

COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS (LMSs)

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Type of institution:	Training Organisation
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URL:	http://www.odl.net/default.asp
Name of training manager: (Optional)	Davide Afretti
LMS used:	Greenteam (developed by local software house http://www.greenteam.it/greenteam/education/Default.asp)
URL of LMS:	http://www.odl.net/default.asp
Language of LMS:	
Number of years in use:	Since 1995
Other LMSs used:	Docent
Number of students in the system:	140
Number of courses available:	7
Typical duration:	2 months – 6/7 months – 24 months (only one pilot course)
Number of tutors in the system:	6 full time tutors

This analysis is divided into six parts.

- 1 Course development tools
- 2 Student support tools
- 3 Tutor support tools
- 4 Administration (student database and records)
- 5 Technology (quality of software)
- 6 Price

1 Course development tools

<p>1.1 Course creation. How satisfactory was the LMS for course creation?</p>	<p>Course creation is simple since the course structure is simple. Content is delivered via:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bibliography • Links <p>Both can be modified by the responsible tutor without any technical assistance Training paths is indicated and mandatory for all alumni.</p>
<p>1.2 Structure and didactic flexibility - openness. In the creation of course materials did the LMS permit didactic flexibility? Was the structure open to differing didactic possibilities?</p>	<p>It is relatively open</p>
<p>1.3 Teacher userfriendliness. How easy was the LMS to use by teachers and course developers?</p>	<p>Yes. Teachers or better content expert have the opportunity to open content specific newsgroups</p>
<p>1.4 Support for graphics, audio and video, moving image. Did the LMS support the provision of graphical materials, moving images, audio and video in the course content?</p>	<p>No – we prefer not to load-up heavy content in order to facilitate those students who only have minimum software and hardware.</p>
<p>1.5 Questioning, assessment, assignments. What provision was made by the LMS for student questioning and assessment and the design of student assignments?</p>	<p>We use automatic test batteries for formative and summative assessment. This software is not a <i>Greenteam</i> product but was integrated later. The product used is <i>Academy</i>.</p>

2 Student support tools

<p>2.1 Interactivity possibilities. What provision does the LMS make for student interaction?</p>	<p>e-mail Forum</p>
<p>2.2 Online student to student communication (synchronous and asynchronous). What facilities does the LMS provide for student communication to other students and how successful is it? Is both synchronous and asynchronous communication between students supported?</p>	<p>Forum</p>
<p>2.3 Online student to tutor/institution communication (synchronous and asynchronous). What facilities does the LMS provide for student communication to the tutor ion to the institution's administration and how successful is it? Is both synchronous and asynchronous communication supported? Are these support services available 24 hours a day?</p>	<p>E-mail student – tutor. Tutors are available during the office hours.</p>
<p>2.4 Resources, library, references. What facilities does the LMS provide for student acquisition of</p>	<p>We have an on-line library</p>

resources required by the course, especially library resources and references to required readings?	
2.5 Feedback on work and assignments. What is the quality of provision of feedback to students on their work and assignments?	We have to distinguish between automatic feedback and feedback coming from the tutor. The first is provided by the system in reply to self-testing, the second one is provided by tutors when the tracking system shows that the student is does not make any progress.

3 Tutor Support tools

<p>3.1 Tracking students - database questions. How user friendly is the LMS for tutors wishing to track their group(s) of students and retrieve data from the student database?</p>	<p>The only way to track students is to monitor their working diary. Since students fill in their working diary you never know if it is trustworthy. This device is not able to prove evidence of learning steps but becomes a kind of self certification.</p>
<p>3.2 Group management tools. What facilities are provided by the LMS to the tutors for managing their group(s) of students?</p>	<p>Forum</p>
<p>3.3 Preparation of questions and assignments by tutor. How successful is the LMS in providing tutors with user friendly and didactically successful tools for the design of student questions and assignments?</p>	
<p>3.4 Course planning for students (monitoring pace). What tools are provided by the LMS to tutors to enable them to monitor and plan student progress?</p>	<p>As mentioned above, the only tool at disposal is the working diary.</p>
<p>3.5 User-friendly administrative systems between tutor and institution. What provision does the LMS make for successful tutor to institution communication?</p>	<p>Administrative issues are managed in occasion of preliminary and periodic face-to-face meetings with students.</p>

4 Administration (student database and records)

<p>4.1 Enrolment procedures and fee paying. What facilities does the LMS provide for student enrolments, course allocations and payment of fees?</p>	<p>Our courses are free of charge since they are covered through regional vocational training funds.</p>
<p>4.2 Passwords and security. How successfully does the LMS handle student access to the system and the security of all student interactions with the system?</p>	<p>The tutor in charge with co-ordination will provide all students with a password at the beginning of the course.</p>
<p>4.3 Student records database. How successful is the system's student database, especially for data storage and data retrieval.</p>	<p>We keep a student db during the course but we still did not conceive a procedure to benefit from them once the course is over.</p>
<p>4.4 Examination and certification records. What structures are provided for recording of data and results leading to examination and certification?</p>	<p>The results of the automatic self-testing get recorded by the system but only final examination which have to be</p>

	Taken in-house lead to certification.
4.5 Course, class and tutors database. What facilities are provided for administration of courses, classes and tutors?	Directories for all of them

5 Technology (quality of software)

5.1 Server - hardware and software options. What is the quality of server hardware and software options? How is the system integrated with existing software?	We are clients. The server is run by Greeteam
5.2 Client - hardware and software options. What is the quality of client hardware and software options? Does the system permit metatagging?	Pentium 133 Mhz; 23 Mb, 64 RAM, Modem 28,8 Windows '95,
5.3 Flexibility of didactic structure; updating, adaptability. Is the didactic structure flexible or is it determined by the technology? How adaptable is the technology to updates and to new technology that becomes available to the market?	Technology is flexible enough not to affect the didactic structure. It has a high adaptability which we appreciate. Integration of new technology is a task of our service provider and their technical staff. We pose the problem they have to solve it.
5.4 Standards. What is your opinion about the standards for e-Learning?	We now work with Docent too since in the future we would like to sell and use our e-learning products abroad. This can be done only if you can assure interoperability.
5.5 Limitation of size (number of students, courses, tutors..) How satisfactory is the LMS for handling varying numbers of students, courses, tutors? How does it cope with 100, 1000, or 10000 students and large course databases?	We hardly cope with more than some hundred students. So this problem hardly arises.
5.6 Speed of system. How is the speed of the system and student satisfaction? How does it cope with downloading courses and high bandwidth materials?	Sometimes it is too slow.

6 Price

6.1 Cost of the LMS (Learning Management System). What is the cost of the LMS to the institution?	This is an information which I can not provide
6.2 Annual fee. What fees have to be paid annually for the system by the institution?	This is an information which I can not provide
6.3 Student Enrolment fee (100 students, 1000 students, 10000 students.) How do fees to use the LMS vary when the student base is 100 students, 1000 students, 10000 students? Is online invoicing available?	Our courses are free of charge.

6.4 Maintenance costs: staff involved in management, IT specialists, trainers, etc What is the maintenance course to the institution of the LMS and what staff resources are need to maintain it and keep it functioning?	I do not know
6.5 Training of teachers and learners and system users. What costs are involved in staff and student training to use the LMS system?	I do not know

Conclusion: Overall evaluation:
We like the product although it is “home-made”.

What features would you like to see included in this LMS in the future?
What we miss is the possibility of providing an immediate feed-back but this aspect goes beyond technological limitations.