



LEARN IT



Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme
Leonardo da Vinci

LearnIT project PL/08/LLP-LdV/TOI/140001

Newsletter

Issue 2

April 2009

Dear Reader,

We are pleased to present the second issue of the LearnIT newsletter. In this issue we would like to explain more about Learning Management Systems (LMS) in general and in particular about our choice of “Claroline” LMS as the best solution for the LearnIT project. We will continue to update you on ongoing activities. We hope that you will find our newsletter interesting.

The LearnIT project consortium

In this issue:

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LMS s

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Claroline?

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Learning Management System

Learning Management System (LMS) is predominantly a combination of applications which allows an easy upload and presentation of learning materials, followed by questions and accompanied by various communication tools like forum, chats, file exchange area and others. More important is the access, content control and an extensive reporting system. LMS platforms are available from many commercial vendors, with prices ranging from hundreds to many thousands of dollars. They might be appropriate for companies which plan to run hundreds of commercial online training courses at the same time, with features not available elsewhere, like database replication, dedicated front-end servers and many more. Since the majority of project teams cannot afford this kind of solution and subsequently is not needed, the attention was made to LMSs available on GPL licensing. This kind of LMS is possibly more widely known, supported by huge community, with relatively low hardware and software requirements, and possibly most important – easy to use without programming knowledge. There are a lot of solutions available, some are considered better than others.

LMS proposals

The partner s proposals included the following different LMS systems:



Atutor



Sakai



Claroline



.LRN



Ilias



Joomla!



Moodle



Bespoke

All systems were compared according to the following criteria:

System requirements,

Security,

Support,

Ease of use,

Management,

Interoperability,

Flexibility,

Performance,

Build-in applications

Out of eight compared systems the main characteristics of four different Learning Management Systems were analysed in depth:

Claroline

Moodle

ATutor

Ilias

Common characteristics:

- Developed in PHP
- Can use different kinds of DBMS but the most obvious solution is MySQL.
- Released under open source GPL licence.

- Built in modules allow people to easily choose the tools they need and the ability to develop new tools.
- SCORM compliancy
- Very developed tracking system

Peculiar characteristics:

Claroline

- The source code is very clean and clear which permits the easy development of new functionalities (also for mobile devices)
- More learning - oriented than communication – oriented, so the learning tools are more appropriated than the communication ones
- Very good documentation
- Used worldwide
- Big community of developers

Moodle

- The most popular E-Learning platform which means a huge community of developers and users all around the world
- Variety and abundance of tools especially for communications
- The code is not as tidy, probably because too many developers have different ways of writing the code

(but generally the number of tools available cover almost any needs).

- There is an existing beta version of a mobile learning platform

ATutor

- It is also a Learning “Content” Management System (LCMS) which means that inside the platform there are tools for the production of learning objects (authoring tools).
- The platform is particularly conceived for people with

disabilities (tools with very good accessibility)

Ilias

- The best SCORM compliant among the different platforms.
- A drawback is that this platform is almost used by only German Speakers (which means less documentation and fewer communities of developers than for example Moodle and Claroline).

... and the winner is...

CLAROLINE!

Main screen of Claroline LMS

Demo Claroline 1.8 **Claroline.net**

Mathieu Laurent: My course list | My calendar | My User Account | Platform Administration | Logout

▶ **E-learning** Course Home

ELEARNING - Mathieu Laurent

🏠 Demo Claroline 1.8 > ELEARNING View mode : Student | Course manager

- Course description
- Agenda
- Announcements
- Documents and Links
- Exercises
- Learning Path
- Assignments
- Forums
- Groups
- Users
- Chat
- Wiki

- Edit Tool list
- Course settings
- Statistics

Path:

Attach an existing resource

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 E-learning is an all-encompassing term generally used to refer to computer-enhanced learning, although it is often extended to include the use of mobile technologies such as [PDAs](#) and MP3 players. It may include the use of web-based teaching materials and hypermedia in general, multimedia CD-ROMs or web sites, discussion boards, [collaborative software](#), e-mail, blogs, wikis, computer aided assessment, [educational animation](#), simulations, games, learning management software, electronic voting systems and more, with possibly a combination of different methods being used.

Along with the terms *learning technology* and [Educational Technology](#), the term is generally used to refer to the use of technology in learning in a much broader sense than the [computer-based training](#) or *Computer Aided Instruction* of the 1980s. It is also broader than the terms [Online Learning](#) or *Online Education* which generally refer to purely web-based learning. In cases where mobile technologies are used, the term [M-learning](#) has become more common.

Manager(s) for ELEARNING : **Mathieu Laurent** Administrator for Demo Claroline 1.8 : **Mathieu Laurent**

Powered by **Claroline** © 2001 - 2006

Why Claroline?

- It is a modern LMS, created and developed using up to date technologies
 - Contains all the modules which might be needed
- Multilingual by default
 - Available in English, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and
- One of our partners has a very good experiences with this system!

Some other important Claroline features:

- Claroline is a Web Based Course Management System
 - It allows Course deliverers to create and administer course website through a browser (Internet Explorer, Netscape, FireFox, Mozilla, etc).

It provides the possibility to:

- Publish documents in any format (PDF, HTML, Office, Video...).
 - Run public or private discussion forums.
 - Manage a list of links.
- Create student groups.
 - Compose exercises.
 - Structure an agenda with tasks and deadlines.
 - Make announcements (also via e-mail).
- Have students submit papers.
 - Consult statistics page hits and exercises scoring.
 - And many others.

Development of the project

Besides choosing the best LMS systems, the partners also analysed existing smart-phones on their markets. It seems that HTC, Nokia and Toshiba devices are the most suitable for the project needs. The technical reports are available on project's website.

The partners also started preparation for the actual transfer of TALAS and ICT in SME projects. At the time of writing this newsletter, the Learning Objects (LO) are being defined.

More about LOs – in the July issue of the *LearnIT* newsletter.