<td>• Many standards, little adoption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cyberspace is built on standards</td>
<td>• Cyberspace is built on software</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>