

Elliott Masie's Learning TRENDS 500th edition

The MASIE Center
e-Lab & ThinkTank

Happy Birthday, Learning TRENDS

By Elliott Masie

You are 500 today! Over the past 10 years, it has been an incredible honor to communicate with over 50,000 global learning colleagues. Each time I press the "send" button on a new Learning TRENDS, my mailbox fills up with ideas, comments and perspectives from colleagues in over 93 countries.

The first Learning TRENDS was sent in November 1997. We have travelled together through the emergence of e-Learning, introduction of LMS/LCMS technology, the growth of the internet, the coming of search and Fingertip Knowledge and non-stop change, evolution and more.

During the past 10 years, Learning TRENDS has also been quite personal. I sent out a TRENDS the morning that my mom, who was one of my first computer students, died at age 90. Within 3 hours, there were 2,000 notes to me about her. What a sense of support.

Where does TRENDS go in the next 10 years? We continue to blend innovation and simplicity. While you can access the notes as a blog (<http://trends.masie.com>) we have been asked by our readers/colleagues to continue to send TRENDS as a short note via email. We have added PodCasts and Video Segments where appropriate and I look forward to reporting from events and journeys around the world.

For TRENDS 500, we thought it would be fun to ask YOU to contribute thoughts about Learning, Learning TRENDS or the future. Here is a sample of several hundred replies.

I thank you for your collegueship and learning companionship.



“Since you started Learning Trends in 1997, just as in other fields, the education arena has changed tremendously with the advent of faster computer and network technology capable of powering e-learning as well as the development of more user-friendly and sophisticated software for both users (students) and developers.

Less prevalent are face-to-face courses and page-turner documents. More prevalent are web-based courses and other online resources that are available at the student’s convenience. The next ten years will likely bring a similar giant leap forward and I hope you’re there to cover it every step of the way.”

Joe Jurczyk

“Winston Churchill is quoted as saying:

I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught.

Most people are always willing to learn something new. However, the way learning is delivered is often counter productive. Whether learning is on the job, online or in the classroom, learners must be actively involved in the learning process and see some relevance in what is being taught.”

David Scannell, Holmesglen Institute of TAFE

“Now, more than ever, it seems the learning field is trying to discover how to consciously make learning part of work -- not a separate task to complete and then get back to a "real job." We are thinking differently about how learners seek information today. People are more active and selective about the information they need and more critical about how their time is spent finding it. It’s our challenge in the training field to seamlessly provide them with just enough information to help them perform, but entice them to want to learn more and come back when they need it.”

Joan T. Busch

“I continue to be puzzled by how much time and resources companies spend on classroom “training” of employees on new software systems navigation and processes - knowing that little is retained when the employee actually gets to using the new software – not to mention the lost investment when the systems change or the employees leave the job or the company. Just-in-time performance support is a viable and proven alternative that has yet to be adopted by the majority of companies. Why?”

Paul Heacock, Human Dynamics

“Fifteen years ago we extended our family with the addition of a cat. My wife comes from rural Norfolk, in the East of England, and the cat was born in her home village of Little Snoring. The cat, then a tiny kitten, had lived in a barn; faced with a cat flap in a terraced house in London, she did not know what to do. She looked quizzically at me, my wife and my sons. After an interval my elder son said: “OK Dad, what are you going to do now? Are you going to bring back a flip chart from work and draw a diagram? Are you going to go through yourself to demonstrate? Or you are going to borrow the firm’s video camera, push the cat through the flap, play the recording and ask the cat what three things it could have done better?”

Nothing it seems to me better captured the trainer mind-set at the time. We could design and deliver effective training in classroom situations. We could deploy a range of alternatives. We were committed, positive, helpful and innovative, but we were often a bit peripheral. Our basic models were trainer-centered rather than learner-centered. We concentrated on what we could deliver rather than what the learner might need.”

Martyn Sloman, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, UK

“Learning is like breathing. It happens daily and often without much thought--it is part of our “humanness”. But when we make these automatic responses a conscious focus, wonderful things happen. Focusing on the simple act of breathing during meditation brings about a profound calm and heightened awareness. Focusing on learning in the right ways can also have profound effects. It's time for learning professionals to step back from the flurry of instructional design and PowerPoint's and training schedules. We must continuously reflect on our own learning and help others do the same. Like breathing, it is part of our existence. We can take it for granted or leverage it for all it's worth. In our intense and constantly changing world, we need more intentional and reflective learners. Let's make 2008 the YEAR of the INTENTIONAL LEARNER! Start by asking others: "What have you learned today?" Help them learn to reflect on experience.”

Virginia W Denny, Delphi Center for Teaching and Learning

“I hope that 2008 becomes the year of achieving greatness for our learners. We know that companies need to look toward the future and educate their teams to outperform last year's work. But I hope that there is a renewed focus on the impact we as trainers have on the humans who participate in our programs. They need to catch the vision of themselves using new techniques and tools to do better and be better at work. The promotion, the raise, the chance to shine and thrive in their workplaces can be a direct result of what we teach them and how we make sure they can use it on the job.”

Ronna Caras, CARAS Training

“The world is your oyster and so many possibilities await...the only problem is which path to take because unlike in decades past there are so MANY options. This is the mixed blessing that we live with today...easy access to information leading to information overload leading to questions about whether the information was good to begin with. For the e-learner this means helping the audience/client understand how to get through all this "noise" and helping them to understand and prioritize what is important. For personal learning, we now have universities and libraries at our literal fingertip. The clever learner will figure out a way to weave a lifetime of learning through this maze of knowledge by piecing together the lessons themselves across this broad spectrum of published content. We each owe it to ourselves to help one another learn from our own experience. Through the community, our power of understanding is increased more than the sum of its participants. Through this sharing we help each other become better versions of ourselves.”

Calvin Sov, TechSprout.com

“I have tremendous optimism for corporate learning, because the technology is maturing just when it is needed most. I think we are moving to the third stage in learning that I call n-Learning (networked learning). Essentially we have moved from 1:1 (think Plato and Aristotle) to 1: Many (classroom and eLearning) to many: Many (powered by Web 2.0 social networking, tagging, and trusted recommendations). Since knowledge is growing exponentially, n-Learning is the only way for us to keep from being overwhelmed by choice and at the same time we can benefit from the Long Tail. The next ten years should be much more interesting than the last ten!”

Jonathan Vinoskey, Oracle HCM Strategy

"What a milestone - Congratulations! Wow, I can't believe it. I have subscribed to Learning Trends since 1999. To me, the key word is "TRENDS". Reflecting back over the years on how corporations have changed, people have changed, skills levels among different generations have changed, and the world is becoming an ever increasingly smaller place (some even call it flat), TRENDS has been there addressing these changes and its impact on learning. As much as I try and stay on top of things, TRENDS has been, and will continue to be a great resource to see what is emerging and to challenge my thinking as I ask, "what value will this add to learning within my corner of the world? - Can I adapt it?"

Stephen Barankewicz, Avon

"We all are in the field of learning beginning when we said our first word, took our first step and read our first book. For the past 27 years, I have been the trainee as well as the trainer in the workforce. I found over the years that learners still like the personal focus on just them and their needs, rather than the class as a whole. The learner has changed the fundamentals of their ways of learning to encompass the new age of learning, but the personal one-on-one will never go out of style. My sense of accomplishment and joy is when I see the dawning of understanding and the excitement of "getting it" sparkling in their eyes. I see their body language saying "finally!" the information kicked in and the learner now sees what else is possible with knowing. I have attended Learning 2000 and Learning 2007 and found that I have the same sense of excitement when I mingle with my peers and growing fascinated with the new concepts of training and learning trying to imagine how I can incorporate these ideas into my own curriculum. My own motto was "please ask, as there is never a stupid question, just an uninformed person." However, I picked up another motto I heard at the Learning 2007 consortium: "you have to fail in order to succeed." I really like this one!"

Jennie Patterson, Winston & Strawn, LLP

"Without learning, high tech would not survive. High tech constantly changes, breaks existing boundaries and finds new ways. Learning is a must and must be in multiple forms. Structured forms of learning initiate many and build a knowledge base to go forward and grow experience. Unstructured learning tempers the knowledge and experience into expertise. Learning mirrors high tech; constant change and innovation required to be viable."

Ralph Eldridge, EMC Corporation

"Over the past couple of decades in the Learning field at WordPerfect and Novell, it seems that many of our efforts often leave us and our students "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." (New Testament) This is often the result of development efforts driven by the glint of new technology, the glint of a quick profit, or the eagerness by management to have a training bauble for anything and everything. But I have also seen lives touched and eyes opened (including my own), and what I do know is that learning is an experience--not a thing. And a learning experience developed by a community effort has the best chance of touching people at the individual level. That's what excites me about future efforts in the Learning field, especially after attending Learning 2007. The possibilities of community development wedded to the opportunities provided by current technology can literally reshape how learning is experienced and lives are touched."

Chris Grayson, Novell, Inc.

"It had to be back in 1992/93, the very first time some of us learned of Elliott. He spoke at an IT User Group meeting held at the World Headquarters of Air Products in Allentown, Pennsylvania. We were all IT trainers at the time (I was with ExecuTrain at the time) and about 40-50 of us showed up. We all thought, "Wow, what a great turnout! Who is this guy, anyway?" Little did we know that 15 years later Learning 2007 would be over 2,200 strong and getting stronger. It shows what vision and leadership (and persistence!) can create! Thanks, Elliott, you have created the combined voice of the industry you helped create—and sustain!"

Bill Concevitch, Verint Systems Inc.

"It is interesting to stop and think about the field of learning – to muse. After 20+ years in training, specifically technology training, I have to say that I believe everything goes in cycles. We still live in an instructor led world. We still are challenged by just in time training – the right training at the right time. We innovate, we see changes, we adopt new ways – I love the idea of podcasts and iphones and WebEx, but we also have to remember that people want to have that out of the office time; they want to get away and focus to learn. Just like everyone who attends the Masie events – getting away from the day to day is sometimes the best way to learn. The balance on this equation will be my biggest challenge. What do we create and deliver to our "customers" that is formal, traditional training and what do we create and deliver that is readily available in the "place I work" (at my desktop, embedded in my applications, available just when I need it). Ah, whoever solves this theory will get my award for best in class. Thanks for asking ;-)"

Jill Guardia , Symantec

"Learning Trends is on top of the latest developments in learning from around the world. It is short and to the point with linkages to Websites or to publications to read more about it or to sample the learning experience from that person or organization. I look forward to every issue and my colleagues and I find it very valuable. It is a tremendous resource in terms of professional development for all types of learning professionals."

Paul Roden, LaSalle University

"I work in a corporate setting and every year I hope that the field of Learning turns into something that everybody "gets it..." I am tired of having to explain the same old things: why education is important, why we need to streamline the way we do things, why we should incorporate new technologies, and why we need to align what we do with the business goals and strategies. I regret to say that Learning does not get the respect it deserves. Corporations don't seem to understand the importance of it to the development of employees, retention and organizational effectiveness. So, another year has come, and once again, I am hoping..."

Angelica Gardner, Banner Health

"I first subscribed to your newsletter in 1999 as a way to keep abreast of learning trends. I have never been disappointed. The field of Learning is so simple, yet can be made so complex. I am thrilled to see the advances in the use of technology: iPods for training, Blackberries, on-line webcasts and simulations. But, at the same time, learning can be so simple a process that is overly complicated by the desire to track return on investments, relationship contracting and sic sigma scores, that the inherent learning can be lost in a desire to meet a set, measurable outcome. Ultimately a knowledge transfer needs to take place and in my field, the ability to complete a technical skill correctly, be able to use good analytical skills and the ability to troubleshoot on the spot are essential. I would like to see greater success in municipality/state government learning events for technical, mechanical and plant operations employees."

Cathy Hirner, Water Services Department, WWTDD

“A Videogame to the Rescue! My 24 year-old daughter has autism. I’ve tried all her life to teach her to tell time if she gets it, and then it’s gone. Amongst other obstacles, she’s never mastered the clockwise/counterclockwise concept. For Christmas, she got a Harry Potter video game. One spell requires rotating the joystick clockwise and another rotating it counterclockwise. You guessed it. Within two hours she mastered clockwise and counterclockwise! Maybe this was a major block on the time telling objective hierarchy that impeded her progress.”

Cheryl Emory, Comcast

“There can be no more important work than ensuring the ongoing education and knowledge growth of human beings, no matter what their work or personal lives may be. Progress and advancement of human society depends on this.”

Art Paton, Motorola University

“This is a wish for learning and a wish for the New Year. In this hyped up, wired, nano-second century we live in, let's not forget that learning takes time. Thank goodness, it is something we can do all our lives, in five-minute chunks or in year-long programs. But learning is a cumulative process as well as an outcome. Let's all commit to creating the time (carving it out of our incredible schedules) to learn, for ourselves and for our clients.”

Jocelyn Phelps

“Elliott you were awesome!!! I had numerous comments about how much the speakers and the staff learned and how wide they had their eyes opened. Your message was exactly, right on target to what we wanted to get across to them. They are a little shell shocked and a few are very nervous, but overall they get the message. This journey will be interesting for us as a company and particularly difficult for some of them. But, we will transition and it will be fun, and I expect we will have a few new trainers by this time next year. Avi and I thank you from the bottom of our CPUs.”

Gary S. Weinberg, Rockhurst University Continuing Education Center, Inc.

“The older I get the more I realize and appreciate the learning opportunities I encounter during the normal course of the day. I’ve always been programmed to plan for my development and learning opportunities, and learning opportunities have been missed or realized but not fully absorbed and evaluated because I was too busy planning for something else. I’m not discounting the value of planning, but I’ve learned to slow down a bit and better observe when life is giving you one of those life’s lessons – whether at work or at home. I equate it to what John Lennon once wrote, “Life is what happens while you’re making other plans.” My favorite aspects of learning are that it’s never ending and whether subtle or obvious, it can change everything.”

Raymond Sinatra, Wells Fargo

"I am honored to contribute because I am honored to be in this profession. What a privilege to be a partner in and catalyst for the growth of our company's leaders. To face the challenge each day of best supporting and challenging their learning as they navigate the intense and sometimes formidable pathways of change, competition and innovation. I am convicted by how deeply personal learning is and how, at its most effective in a corporate environment, learning events and learning vehicles like professional coaching can and do encourage authenticity, challenge beliefs and engender openness. That, in the end, the corporate culture is a reflection of the learning culture and that the organization that recognizes individual learning and development as holistic, secures itself as a place of meaning and significance in a world where people are looking to belong to just such a place."

David Berry

"Asked to pick a timely thought about the field of Learning, I come back time and again to "just in time" human enhanced search. Colleagues tell me that what they need is an overview of a topic. They need a framework that they really understand. What they can't retain and don't have the time for is details. Then, once they do have the need, they want a human enhanced search system that will help them find the needed details. Providing the framework is the easiest part. The real challenge is the human enhanced search. The internet and even our own corporate databases are just too rich. I need to find better ways to incent previous travelers to mark the valuable material they have found so it is more obvious to later searchers. The old 80/20 rule: 80% of the time someone, probably in your own office, has already solved the problem you are working on."

Tom Pears

"The opportunities for learning today are boundless. The trick is going to be to find the right outlets for each of us that give us the maximum learning potential while still in our time parameters. I now have a nightly radio show on business issues, interviews with business leaders, consultants, experts, academics on business, large, small, and non-profit. It's a great way for the general public to learn about local business while driving home. All are podcast so if they can't hear it all, there are over 300 40 minute (no commercials) on a variety of subjects. We just need to continue to be creative with our methodology."

Joan Gillman, University of Wisconsin-Madison

"E-learning has providing us with the opportunity to offer, open and have equal access to learning opportunities for all members of our society, organizations and schools throughout their lives. E-learning, E-work and E-commerce will jointly transform our global society. The United States will no longer be the super power as we all have learned it!...China, Indian, Russia and Brazil has just started the new learning curve to prosperity, power and wealth. Maybe our joint global vision, therefore, should be that "We shall all be like Denmark" – even stated last year by Microsoft Founder Bill Gates – and Why? Because Denmark is a small society and local community with a healthy business climate, social security, education for all and a strong future focus on environmental challenge!"

Jesper Lohse, Danish Probe A/S, Denmark

"Here is a fragment of my thoughts about learning. In Iceland we have an old verse saying. To learn is to play. That play I love. Knowing more and more and more every day! I think that should be our mission in the learning field today. To make all people feel that learning is a wonderful play which everyone can participate in on their own premises and enjoy that learning journey throughout life!"

Sigrún Jóhannesdóttir, Education and Training Service Centre, Skeifan 8

“Because e-learning is never as much fun to do as 'real world' learning, it is most effective when it is part of the real world. For example, sales people will complete some e-learning if it is a precursor to and as part of an event they see value in. Graphic design and interactivity cannot replace relevance and extrinsic motivation. This is not an argument for poor e-learning design; rather it is an argument for good design in terms of the overall learning.

Many thanks for the Learning TRENDS newsletter. Always thought provoking and challenging.”

Rob Taylor, HuthWaite, UK

“The impact of learning in a developing country like Brazil could be outstanding. The internet, therefore, is being responsible to create a varied ways of learning that can help us improve the way we learn and the way it can affect social and economical development.”

Bruno Weiblen, GSI Online

“My hope is that the delivery of learning would remove a lot of the world’s inequalities & poverty. With effective delivery of learning, there is no reason why somebody in Mali or Uganda could not be as effective as someone in San Francisco or London. The One Laptop Per Child program and much of the other work that you are involved with is going a long way in this direction.”

Brian Kelly, SalesPulse

“Why don't the game manufacturers produce engaging games that teach? For example, business / financial strategies (negotiation, personal development) medical diagnosis (reading x-rays, microscope slides, MRI files) bird watching literacy veterinary diagnosis. Too much technology and programming skills is wasted on the production of games that address such a very narrow focus of the lives of so few people.”

Paul Mulvey

“First, congratulations on reaching the 500 issue mark. This is a further demonstration of your commitment to share your learnings and knowledge with an ever-growing community.

What strikes me most about the field of learning, is how much it is both the same and different. The way human beings learn – the very basic learning mechanisms – really haven’t changed. Babies still learn to walk the same way as they have for thousands of years. Children still learn through games and role-play, as they have for thousands of years. And, adults still learn best at the moment of need, through trial and error and immediate feedback, as they have for thousands of years. What has changed – and changed dramatically – are the tools available to enable, extend, and enhance learning. We’ve gone from simple writing implements to publishing machines to audio & video networks to an interconnected cloud of computing power. And, I can foresee a bio-learning tool somewhere in the not-to-distant future; think learning patch akin to a nicotine patch. This will be a world in which we are truly learning-at –the-speed-of-life!”

Lance Dublin, Dublin Consulting

“Learning has, in the last five years, been focused on ever greater value for money, improving performance and hence delivering increasing ROI. It has had limited success due primarily to a lack of understanding of how to connect it to other talent management and business processes. Learning in itself does not make cars, fly people to the moon or save lives in Africa. To demonstrably add value and hence catch the eye of the CEO, learning professionals need to look at the other processes which directly create value, such as business development, manufacturing, finance, then to look at all the Human Capital processes that enable these, including recruitment and retention, people development, performance management and succession planning to understand the fit of learning. Once this is understood, the core currency of talent must be rigorously used to be able to connect learning any other processes and systems. These are competencies and understanding the importance of these and using them is the greatest single advance that learning could make in the next couple of years. Learning professionals all need to become evangelical about competency frameworks and focus their organizations on getting these fit for purpose before any new attempts are made at integrating learning with other Human Capital, talent management or business processes and systems. Our 2008 mantra needs to be: Competencies, competencies, competencies.”

Myles O'Connor

“In this century we decide the future of mankind and of this world. Either we reach a sustainable equilibrium, or we'll fall. Technology can help, but, by itself, it will only buy us a little more time. The only solution is a major shift in our global mind. And learning is the only way to get (people) there. The human challenge for this century is to build an effective worldwide chain of learning/development that may produce enough pull to tip the scales of the future for our side. That alone can buy our way into the next century. And for this purpose, we'll all need to learn to collaborate and let go of our petty squabbles. That's how important the learning field is...I'm sorry this sounds gloomy, but note that it is not pessimistic. If it was, there would be no way to get there. There is a way!

P.S. We should have a worldwide International Year of Learning. Maybe you could help pull this off...”

Pedro Freire, Portugal

“ICT technology offers more and more opportunities to speed up and tailor the learning processes to the needs of the student. As a lecturer and trainer at a business school this becomes increasingly clear to me. This learning process as part of the escalating centrality of the virtual as Goodson et al. mentions, needs trainers to focus on its consequences. I'd like to mention two of them. More attention should be given to the influence of neuropsychological developments of the brain (Jelle Jolles et al.) in order to fine tune the learning environment to the needs of the student.

ICT technology needs to be used to an attitude of amazement and stimulate authentic thinking, instead of 'copy paste' mentality. In addition 'a dare to be different' attitude as a condition for innovation and source for creativity needs to be fostered. Challenges to work on.”

Bert Jorritsma, Zuyd University, Netherlands

“Since 1997 and even before then, learning industry analysts have warned us that e-Learning is going to eventually replace traditional instructor-led training. Similar to "the paperless office" this hasn't come to pass, but eLearning and virtual instructor led training has made a serious foothold in our "training mix." I can't tell you how many corporate training organizations I've seen try to replace ILT with a combination of eLearning and Virtual ILT. Unfortunately, before they realize that it's not a one-two-one replacement, damage has been done to the training department. The most successful training organizations are the ones who gradually transition part of their training mix to e-Learning and also add the marketing component that helps e-Learning get fully utilized.”

Gordon Johnson

“Many nurses in Canada (and probably in the USA as well) are a little afraid of computers and using them during our patient care. I guess it has a lot to do with the generation of nurses that are at the bedside right now, they are older and don't have as much "electronic" experience as the new nurses just starting out. I'm hoping that, in light of the nursing shortage that is here across the world, that we can gently help the nurses see how computers can help their practice in every way possible.

When I work with nurses, related to the computer, I use the following approach "teach the basics first, let them practice, and above all, tell them it is impossible to "break" the computer, any learning must be FUN!....this will get the nurse "hooked" on computers, then I move onto how that computer can help his/her practice, and you will have a nurse that supports e-Health in every way!"

Sue Eggleton

“Learning doesn't matter. Doing does.”

Jay Cross

“In-person training won't go away anymore then the book will go away because of the internet. Much of what people need to learn to improve their lives and the planet has to do with dealing effectively with others. People must practice being different with people in new ways in real time. Look to improve techniques to infiltrate soft skills training for experiential learning that has the best chance for producing real change.”

Cheryl Gould

“Curiosity and Necessity (as in staying alive) are the two most powerful stimulants (prods?) to learning. And KISS (Keep It Simple, Stupid) is the most widely applicable principle for teaching.”

Mike Graff

“While visiting Stratford UK last autumn I watched a Parliament debate on unemployment in the UK. Prime Minister Gordon Brown said in his speech the truest thing I have ever heard about this topic: "To change our way of living, we have to change our way of learning".”

Per Eide, Norway

“The role of learning is to change lives for the better. It is the obligation of those in corporate and commercial learning to ensure the developments; knowledge and insights we create not only help and drive our businesses but also help and improve the world around us. We have an obligation to use what we do, and allow what we do to be used, to change the lives of those who need support and help.

Abroad and “at home” there are those whose lives we can change or help to change for the better with access to technology, learning materials, advice and support. Closer and closer alliances between the commercial learning sector, the mainstream educational sector and the not for profit sector would ensure the true return on investment from innovations in learning would be truly remarkable.”

Charles Elvin, BSI Learning, UK

“The next few years should be very exciting for professionals in the field of e-learning, which will cover not only general best practices but the skill of applying those practices to everything from web-based training to iPods, as well as how best to combine media with live presentations.”

David Garrett, Future Blue LLC

“When learning is an investment in our future and as key to organizational growth as sales and marketing you would think justifying the need would be as easy as recognizing the gap between today and tomorrow. Knowing we must have a learning culture is as well discussed as the need to have a service culture yet moving from status quo is so often challenged. By challenging status quo our team will see the future that education and training brings to an organization; a future of understanding, creativity, innovation, hope, optimism and excellence. This in turn creates the opportunity for a return on our learning investment. A skilled workforce with a growing ownership in the business who individually may stay a little longer. I have kept the above to a short rant as should you receive 55,000 'short rants' it will take me a long time to read issue 500.”

Chris Lund, Watty New Zealand Limited, New Zealand

“The field of Learning is on the verge of the most significant series of evolutionary events since the time of Socrates. Just think of the outcomes for the individual learner(without regard to age) when we combine the outreach of social networking via "Web 2.0" applications with the limitless capabilities afforded by scaling high performance computing and high speed networking across the traditional curriculum! Hardware, software, and skinware will evolve to maximize the new capabilities.

The age of on-demand, truly virtual, highly interactive, and deeply personal learning environments is upon us. In short, we are entering the age of e-volution!”

Michael Abbiatti, Louisiana Board of Regents

“I've so looked forward to receiving the Learning Trends for the inspiration. Elliott Masie always presents the world of training in a delightful and interesting perspective that makes me want to receive the news to get a "warm fuzzy" about my career as a trainer.”

Judy King

“Thanks for taking a little idea and inspiring so many people who love helping others learn. I was working as an Instructional Designer when I found out about your organization and subscribed to Learning TRENDS. While I loved learning, I was actually new to the training profession. Learning TRENDS provided a welcome bit of information each week that was delivered in a professional and engaging way. It was like having an electronic mentor to let you know what was happening outside of your organization. I am no longer in the training profession, but I still love the field and stay in contact by reviewing Learning TRENDS.

Like all the other people you influence, I appreciate your efforts. Keep up the good work.”

Wayne A. Fletcher, UPS

“The biggest lesson for me over the years is that education is going to fail. If you can reach 90% of the learners, you're doing great! There is such a variety of learning styles that no one format or technique is going to reach everyone. Some people need a face-to-face environment, some people need a great deal of directed structure, some people want to drill down into every detail, and so on. The best you can do is try to make sure that a variety of approaches and resources are included in each course, and that a variety of delivery mechanisms are available.”

Eric Pourchot, American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works

“In order to deliver effective web-based e-learning, an author now needs to learn a package of tools. This is making the price of e-learning very expensive. We need to push for creating a one-stop tool where graphics can be imported, and then the tool manipulates the environment.”

Frederick Z. Banks, Boeing

"When I entered the field of learning almost 20 years ago you were such an inspiration to me and always provided a glimpse into what was coming next on the Learning Horizon. Receiving Learning TRENDS has been a wonderful tool for keeping up with the industry news. I attended many of your conferences which introduced me to a world of learning opportunities, as well as a place to network with others facing the same or similar challenges as me. You gave the latest and greatest technology, not just hype, but real hands-on experience.

I think a highlight of my career was when you asked us to write about the teacher who had the greatest influence in our lives several years ago.

Being able to pay homage to him was an honor. Then you took it a step further and published all of the testimonials. I cried when I read the countless stories and then got to mine. I cannot begin to tell you how much I appreciated being a part of that work."

Bonnie Deering

"I thought I knew it all until...I retired last year as Managing Director, technology-enhanced learning, Harvard Business School! Having joined the Harvard Institute for Learning in Retirement (now the world's happiest student) I reflect on the following:

- 1) There is no substitute for motivation. When people want to learn...when there's something in it for them, the learning is fast and fun.
- 2) Computer-based training can't--and shouldn't--compete with personal interaction. Computer tools, such as personalized directories--are a great tool for enhancing that interaction. Why don't companies leverage this kind of tool, particularly where team members don't know each other?
- 3) A surprising number of people are basically computer illiterate, certainly among the population of people over 60 but also in the younger generation. They can turn it on and get their mail or write a simple document but....
- 4) There is no substitute for experience. The richness and variety of older citizens is breathtaking if you can just tap it. It stands to reason that learning should seek to find and leverage those experiences, not try to erase them. Pairing young and old is a good thing.
- 5) Is today's college degree worth the high levels of debt and scarcity of jobs our graduates are experiencing?"

Judy Uhl

"Six years ago you were among the first to leverage the power of visuals in learning and in the conference setting--a maverick inviting me to "write on the walls" with my visual journalism at Tech Learn 2002. Over the subsequent years bringing in many variations on visual learning--from the animations during conferences, to podcasts in between, and visualized social networks. Now we are seeing visuals pop in all kinds of ways during face to face sessions and on the Web. One of your protégés Tom Crawford is now CEO of Viz Think bringing together visual communicators across the spectrum -- from my mural style of live visual journalism to the complex mapping of Xplane. The story of visual communication dates back to the earliest civilization and has its roots in Nature (there's an example - the image of "roots" which we all understand) Dan Pink talked about the modern revival of visuals as key to the "conceptual age." In visual journalism we use a strategic combination of words and images to convey emergent ideas. Visuals allow ambiguity and emotion in the room, enabling people to be more creative and engaged. It's so exciting to be part of this revival of an old story and as always Elliott, you've been at the cutting edge. I'll close with a favorite quote from coauthor Bonnie DeVarco: "Words capture ideas. Images free them.""

Eileen Clegg

“Picture this; a student with a hand on an electrostatic generator, fully charged and having an electrifying experience. This is the mental image present when thinking about the potential of the field of learning and its impact on students. Knowledge is everywhere. At anytime in a given day one has access to knowledge. Further, if a learning style is known, one can choose how they want to experience the information. Learning content can be customized or tweaked to enable each student to have a quality and effective learning experience. In some cases, the student can even decide the path taken to gain knowledge decided on by connecting it to relevant and personal interests. Never before have educators been able to produce customized and researched content with relative ease. Allocated planning time can now be used more efficiently due to the opportunities presented by technology. All of these factors contribute to what can be a thrilling, inspiring and exhilarating learning experience for our students. It is a time to be thankful for no longer being chained to an overhead projector looking out over a sea of faces bored to tears. It is an overwhelmingly exciting time for those in the learning field for the reason that, when thinking about the potentially electrifying learning experiences, my heart races with renewed passion.”

Heather Clevenger, Ohio Learning Network

“Elliott has kept my business up to date on all the newest gadgets, equipment and techniques from the simplest facilitation trick to the most complicated learning devices. His newsletters and pod casts are truly a great way to stay on top!”

Michael Davis

“As a violin teacher, I finally admitted that I can learn as much from each lesson as my students do. I observe their current challenge, and must articulate a remedy on the spot. We both get instant feedback on whether that results in better playing. That articulation informs my own learning about how to play. Sometimes, after a breakthrough lesson, I feel so privileged to be able to assist that I'm humbled by the whole, wonderful process of teaching and learning. The larger game I'm playing is not teaching the violin; rather, it's learning about how to be a better teacher. Which is really about being in service to the learner?”

Margaret Elwood, ITS Budget & Administration PUD

“Learning is inevitable. One cannot not learn. This fact should make our profession easy, but don't we all know some “teacher” who does not see him/herself as a “learner assistant” and has developed efficient habits of hindering learning by trying to force a creative process into inflexible structures? Of course, since learning is inevitable, students will still learn. The question is: What?”

Iris Peceny, Goodrich Corporation

“Here is what we have learnt in working with 1000's of faculty the past 10 years!
People Cultivate. Technology Innovates.
Thus our company by-line and belief reflects: Cultivate Learning. Innovate technology.
Learning is more like tending a garden than instantly flicking the switch of innovation.
We can flick a switch in less than a second but take a lifetime to understand what to do with the “light”. For every 1000 references to “innovation” and “education” you will find the word Cultivate or Cultivation only a handful of times. Makes me think that we have yet so much to learn!
Cultivate Learning. Innovate Technology.”

Andre vd Merwe, Eiffel Corp

"I sometimes think about the attitude people and companies have concerning their education and learning procedure. On the one hand many companies claim that the trainees get educated worse year by year. On the other hand many companies try to save the last cent for any training for years! I think we are on a shift now. Companies are more willing to spent money now. They realize how important training is and they save double when they spend into the quality of training. To cut a long story short: I am happy that we will be able to do one thing in the future: help people to succeed through learning! I am really looking forward to seeing this positive tendency grow."

Niels Brabandt

"I think the biggest challenge we face is helping our customers see Learning as a strategic thing and not just a content or technology-based deliverable. They too often focus on the deliverable rather than the change they want to see in behaviors or in their organization."

Ed Duffy

"500 is an amazing feat! Elliott, you should be proud of the influence that you've extended to all of us in the learning field and beyond through your TRENDS messages. Looking back at some of these is a great way to catalog the immediate issues of the day like Trends # 127 - Microsoft Office 2000 launches!, #145 – LSP/ASP Learning Models Grows in Business Plans and Offerings, or #218 – 9/11 Survey responses - and to see how far we have come. I can't wait to see Trends # 2,500."

Rob Lauber

"As difficult as it is for many of us to accept, corporate learning will progressively become productized and automated. This will mean more standardized, blended programs delivered by computers, subject matter experts or leaders. The skill set for learning professionals is rapidly changing: we are less and less required to be content experts - why even bother if there are content providers such as Harvard Business School publishing and the like. No one training department can (or should try to) compete with these folks. Instead, we increasingly have to focus on efficiency of our operations, on consistent quality across the globe, and on integration of our products with other platforms. I sometimes compare this model to running a "training McDonalds" - were your focus is on serving fast, efficiently, inexpensively, and with consistent quality to thousands of people across the globe. The big difference however, is that unlike a fast food chain, the learning organizations will outsource the actual "cooking", or development of content to thought leaders such as Harvard to ensure top-notch quality."

Maria Wayne, HR Global Leadership & Learning

“As technologies and economies evolve and mould the environment and lives of new generations, needs and expectations in all areas of life including education and training must adjust accordingly. While in the past we often prepared students and workers for specific jobs, we are now tasked with preparing students for jobs and work environments that may not yet exist. Individuals and organizations need to reflect deeply on how they will organize and position themselves effectively in order to meet these changing learner needs while supporting sustainability and efficacy. There is much we can discover from the new learners themselves. For instance, Gen Y (born between 1980 and 2000) is purported to be a generation of collaborators. Many arrive in classrooms and the job market equipped to work in new and productive ways. Unfortunately, the workplace and the classroom may not be designed to accommodate and utilize these new skills and abilities. This too presents many challenges for the educator and learner. That being said, younger students have already affected the direction of education and learning the workplace. Electronic technology in the early dawn of the Information Age has impacted new generations and provided a multitude of new avenues to explore. To be effective educators we need to also be effective and motivated learners; we need to be both leader and follower; we need to discern what is still useful and what needs to be jettisoned - we need to ready students to do the same in order to prepare them for the new situations they will inevitably find themselves in. Education and training has always been a “tall order” and it seems it always will be especially during the global tumult of change we are currently experiencing. This is both the challenge and the joy of teaching and learning!”

Karen Quinney, Loyalist College

“The field of education has great challenges ahead, brought on by the Gen x'ers and Gen y'ers, who have known nothing but multi-tasking, technological innovation after technological innovation, speed to accomplish, and yet, many times are in a classroom with Boomers and Silent Generation members. To continue to use the classroom for a rich learning environment means teachers, trainers, educators and administrators have to be in sync in not only how to accomplish but also the willingness to pay the price.”

Joseph Marovich, MAROVICH BUSINESS INSTITUTE

“Learning TRENDS has demonstrated that people like to hear a good story and always will. I'd like to emphasize that its success is from the emphasis you have placed on ensuring that which you share is truly “good,” relevant, insightful, and yes, even compassionate. Communicating about the way in which we learn will continue to be a source of delight in the future, as I believe great technology will meet smart design. However, the joy in learning and sharing is never ending.”

Harriet Stein, Centocor, Inc

“Learning in the workplace – it’s teaching you your current job or developing you for the next. It could be taught in 2 hours or 2 days, on-line or traditional classroom and / or combination of. It can and will improve performance. Learning – for the young and old, never ends. This is something that we all continue to strive for, year after year. In order to happen, it should be fun and stimulating. It doesn’t have to end. These are the benefits of learning – I’ve been grateful for being taught and having taught – we all learn from it. Let’s continue to learn, to prepare & grow the organization.”

Sergio L Chiappetta, Abbott

"I love learning! Both the learning opportunities that I've been privileged to develop for others over the last 12 years....and the endless learning and growth I've received while doing my job. I consider myself lucky to have found such a changing, exciting and challenging profession....one that can really make a difference in the everyday lives of employees. My belief is that employees really want to do a great job....but, often need the tools, ideas and confidence to get the job done. I'm very grateful that I can contribute to their professional lives everyday. Thanks, for doing a great job, Elliott! It's been a wonderful 10 years from paper-based workbooks, videos, multimedia CD-ROMS to the Internet to Learning Management Systems to mobile learning (m-learning)! Who would ever have think it?"

Georgia Jo Appogast, BAE Ground Systems

"It seems like self directed learning is increasingly in vogue in business settings. The learner feels more empowered, it is flexible, it is cheaper - all these and more are reasons given. While I agree that self directed learning can be wonderful, it often needs a context for the full cycle of learning to take place and this context seems to be missing too much of the time. In John Dewey terms I think this needs to be a context that offers help to the learner, given where they are starting from, in: a) choosing what to focus on and what learning resources to use b) a forum for discussion of and shared reflection about what is being learned and possible applications/implications of it and c) a way to apply learning and then reflect on the experience of doing so that includes development of critical skills for evaluating one's self directed learning process and planning improvements for the next cycle."

Heather Wishik, Heather Wishik Consulting

"The problems we have with designing new e-learning programs are, being such a small staff and projects coming one after another, it doesn't allow us to grow or 'think out of the proverbial' e-learning box. We keep on creating the same old, same old. We need fresh ideas. But how with such a dilemma?"

Greg Davis, NVTI

"The more we study and Learn from our field the more I feel we are dealing with an untamed beast that continues to reveal just how little we have understood about how people learn and develop. The advent of our new technologies has asked us to question the "norms" of what we understand as learning professionals, and embrace a completely different paradigm that consistently re-enforces the "individuality" of learning and what we need to embrace as learning professionals to enhance this experience.

Learning trends is just one of the vehicles that allows me to undertake my daily "embrace" and enjoy my field for what it is - An evolving and dynamic field that continues to strive and understand what people "need" to learn and then strives to provide for that need."

Robert Wilkins, St George Bank, Australia

"Learning is about being a Change Agent, especially for those of us who are in any type of the Learning Industry (Managers, Instructional Designers, Trainers, etc.)

Numerous driving forces motivate the behavior of change agents. An agent who is constantly adapting to new practices is often motivated to find better ways to do things. These driving forces may be external—shaped by circumstances outside the agent's control, such as the state of society or the seasons— or internal—from a desire to make change.

This is why I am always excited to be a Change Agent... part of this wonderful-crazy-fast paced learning to share to our constituents, our learners."

Marina Kokkinias

"I see learning as seed corn. Interesting we must first recognize seed corn and the true intrinsic value of it! The seed corn - like learning, needs the precise environment to flourish. Seed corn needs to be planted in a soil that supports not only germination and growth, but ultimately producing an abundance of wonderful nutritious sustainable fruit - with the fruit in one form being more seed corn. It needs to be delicately nurtured with the right amount of water, sun and fertilizer. And the seed corn, like learning needs to be encouraged - not trampled on. Without seed corn like learning, our future is in peril. Learning is the seed corn for our sustenance. Dare we eat our seed corn or maybe even worse, dare we first recognize it and the value to us and our future as a society?"

Dave Siefert, SBC GLOBAL

"When I think back on PLATO, interactive videodisc, the advent of CD-ROM, the pre-SCORM days, the birth of web-based training, and the online immediacy and integrated Talent Management approaches of today, I'm amazed at the journey we have taken and remain quite excited about where we are going. Through it all, of course, it comes down to solid, learner-focused design, doesn't it?"

James Gotlieb, AIG

"It seems that, as I come across new publications about learning, I am finding new, ongoing debates regarding the "best" way to learn or the "best" theory on how people learn or even (perhaps the most arrogant) the "best" system or environment in which to learn. While the research and reporting on each of these topics is great, the learning community (and all organizations in general) would benefit from realizing that learning (just like people) is far too vast and complex to place neatly into single categories or theories that, taken independently, will work in a given situation. It seems that many organizations have encountered pitfalls due to adopting a system/theory of learning (whether it be a form of coaching or an LMS/LCMS) and that the decisions to adopt these things were likely spurred on by the lofty claims made by the researchers/innovators that championed them.

What can be done? Well, the researchers and innovators of learning sciences and learning technologies can help by presenting their findings as viable possibilities accompanied by concrete, variable examples of how they can be used effectively rather than boasting them as the "end all be all" of their particular field. Learning organizations can help by not adopting a particular system or theoretical framework based on the notion that it will solve a boatload of issues; but rather examine their situation closely, scrutinizing all theories and all systems in order to create the best learning environment for their unique organization by collecting and adapting the best attributes of each...and then, of course, keep evaluating and improving!"

John Morgan

"California failed to sustain student scores in national rankings. No new American companies seek highly skilled young employees to work in California. Without an educated middle class can tomorrows California citizen pay increased taxes or vote? What do lower ranking U.S. student math and science scores suggest about our ability to compete internationally?"

RK Smith

"I like to see that true learning is a combination of passion and handicraft. The passion of the tutor and the pupil and the tools that are used. It does not matter if it is low- or high-tech as long as it keeps the fire burning for the subject.

If there is no passion for the subject I may still learn some or most of it but I will never be able to take it to my heart and hence never have the drive to get to the core of it."

Christer Carlsson, Interactive 97

"Web 2.0 is not special... there are some nice features but again, people are trying to push a square through a circle hole. Wikis and Blogs have their place in learning/training for letting people collaborate, communicate, and share lessons learned. These tools can not be used though to train on their own... the idea of "the mass" training one another is quite frightful. The training industry needs to enter into gaming as a learning tool much more than it has. To prepare for the new type of learner that we will be facing entering into the work force in the next few years there needs to be a shift from the status-quo into much more interactive simulations. The boundaries need to be pushed now... Distributing information via iPods or other smart devices will and should increase in time (thanks to the younger generation adapting to this technology at such an early age). As these devices become more capable and affordable training across these devices will increase."

Kevin Schmohl

"Thanks for your Learning Trends, this is something I have started to like and look forward to receiving. I find them useful because you offer practical tips I find inspiring and can often use them in my context, you take great initiatives and share your experiences with us and you make me feel updated on learning trends. I am very happy to be part of your network."

Ulrike Forsberg, WIDEX A/S, Denmark

"As I look to launch a new corporate learning strategy for two previous competitors merging into one company, I am struck by the change in our industry's "language". Talent, community, knowledge sharing, storytelling, blended, facilitation, co-creation, collaboration: these are very different, informal reflections of how broadly informality has taken hold not only in learning circles, but throughout our culture today. No one running a company today can overlook the challenges (and opportunities) of engaging customers, partners, and employees in a completely new learning dialog."

June Nugent, NetScout Systems

"I'm lost in a sea of paradoxes, polarities and contradictions: Ever since the Learning 2007 Conference, I've been thinking about the differences between "learning" and "training." Specifically, using a communication model -- training equals the "sending" and learning equals the "receiving" of information. Another perspective might be that training is an "activity" and learning is an "outcome." From a corporate governance standpoint, our organizations pay for outcomes not for activity -- in theory anyway! As a trainer, I can only control what is "sent" to the student. As a student, my perspective or "filters" influence what is received and this dictates what I learn. In this equation, learning cannot be controlled actively! Put in this context, I'm amazed anything ever gets learned! Again as a trainer, where do I put my energy? As with anything in life, it is always more productive to put my energy where I have control. As a trainer, that is on how I design the curriculum and setup the learning environment. As a learner, it is on monitoring my own filters and learning outcomes. My company remains fixated on the "return" for their training investment. However, ROI is a measure of outcomes and training is not a business outcome, it is an input... we train employees so they can accomplish an outcome. No wonder training budgets and jobs are constantly at risk! It is really my function's leadership that fixates on ROI of training. Outside of the training function the company's leadership realizes that training must be done and they focus on reducing costs whenever possible. Is the learning function threatening itself through a focus on reducing training costs? Perhaps it would be better served by reducing business costs -- sometimes which might include an investment in training activities! There is an old adage that "what is measured improves." There is another adage that says, "What one thinks about expands." While we often talk in terms of measuring outcomes perhaps we have it backwards? Maybe we would make better progress if we thought about outcomes (to increase their occurrence) and measure activity (to improve its efficacy.)"

John Morris, Hewlett Packard

“The world is constantly going to change... Just as business will always change. It is a choice we make as learning professionals to embrace it or ignore it. Training and Learning are key factors to empower employees to embrace the ongoing change. Technology will continue to play a large roll in learning... embrace it or ignore it, but technology is here to stay. My advice to any learning professional is embrace change and don't forget the technology.”

J.R. Dansie, Nu Skin Enterprises

“FYI ... Learning is what it is all about. We may call it different things and use different delivery mechanism but in the end each day we learn something. We can take advantage of each other in a positive way to learn from each other either by what we have done or not done or by our successes or by our failures just like Elliott does when asking for our thoughts, suggestions, etc. If we do not continue to learn then we would stagnate and die.

Learning never stops and we're learning more about learning all the time. It is a challenging, frustrating, exciting, and fun field to be involved with.”

Rick Winter, Georgetown Community School

“As a runner, one of the nice things about running outdoors and running in different races is the change in scenery along the way compared to the static view from a treadmill. As I think about my experience as a lifelong learner and as an educator throughout my adult life, I see the world of learning through a runner's eyes. That is, as I progress from one marker to the next (or one decade to the next) the details of the landscape change - the technology, the tools, the language, the focus, the climate, and the bumps in the road along the way. I never seem to arrive at the ultimate destination or a point at which I say "I can stop now. I have arrived." There are more uncharted paths to follow and more turns ahead than I can now predict. The joy, however, is not in the destination but in the journey. It's a marathon - not a sprint - so I'm pacing myself. Yes, I could be content for a time on a learning treadmill doing the same thing and viewing the same sights over and over, but wanderlust for life and for learning call me to new places and experiences. At age 51 I am pursuing my PhD in Instructional Design for Online Learning, not for a career change or even for advancement in my current career, but rather to better equip me to run the exciting, unending race before me.”

Jeff Ross, Humana Inc.

“As a young professional, I foresee that learning will continue to blend with entertainment, mostly in the forms of online communications and gaming. I think gaming to learn will continue to make strides, especially as the gaming industry pushes the limits of gamer interaction. Current Gen Game Systems such as the Nintendo Wii have made physical interaction a requirement for gaming, which could lead to the learning of more sophisticated movements (dance, martial arts, sports, changing tire, learning in the physical domain, etc). And even the games themselves are redefining interactions. I spent some of my holiday playing Rock Band with my brother-in-law and in that time I've learned the appropriate movements to “rock out”. If presented in a real world format, I may have been able to play a bit of the guitar as opposed to a joystick shaped like one (though I do think I could play the drums a bit better as the controller is a mock drum). It's our job as learning professionals to better utilize these systems because entertaining results in learning.”

Bob Wolfe, Jr., Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA)

“Learning is a multifaceted art, science, and methodology that we all participate in... A convergence of knowledge sharing (teaching), knowledge acquisition (learning), and knowledge filtering (contextual structure and design). It's our privilege and challenge as learning professionals to provide the framework and definition that empowers others to learn with intuitive simplicity, insightful synchronicity, and the inspirational spark that leaves them wanting more!”

Robb E Bingham

“With the advances of digital technology, learning has changed for ever. Learning is now more fun, entertaining, and ubiquitous than ever. The following trends have lifted learning and given it a new status. Advances in computer technology, data communication, and document technology have made learning more affordable. Internet, global networks, broadband connectivity, and mobile technology have made learning more attainable. Increasing costs of conventional education and training have impetus for online delivery of information in education, training, and knowledge management. The introduction of virtual universities by world-class institutions like Harvard, Stanford, MIT in the United States and Oxford in England...Rapidly changing content fueled by advances in graphics, animation, simulation and multi-media communications. Demand for just in time, on-the-job, and immediately accessible education and training. Lifelong learning is keeping up with ever-changing knowledge and skill requirements of the workplace. Globalization of education and training targeting culturally diverse and geographically dispersed workforces all over the world. I expect to witness to see the globalization of learning to be furthered across geographical, cultural, technological, and economic divides.”

Matthew Sauber

“In relation to a work environment: "PAY now or PAY later!"...if you don't invest in EFFECTIVE employee learning programs as an ongoing part of your business, it will impact your bottom line one way or another...and in ways you can't always concretely measure. In life, learning something new is what brings you joy and makes the journey worthwhile....find what brings you joy and go there, all year long!”

Laureen Guerriero, Hartford Life International

“My comment relates to a concern that I have as we visit customers and watch the dynamics in the individual markets. As we all know, e-learning has had its share of detractors. However, I think it is difficult to deny its many benefits for competitiveness of individuals, organizations and even countries. As countries struggle to be competitive, it has been a concern and very frustrating to watch many good ideas not come to fruition. As one looks at Latin America with its many problems, education would seem to be at the top of the priorities in order to change things. Time keeps flying by without much success in improving math and reading indices which would influence job performance and country performance. E-learning would appear to be the correct solution. However, there is so much noise and information overload that key decisions are not made. In Mexico for example, the teachers union does not want to “bother” teachers with having performance standards and evaluation criteria, and this becomes more important than education itself. Another common thread is the comment that “people here don’t read, how do you expect them to use the internet to learn?” So unfortunately, we see all too often a culture that puts barriers and reasons why things cannot be done. As someone who is very concerned with poverty and improving people’s lives, it is sad to know that the tools and technology are available but that the will of governments to assure better performance is not at the same level. I do think that some countries get it, while others will continue to be held back by cultural issues or stereotypes. This is an unfortunate state of affairs when it implies ongoing poverty for hundreds of millions of people. I hope efforts by organizations like Masie, the company I lead, the OECD, and The World Economic Forum will convince governments to adopt technology and stop wasting time.”

Carl Rianhard, OpenTec

“As a learning professional I heard for years that content was "king." I grew increasingly skeptical over the years. I am now convinced that the real role of the learning professional is one of "matchmaker." As an industry, we struggle with keeping content current, available, scalable, affordable, memorable, and so on. Now I am convinced that content isn't the even end goal. It is the byproduct of a well orchestrated human relationship. Learning professionals should strive to facilitate those relationships--becoming the matchmaker. Let me explain. After being deeply involved in technical training and certification (first at Novell and then for the past dozen years at Cisco Systems), I recently took a different position building and directing a group of technical consultants in Latin America. My new engineers struggle with two things as they do their jobs. First, they must be conversant enough in their technologies to know what they don't know. Second, they must have the ability to get just what they need to fill their knowledge and skill gaps long enough to get the job done. I have found that traditional learning products--ILT, e-Learning, books, VoD/AoD, EPSSs--do a good job introducing new concepts and practices. However, once the engineers establish a baseline of knowledge, all other knowledge and skills is developed...and forgotten...as it is needed. The engineers experience situations that require some of the highest orders of thinking--call that synthesis, organization, or origination. Even the best learning professionals can't foresee all of the situations they face so traditional learning interventions fall short.

What then is the role of learning professionals? We should become learning matchmakers. How do we do that? By creating scalable, easy-to-use systems and environments whereby learners find one another and create solutions together. Is that Web 2.0? It could be if we help supply an understanding of how people interact and learn. Otherwise we could end up with a huge web of learning acquaintances and no real learning relationships.”

Chris Berriman, Cisco Systems, Inc.

“2500 years ago a philosopher and a politician said, “The only true wisdom is in knowing you know nothing.” Socrates

“I grow old learning something new every day” Solon So how can we ever stop ‘Learning’?

Thank you very much for all your good work, keep going we need to ‘keep on learning and find ways to improve our learning methods’.”

Dimitris Antoniadis, MSc BEng(1st Hons) CEng MIMechE

“The field of Learning is a real test for a person's passion in continuing to be curious, interested and energetic to pursue things till the ‘AHA’ moment.

Getting others to take this journey is an equally arduous challenge, though worthwhile even if 10% of the target group gets their ‘AHA’ moment and their life changes forever.

As a person in this field (variously called training, development and learning), I have realized that people will see the benefits of actually pursuing learning on one's own, even if there are no other sources instead of waiting for someone to do something.”

Satyanarayanan Kumar, Fullerton India Credit Co. Ltd., India

“The things on my mind these days are authoring tools, helping SMEs build informational/instructional content, and getting out of the way of teaching and learning.

Learning content and activity authoring tools have become so much better. Just a few years ago, most tools were dreadful and quite constraining. Now there are lots of tools with a reasonably short learning curve (for example, Adobe Captivate and Articulate Presenter). And there are tools with longer learning curves that are really excellent (for example, Lectora). Sure, you can build dreadful content with good tools, but the great news is that you can build great stuff, too.

We need to give up some control (and stop being a bottleneck) and help SMEs and others author content that doesn't call for a huge level of effort, resources, or time. With the advent of easy-to-use authoring tools and easy online self-publishing tools (such as wikis and blogs), publishing learning content has become much easier. I think this change is mostly terrific. We can help SMEs and others build good content and activities, but we shouldn't get in the way.

Learners will find ways to learn, as they always have, with less-than-optimal learning experiences. (And I think it's mostly wrong to assume that all the learning content built by learning professionals is great.) We are, after all, learning machines.”

Patti Shank PhD, Learning Peaks LLC

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts in authoring this useful and brief weekly book. As a member in a team struggling to get our courses well supported by e-learning, I found your letter inspiring and informative. It gave me vision and helped me stay on top of things as far as e-learning development, deployment and management are concerned. God bless you and I wish you a happy new year.”

Awad Ahmed

“I'm torn between wanting to confess the boisterous fun I have with it, and praise the serious value. So why not do both?

I've been amused and astonished by things like the "Helicopter parents" hovering over to swoop in and rescue adult children getting a mediocre performance review in the workplace. I've had gadget envy as Elliott talks about a video iPod (2005) or even an ancient REX PCMCIA card digital assistant (1997). When it got to December of 2007, Learning Trends reported about the Amazon Kindle and I was finally fortunate enough to contribute about a gee-whiz gadget too. It isn't all about gadgets though; there are interesting people, ideas and places discussed in Learning Trends. Learning happens everywhere, in many changing and amazing ways. Sometimes the insights and stories seem like "Where in the World is Carmen San Diego" as Elliott reports about (or from) exotic places, corporate headquarters, broadcast centers, government agencies, major universities, tiny schools, military bases, fast food joints, urban centers, or remote relief projects. Mostly though, I feel like I'm both a benefactor of, and envious of the way that Elliott and Learning Trends, seems to be right at the break point where the curl of the next wave seems to be forming. It keeps me on my professional toes, and sometimes makes me want a Segway (April 2003).

Speaking of segues, now the serious stuff. Learning and training, like any worthy avocation, presents both constant challenges and successive rewards. Learners feel challenged by "not knowing," but often learn well, and perform very well, from good, simple instruction. Trainers, even those with years of experience, feel challenged by learners, and by "knowing," yet often struggle to create good, simple instruction.

Why is it such a challenge to learn to create good training? Why do we strive for it? I think we do it for each other as learners, and because of each other as trainers. We enjoy the achievement of helping others perform and meeting new goals. Yet, our own achievement creates a new goal to improve the training, a successive challenge to ourselves and our peers in learning and training. Let us toast Learning Trends for the fun, the challenges and the rewards- together we gather, receive, share and apply ideas. Now, on to more fun and new challenges!”

Tom King

"I work for the Dutch prison service and we (the InnovationLab, consisting of five people) are developing a learning system for inmates. We have 22,000 beds; about 75,000 inmates get through every year. We can never hire enough teachers and at the moment we don't achieve great results with educating this population. It is a particularly difficult group; diverse (nationalities, beliefs, cultures, age, level etc.), many problems with literacy, hardly any motivation to learn and no belief in themselves. Putting e-courses online does not help, so we are aiming for an adaptive system (with a digital schoolmaster and coach) that gets to know the person very fast and aims at the right targets. The main point is however that it must be FUN to take part in this system! We call it e-go because we want them to take a GO! We use every means to get them to use the system and slowly fire them up again. Games, all sorts of activities and some real learning thrown in. Gradually the amount of learning grows, but using e-go must always be in itself very rewarding. The content is aiming at literacy, health / vitality / lifestyle, self knowledge and responsibility, social behavior and competencies for work. An inmate stays only for a week? No problem; at least he is not hanging around or doing mindless work. There are difficulties of course. Our politicians will wonder if we are totally mad letting convicts do games! So we are not shouting about it all at this moment but quietly devising the system so that it is generic enough to work in psychiatric hospitals, old people's homes, institutions for the young, etc. We make it a kind of platform and the institutions can decide which content, activities and games will be installed. Even intranet therapy and other specialized programs should be no problem. Of course, you need teachers for some activities. No problem. Hire pensioned teachers and let them use web conferencing. And you need people in the 'classrooms' to keep the peace and help out. No problem either. They are already working in the institutions, just not doing the most optimal work (for instance letting prisoners do mindless jobs).

Apart from that, we will use the prisoners themselves! All that manpower going to waste. You just have to find out how to harness that power. Peer tutoring, learning together, etc. Rewards are easy. For instance, more time in e-go :-)! Or a MP3-player with content, a PDA or Nintendo DS Light with flash training, brain training, etc. For every content module that the inmate successfully finishes he can receive something as well.

When an inmate leaves the institution, he receives a DVD with the Open Source OS on it and there he finds his portfolio and many other useful things. If he visits for instance an employer, he can show the work he has done in the prison. There are many other aspects but that would take extra pages...

In short, the digital world makes it possible to look anew at how we work with people in institutions. In August 2008, we will build a showroom where people from the ministries of Justice, Health, Education and others from the institutions themselves can have a look at e-go. If e-go is convincing, it might (slowly) take off.

I'm not a learning pro but have been working in the service for 30 years and always wanted to do something to promote learning. Together with a firm (Stoas, Netherlands) that helps us with didactic advice and content I visited Learning 2007 and it has been a great experience that warms me through. It seemed logical to respond to your email about the Learning Trends. I hope others will already walk the same road (or that it inspires them to think about it)."

Ernst Duvert

"Baby boomers! As we emerge from "hibernation" (when we were quietly raising our families, not raising Cain, behaving ourselves), we are rarin' to go and not "retire" but learn, grow and expand ourselves. Learning will be huge for baby boomers. Not just night classes -- hopefully learning orgs outside of universities will figure out that they should be offering courses that have traditionally been offered as "adult education" only at night will figure out that enough boomers are on flex-time or semi-retired or are changing careers or plunging into volunteering and will have daytimes available so they can spend their evenings with their families or whatever else they want to do."

Judy Writer

“Not every training challenge requires a course. Sometimes a simple job aid, some embedded supports, mentoring, or a learning community of peers will meet the need. If a course is required, don’t make it a mind-numbing, content-dump, page-turner followed by a quiz. Such a passive learning approach is sure to kill any enthusiasm for learning that may exist in your organization. Instead, take an active learning approach by creating realistic scenarios that mimic real world tasks or situations, and have learners make choices and learn from these. You should be investing far more in people with competencies in instructional design, graphic design, Flash programming, facilitation, etc., than you invest in learning technologies. Talented and dedicated people create great learning, not technology. There are no magical technological bullets out there, so stop looking for them. View all new technologies through the critical lens of how these will help your organization meet key learning goals. Measuring success of training interventions does not require complicated and often trumped-up ROI calculations. Gathering pertinent quantitative and qualitative (even anecdotal) evidence from stakeholders that training interventions are helping move the organization toward key goals is enough. Inability to prove ROI conclusively is no reason not to measure outcomes.”

Rick Nigol, eLearn Campus

“I recommend TRENDS to my Learning Technology students - it is a valuable source of information on e-Learning for people both experienced and new to e-Learning. We also use Elliott's podcasts and videos in class for two purposes: First - as a fine example of how to use this type of technology for learning. Secondly, it is part of my "Let's hear what the experts have to say" slot in class so that my students don't tire of me too much - thanks Elliott!

I would like to see much more Academic involvement in the e-Learning profession. Colleges and academic institutions all over the world are researching and publishing on e-Learning - I am certain that much of this research does not come to the attention of the e-Learning industry. I attend many academic conferences on Learning and Technology where postgraduate students and academics present their research findings - rarely do I see or hear of industry people at these conferences. Quite often they are sideshows who only get to show their products/services at Sponsor Demonstrations during Conference breaks. Let's have more collaboration!”

Eugene OLoughlin, National College of Ireland, Ireland

“Congrats and thank you for 500 editions of thought provoking info. My rant “Why is there never enough time allotted for training, but always time to address and readdress the confusion about a tool or policy that lack of training causes?” Thanks for being there.”

Christine Sawchuk, Merck

“This year will be my tenth as a trainer. I love the field and continue to find it challenging. Over the last few years it seems like our training time has been getting squeezed and cut down to "just the facts," eliminating opportunities for fun and/or interaction. I would like to figure out ways to employ more new technology as a way to insert fun and interaction back into presentations, especially those intended for continuous education sessions. I find your e-zines a great source of inspiration and ideas and have forwarded them on to many others. Thank you for the great job you do, congratulations on #500 and best wishes on the next 500!”

Sue Bell

“Do you remember roller-skating as a kid? Remember when you would form a "whip"? A long line of people holding hands. Then as you hit the turn the person at the end of that human chain would be slingshot at high-speed. For some, they could hang on and enjoy the ride. For others, they crashed into the wall. The Web 2.0 notion of the "long-tail" serving niches and multi-nodal-2-nodal, training I believe will have that whip effect. For some it will propel them to as yet undiscovered areas of learning and connecting. For others, I worried that it may cause an instructional pileup until they can become acclimated to the new environment of learning.”

Michael Maier

“I first heard of Elliott Masie as part of a Conference in Wisconsin back in 1997. He was a keynote speaker and from that moment on I have been a fan. Elliott, I appreciate your insight. You have this ability to look at progressive technology and find ways to apply it to the training and education field. Your insights continue to push our industry to a higher level of expertise. This takes confidence and courage. There are times within an organization when “we have always done it this way why should we change” comes into play.

Trends, along with your website and conferences give others the courage and confidence to go back and push the envelope. To find the confidence and courage to take on mediocrity, the nay-sayers, and to continue to ask why are we doing something a certain way, is there a smarter, faster, more effective way?”

Cindy Bartz, VeriFone

“Like Trends, I recently celebrated 10 years of work at Teachers College Columbia University. Soon after my arrival, I was put in charge of the school's LMS (remember Lotus' LearningSpace?). Much of my insights into this online field were derived from Trends, workshop at Saratoga, and participation in the Learning conferences (and its previous incarnations). I hope to be able to take advantage of these valuable resources for at least another 10 years.”

Ivo Antoniazzi

“As learning professionals, we continue to witness exponential growth in terms of the volume of technology-related learning innovations. While it is difficult and at times overwhelming to keep up with the pace of innovation, there are huge possibilities in terms of how new technologies could be leveraged for the benefit of learners. To harness innovation, however, a certain level of risk-taking and experimentation with emerging learning technologies is needed.

Optimistically speaking, my hope is that corporations recruit and value visionary learning executives who instinctively know that "learning innovation" is a critical component of a corporate learning strategy. Pragmatically speaking, however, it feels as though "learning innovation" is being bypassed or minimized due to:

Unrelenting regulatory requirements (which further enable "compliance" vs. "performance"-driven training groups and a risk-aversion mentality)

Increasing pressure on training organizations to prove their business value at the same time they're being challenged to cut spending, reduce headcount, and outsource T&D roles

Gaps at the top of many corporate T&D infrastructures (i.e., No defined role for a learning executive who is accountable for creating and implementing a strategic plan for learning across the entire corporation)

The presence of multiple, highly decentralized T&D functions that lack credibility with the business and clear accountability for results

Collaboration and communication difficulties among the T&D, MI/CS, Legal, and Procurement function.”

Paula J Fritsch

“That one day we will figure out there is something called education that involves the process of educating that educators demonstrate.

Have education, do educating, be educator ...

Then we figure out there is something called learnaction that involves the process of learning action (learning-for-knowing) that learners as knowers demonstrate.

Have learnaction, do learning-for-knowing, be learner as knower ...

Then, hold educators accountable for educating and learners accountable for learning with each being responsible to the other to do their ‘work’ to help educators educate and learners learn while consciously aware that we educate what we love to learn. We are an educator as we are a learner!

Also, it is not educator centred, nor is it learner centered, it is educating/learning-knowing centered; that is, we seek the complementarity of educating and learning/learning-knowing.

Within their doing, educators and learners can become who they really are as they edit (add, alter, delete) their wisdom.”

Steve Hobbs, World ICU, Inc.

“First; let me congratulate you not just for 500 issues but for your years of success at being instrumental in changing the world of training. Second, I want to thank you for all of your lessons that you taught me over the years whether at your conferences, trends newsletter, video webinars, or whatever. You truly are the guru of technical training. This brings me to your request, point #3...

When I started in training ten plus years ago, there was a huge push towards “games” and incorporating these into training sessions. Back in 1997, I vividly remember attending a Training magazine conference. Being new to training I asked Elliott for advice. He told me not to be solely drawn into this theory of games. Here it is more than a decade later and I can vouch that he was 100% correct. While these games enhance training classes (and believe me, I do incorporate games into training), they are not the driving impact of the training. They are not what make the course.

Training content and delivery mechanisms have changed. While games are one form of “learning entertainment,” they are not the only one. We now have various methods of delivering training which keep it interesting – video conferencing, web sessions, live sessions, hands-on, etc. We are more focused on content and what is in the course as well. While once it was “how” now it is not only “how” but “why.”

“Here is something rather philosophical, but I really like it – and it’s a reminder for both our personal & business lives. I am from NZ – and have included the Maori version as I think it is rather lovely, and the English translation is below that:

Ma te mohio ka ora

Ma te ora ka mohio

Through learning there is life,

Through life there is learning.

And thanks for your fantastic Learning Trends – I always look forward to reading them.”

Nicola Kane, Topaz Solutions, New Zealand

“Since moving to Bangalore to deliver training at our Target India offices, I’ve noticed that at some point learners still need to connect directly with people to effectively optimize the learning experience, especially in the global training environment. In a country where traditional pedagogy is still alive and well, shifting corporate learning towards more e-Learning and web-based training is, indeed, a challenge; but it’s also an opportunity to introduce a genuinely blended learning experience. Using the enthusiasm of a classroom facilitator and a shorter more meaningful classroom experience, we guide our learners to the information (including e-Learning) and the people (connections) to help them become independently successful. This approach truly brings the best of both worlds--the real and virtual--together in collaboration. Perhaps India is reminding me not to forget the “human touch”, and this, in itself, is a wonderful learning experience.”

Michael Sunnarborg, Target Corporation, India

“The field of learning practice has framed a relationship with two important partners: the executive suite and the ivory tower. The results of this coalition are evident in the important shifts of recent years. The trend to training programs of slick presentations based on canned content is being replaced with timely engagements that dive deep for knowledge and continuously capture informal learning converted into corporate intelligence. This evolves from less time and fewer resources devoted to training department design projects and materials stockpiles, and more of an investment in building a set of universally applied critical management competencies for the workforce. Learning professionals are valued as they create the “container” of environment and engagement within which employees solve and learn from the real problems of work.”

Loretta Donovan, EarthLink

“Real online learning is not merely anywhere, anytime. Real online learning is anywhere, anytime, anybody. If we restrict our students to the official structures and members of the Learning Management System only, then, although we have enlarged the box, it remains a box.”

Ken Masters

“My career in the field of corporate learning and online learning started in 1997. After spending years working at a private academic library and in bookstores, I took on the adventure of a research librarian job at a publicly-traded financial services company. I was part of a group called Learning Resources, and my duties quickly grew to include managing our library of CBT. It has been a long, interesting ride. I was fascinated to learn that Learning TRENDS is about as old as my new career. (Yes, the field being what it is, this does feel still like my new career!)”

Jennifer Juday

“The world of online learning seems caught in a curious dichotomy. On the one hand, the prevailing approach to developing content seems to be Flash-based. This means expensive, extended development cycles requiring armies of technically proficient Flash developers. Maintaining the content is difficult and expensive; in fact, there is really no way to apply effective content management strategies that would facilitate development, maintenance and localization of content. For that matter, the technology is stand-alone, so there is also no real support for distributed development involving large teams of geographically dispersed experts. Here, then, we find the field mired in an old industrial, assembly-line mass production model that really is unable to meet the demands of organizations operating in contemporary, dynamic business environments.

On the other hand, we can also see that “informal learning” has become a huge buzzword. Together with the advent of web 2.0 or social computing applications, such as wiki, social networking platforms, blogs and social tagging and content sharing tools, this new focus seems to promise almost effortless, and virtually “free” development and distribution of learning content as a by-product of direct end-user activity and participation. In contrast to the stand-alone authoring tool or Flash-based model, this is a decidedly post-Fordian, indeed post modern, scenario. It is also rather naïve and idealistic. There is little or no hard evidence that demonstrates the value created in terms of quality learning and learning content, as a sheer byproduct of social computing activities. Indeed, many organizations fear that the technology, fully unleashed, will lead to the dissemination or replication of erroneous information, spreading poor practices, undermining business strategy and, in highly regulated industries, increasing exposure to risk. Obviously, there is some middle ground. Content needs to be produced in a way that is efficient, facilitates collaborative development, and enables on-going maintenance and proper localization. This means abandoning Flash in favor of content management applications. Social software and communities of practice also have a key role to play in generating content, including capturing new ideas as well as the collective experience and knowledge of an aging workforce. However, there must be some way to channel this activity and production in ways that are productive for the organization. Current research and development in the realm of knowledge management and learning content management also suggests there are ways to accomplish this end, though they require effort and bring some cost.

The way forward is not necessarily an easy sell. On the one hand, what we are suggesting runs counter to the entrenched paradigm and the interests of a whole industry that has been built on this paradigm. It also entails that we confront the complexities inherent in implementing enterprise architectures to support learning and introducing the discipline of content management. On the other hand, we have also thrown water on the prospect of a “free lunch”: content generated, captured and distributed without any specific investment of resources beyond supplying the necessary social computing platforms.

Sticking with the status quo or believing in miracles might seem easier. But organizations that embrace learning content management and take the steps necessary to harness the power of social computing will come out ahead.”

Melonia M da Gama, Eedo Knowledgeware Corporation

“The challenge of any training organization is not only to deliver a superior product at a competitive price, but also to achieve the status of a trusted partner who adds value to the business. As it turns out, the latter objective is the more difficult one to achieve because training is routinely viewed as a questionable expense rather than as a vital resource. As an organization, we at IS Training Solutions have had no choice but to face this challenge head on. We have worked hard to make our product more diversified, better suited to our clients' needs, and more cost-effective.

Where instructor-led hands-on training once was the only option, we now offer a variety of additional training experiences, from short onsite demonstration classes, to long-distance virtual classes conducted via WebEx, to self-directed e-learning classes, which clients can participate in at home. Where we once worked in semi-isolation, each site coordinator running their own program independently, we now engage in continuous cross-site consultations, have centralized certain functions, and actively share resources and expertise.

The result has been positive: According to a comprehensive survey we conducted in the summer of 2007, over 90% of our clients express satisfaction with our services. As we begin a new year, we have a new goal, which is to work directly with managers in order to even more closely align our services with actual business needs through customized department training. The days of "one-size-fits-all" training are over. These days, it's "one-size-fits-one". The challenge is clear. We must press on to truly become that trusted partner whose value to the business is unquestioned.”

“As a runner, one of the nice things about running outdoors and running in different races is the change in scenery along the way compared to the static view from a treadmill. As I think about my experience as a lifelong learner and as an educator throughout my adult life, I see the world of learning through a runner's eyes. That is, as I progress from one marker to the next (or one decade to the next) the details of the landscape change - the technology, the tools, the language, the focus, the climate, and the bumps in the road along the way. I never seem to arrive at the ultimate destination or a point at which I say "I can stop now. I have arrived." There are more uncharted paths to follow and more turns ahead than I can now predict. The joy, however, is not in the destination but in the journey. It's a marathon - not a sprint - so I'm pacing myself. Yes, I could be content for a time on a learning treadmill doing the same thing and viewing the same sights over and over, but wanderlust for life and for learning call me to new places and experiences. At age 51 I am pursuing my PhD in Instructional Design for Online Learning, not for a career change or even for advancement in my current career, but rather to better equip myself to run the exciting, unending race before me.

Thank you, Elliott, for what you mean to the world of learning. You are one of my coaches whether you realized it or not.”

Jeff Ross, Humana Inc.

“Thanks for asking. I love the newsletter; it pushes me out of complacency, and helps me communicate with my 18 and 21 year old children. I’m now developing podcasts – who’d have thought? Here are a few of my thoughts about the state of learning.

Gains:

- Just what’s needed, just in time
- Laser focused content
- Output/behavioral focus
- Customized to learner
- Instant access
- Urgent and compelling
- Networking is global and electronic
- Presidential candidates and MySpace
- Granola bites

Losses:

- Reflection
- Background/context
- Funny trainer + PPT = learning
- Learner expected to make connections
- Data/information overload
- Urgent vs. important discernment
- Face to face contact
- Candidate photo ops and scripts
- Donuts”

Carmela Southers, The Ken Blanchard Companies

“After reading almost 500 issues of this newsletter, what have I learned in these 10 years? You’ve introduced me to a number of approaches to learning that were powerful enough to become widely adopted (e.g. Performance Support, Informal Learning), and many that were interesting ‘experiments’ that never really made their way out of the lab. Yet, after managing training and learning for 1,000’s of people, I always looked forward to the next issue, not only for the trends you identified and described, but also for something more basic. At the heart of all the trends (500 issues worth!) the message was always clear: Whatever learning trend we choose to use, people have the unique ability to imagine doing something new. And it is that ability to imagine that enables us to learn. That’s the lesson that shines through each issue and all of the trends. So here’s to the next 500!”

David Grebow, Knowledgestar, Inc

“I have since moved out of a ‘learning industry’ related role into the role of the front-line Team Manager in Underwriting. My observation about the learning field is that we need to do a better job of educating our leaders who are not in learning related roles on learning-related issues and give them some skills in identifying these issues. Example - our underwriting team faces a huge challenge with growing our underwriting knowledge. Turnover is regular, so our talent is generally ‘young’. At first glance it looks as if we need a stronger ‘training’ program. But the real issues are performance support and sharing knowledge (as it is learned). Could we consult regularly with our L&D shop to help identify these areas? You bet, but resources are limited and I believe with more knowledge for the managers, we can identify the real learning issues faster and get assistance from our learning professionals to help our employees.

I appreciate you listening to my ‘ranting’ and hope that in ‘08 the learning industry not only produces good products such as performance support, but looks to educate leaders more on learning-related skills.”

Linda Rigsby, State Farm Insurance Companies

“Is it a rant, is it a hope? Maybe a bit of both. Training always seems to get thought of last in a project and cut out first. We are called in late and expected to finish early. It is always a challenge! My hope for the future is that, as web technologies develop, more people who consider projects start to consider the implications of using these technologies earlier and put budget in place to use them on their projects”

Mark Cornwell, Studwright Ltd, UK

“Question: I thrive on _____.

- a) Learning.
- b) Learning about learning.
- c) Learning about what others are learning.
- d) Learning about what others are learning about learning.
- e) Learning Trends!

Answer: All of the above!!!”

Terry Preuit

“Living in this “always connected” era, learning will become more and more a lifelong necessity instead of an option. However, being able to find the nuggets that help and develop the individual will become harder as we are bombarded by more data, news, facts and information than we can handle! The Next Big Thing will be the device/software thing that processes and distills all the data, coursework and information into concise, relevant and interesting learning modules that encourage us to learn and create an enjoyable experience in the process. I can only hope that some 19 year old kid just into college invents it before my brain explodes!”

Colin McKie, KeyStone Biz Solutions

“Imagine for a few minutes that the year is 2015 and you are 15 years old. A few years ago, the high school building in your town was renovated and became your Learning Resort. In its first year of operation, it was called a Learning Resource Center, but it was so heavily embraced by the entire community that it has now come to be known as The Learning Resort.

Your day begins by reviewing your online portfolio, where all your learning has been tagged and archived for the last few years. Then, you check this week’s schedule of Learning Opportunities and choose from a wide array of face-to-face lectures, help sessions, individualized learning sessions, and interactive seminars by a number of experts and others from around the globe. Your academic profile and goals are also maintained online so you can easily monitor what you need to complete in order to move on to post secondary schooling. You can also make appointments online to meet with a host of facilitators and learning support staff at the Learning Resort. Subject Matter Experts, Life Counselors, and Workforce Experts, to name a few, are just a click away. You can also reserve your space to study with others in the Starbucks’ room or your space in the quiet room, or your space in the game room.

You choose to work online this morning. Perhaps you are conducting researching for a video you are creating to meet the objectives of your economics course and you have an online interview with Malcolm Gladwell. This afternoon, you have made a reservation for a culinary class and to meet with an algebra facilitator. Then, you plan to go to the game room to increase your understanding of WWII.

When the high school became a Learning Resort, school buses became community learning buses. Now, the bus stops three times a day and picks up people from all walks of life who use the Resort. Everyone has a card and swipes it to get on the bus and into the different areas of the Resort. One of the things you thought was weird at first, but now you’ve come to truly enjoy, was that your best friend’s grandmother is one of your classmates when you go to those culinary classes. Meanwhile, you’ve finally gotten used to the fact that your Mom, who is a senior manager at the local phone company, does monthly online chats about 21st century skills in the workplace.

The Learning Resort is guided by the following principles:

- Principle 1: Everyone is a very important individual customer.
- Principle 2: Everyone is a learner and a content creator.
- Principle 3: Learning matters. Relevant learning matters most.”

Pam Birtolo, Florida Virtual School

"It's been a rough week out here in San Diego, and our corporate headquarters were closed all last week due to the fires. Which means I came into work this morning to find 127 trdev messages awaiting me. Many of these emails touched upon "freebies" and sharing of training knowledge. I read through all of them, and want to share my thoughts on the subject.

Having witnessed the overwhelming generosity of San Diegans over the past eight days, it put things in perspective when the question arises whether we training professionals should freely share our knowledge with people.

Out here, the San Diego community outpouring of donated items, goods, foods, and services has been heart achingly positive. And it's because we all realized that the collective good is better for it if we share.

Here on trdev, there have been times when I needed a quick answer or opinion on training stuff. So I reached out to the group. Sometimes my posts were long and thorough. On other occasions, I've only had time to bang out a quick couple of sentences due to deadlines. Either way, I knew trdev was a place that would help me.

I have not always been the stalwart of instructional design knowledge you see standing before you now, nor will I ever be as well-learned as Don or Fred or Bev or the countless others on this list who contribute to making it the best training resource out there. I was at once a neophyte grabbing at straws about the best way to design a class -- I know, I know, it's hard to believe. ;-) Back then, however, I didn't know about trdev.

So I asked people how to do things. I researched ways to do it. I made mistakes, and I learned along the way. I didn't always ask the best questions, but I learned how to ask better ones. And people coached me and taught me how to do things better. That's one of our most important job as training professionals -- to give back the knowledge we've learned to those who ask.

If people didn't give back and share... well, then, San Diego would still be on fire."

Kara DeFrias, M.Ed., Jack In The Box

"I still have the first Trends that I received, and have looked forward to receiving each of the 459 since then. Congratulations, thanks, well done, and here's to the next 500!"

Jim Bolton, Ridge Associates, Inc.

"NYS Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities

The seminar workshop I attended at the Saratoga Lab approximately eight years ago was by far the most progressive, enlightening adult learning experience I've had as a management trainer in the past decade. The concepts promulgated were the most knowledgeable, useful information that I've learned from and have been able to deliver back to my workforce with the State of New York."

Derrick J. Holmes

"Learning is the sunrise and sunset of our lives. We greet each sunrise and ask, 'What opportunities are there for me to discover and learn today?' We send off each sunset by reflecting, 'What did I accomplish today with what I learned yesterday?'"

Joe Slezak, Miller Electric Manufacturing Company

"In 1985 people backed away from me because they thought training with computers was weird. Now they back away because they think I might be responsible for the junk e-learning they have suffered. One day we'll learn how to make e-learning that clients want to commission *and* learners want to devour. Can it be soon, please? I'm tired of backing away..."

Mark Iliff, Talespinner