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Partner



Editorial

The **Final Conference**, held on 23rd September 2011 has marked the definitive entrance into the very final stage of the **E-LASTIC Project - E-learning in the automotive sector by transfer of innovative contents**, started in October 2009 thanks to a co-financing within the frame of the "Programma di Apprendimento permanente" (Lifelong Learning Programme) launched by the European Union - the **Leonardo da Vinci** sector programme - focused on supplying innovative tutorial contents and tested methods of learning, addressed to managers, workers and students active in the automotive sector, by means of E-learning solutions that are low-cost and easily accessible. The main objective of this Final Conference was to evaluate and come to a conclusion on the effectiveness of the implementation of this tutorial tool and the future possibilities to use the E-learning platform in the automotive sector.

In order to grant an adequate and representative participation, the event was held in videoconferencing and this allowed the initiative to include the two ANFIA offices: Rome, at Confindustria School of Training Systems – that was more easily reachable by the institutional representatives – and Turin, at the "Centro Congressi Torino Incontra", more accessible by the automotive companies that directly took active part in the e-learning platform testing, of which the most are located in Piedmont.

Before considering the whole experience and measuring the final outcome of the pre-fixed objectives of the Project, it is extremely important for me to return to the initial motivations that led ANFIA (E-LASTIC project leader) to undertake the initiative. First of all, we start from the great proportions of the economic-financial crisis broken out in 2008 and still ongoing and heavily dominating, which had a strong impact that can almost be defined as epochal, also on the automotive

industry. Meanwhile, the more and more rapid changes intervened and the growing mobility of workers, affecting the industrial realities in the last years, have imposed, more than in the past, to find continuous adjustments in the competences of human resources.

In this perspective, our Association, with its major mission of representing the whole Italian automotive sector, has taken its first steps in order to find the right structural and effective answers to face both crisis and transformations currently undergone by its associated members. To do this, the Association has tried to identify valid countermeasures capable to strengthen the entire commitment previously carried through on the front of increasing investments in human resources' competences, active at various levels in the automotive field.

Returning to the "Conference", after a short **excursus on major criticalities met and solutions adopted to reach the fixed objectives of the Project** – made by Elisa Boscherini, Project Responsible for ANFIA, and a brief **overview of the technical functionalities attained by the e-learning platform** – made by Maurizio Semplice from TECTRA – a discussion was started among participants to **assess the personal experiences of the single foreign partners involved in the Project**. Laurence Meunier, Céline Bonnet from *Magneti Marelli France* and Martin Schmidt Prange and Gerd Bahamuller from *Automotive Lighting Germany* declared themselves quite satisfied with the results obtained and also intended not only to go on using the platform for their tutorial company's needs but also to take into consideration possible future developments of the project within the partnership frame.

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Third partnership meeting – Reutlingen, 26th July 2011



The 3rd Partnership Meeting of the E-LASTIC Project took place in Reutlingen, in Germany, on 26th July 2011.

This meeting – organized by the Partner *Automotive Lighting Germany* – was focused on the platform testing made by a group composed of 17 workers of the company.

First of all, Elisa Boscherini, Project Responsible for ANFIA, made a short description of the major objectives of the Project and the results obtained through the Project, whereas Martin Schmidt-Prange (Automotive Lighting Germany) and Maurizio Semplice (TECTRA) made a brief overview of the technical functionalities of the E-learning platform. Afterwards, the test stage was given the start and those participants were divided into four experimenting groups – one for each of the four online courses implemented – as follows: ***Problem Solving, Planning and Control, Commercial Networks and Safety management System (OHSAS 18001)***.

From the debate at the closure of the tutorial session, some criticalities and also general suggestions emerged. For example, according to the participants' opinion, it was considered useful to further implement the platform, highlighting more the themes and notions specifically concerning the automotive sector, lightening the presentations whose contents were too heavy, having a more in-depth recourse to schemes, graphic examples, photos, flow charts, practical examples (filled modules), case-studies/best practices, favoring those immediately understandable tools, with an easier approach capable to find examples of solutions, by starting from the problems to solve.

Since additional remarks and comments were gathered on each of the four experimented courses, on the whole both quality of the work done and practicality of the tutorial tool implemented were quite appreciated.



The team working for the Project followed the various hints gathered, that were then rendered into activities of improvement of the platform in view of the Final Conference scheduled in September 2011.

At the end of the Tutorial Day, the **Customer Satisfaction Questionnaire on the E-LASTIC Courseware** was circulated.

The Project in figures

	2009			2010									2011									Participants involved				
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUG	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUNE		JULY	AUG	SEPT	
Validation of Technological and Communication Options of PEREQUAL																										E-Lastic Partners with the help of 1st workshop participants and MM and AL employees
Analysis of integrative requirements by a survey among automotive industries																										150 participants from Italy/France/Germany
Collation and processing tutorial materials																										Automotive sector Experts from Italy/France/Germany
Adaptation of interface E-lastic Platform according to specific formats																										E-lastic partners
Feeding E-lastic Platform																										E-lastic partners
Sustainability for the future of the platform - Trianing Course on Content																										E-lastic partners
Transfer and use of E-lastic Platform																										250 participants from Italy/France/Germany

Training activities trends in the automotive sector companies

The experience made through E-LASTIC Project – that proved of particular interest principally for micro and medium enterprises allowing them to use E-learning solutions accessible at low costs – also represents a meaningful point of view for analyzing the current trends of the tutorial activity applied in the automotive sector industry, the most frequent requests and the most important requirements to take into account: from this point it is advisable to start considering the future developments that these kinds of projects will then cover.

In these last years of economic and financial crisis, the major trends of the automotive sector industries' behaviors towards the tutorial activities are the following: the preference for the "in house" training, also further to the stimulus to turn to the financed training activity, and for experimental methodologies, like simulations and practical examples getting inside single industrial realities' cases, together with the tendency towards short-time courses, namely the so-called "quick views". Online courses on precise subjects, also of soft skill, virtual platforms to favor the comparison and the informal learning, but also the circulation of the company's knowledge, are already practical examples of this phenomenon in the multi-channel classroom, supported by the technological evolution.

In this sense, the impact of WEB 2.0 on the remote tutoring certainly represents an interesting innovation in that, through some Internet applications like forums, tutoring services, video-streaming, it overcomes some of its disadvantages such as the lacking of experience shared and the existing limits in terms of usability. This does not involve the *in-class tutoring* ending, in that the face-to-face interaction and the practical training are irreplaceable. On the contrary, it allows reducing its duration and, therefore, its costs, allowing to mainly transfer the theory onto online platforms and to encourage consequently the self-tutoring processes.

With regard to the method, we can say that the success has been growing – both in terms of effectiveness and satisfaction – as for the *blended learning*, namely the mode of supplying tutorial paths, that includes e-learning and in-class tutoring, distributing a vast and various range of methods chosen and mixed according to the objectives to reach and also the necessity of involving and motivating people to satisfactorily participate in the tutoring, without getting bored and also without excessive effort. Actually, there is an arousal of attention and interest more and more focused on the assessment of the tutoring activity satisfaction.

As for thematic areas, the crisis has also sharpened the sensitiveness towards some particular issues, like productive efficiency, and pressed companies to invest in *change management*, *team building* and *team working*. The fact of having to carry on the same activities with the same quality standards but with fewer resources has required more innovation in terms of organizational models and improvement of the internal communication. Relational aspects have therefore become central, meaning that all company's divisions need communication models and co-ordination of the actions taken. In the post-crisis period, then, enterprises have decided to expand on the matter and/or extend the tutoring to a higher number of employees.

Taking into consideration the Italian situation, it is interesting to notice the underuse of the digital technologies and the software programs that are already available and that make more performing the services on different fronts, from bureaucratic and administrative records, to teleworking and training, and with reference to this latter there is a growing need for "ubiquitous" training, that has the tendency to minimize the physical presence attendance. Despite Italy is the third country worldwide that uses social networks and mobile phones and that it is among the first 10 to 20 countries worldwide as for personal welfare, health system, exports and scientific creativity, this nation makes poor use of ICT, namely quite less than the rest of the world: actually in this country a way of looking at ICT not only as an advanced technology, but above all as a tool of drastic modification for both society and business world is missing.

Editorial

(please refer also to page 1)

A debate followed this first part of the Conference, regarding **functionalities and contents of the web tutorial platform** implemented, with the participation of representatives from some major companies involved in the experimentation, together with the Project staff. All was coordinated by Giuseppe Barbuto, tutor from ANFIA Service.

From the debate a unanimous opinion came out on the clarity and the usefulness of contents, as well as a shared appreciation of the product itself conceived as integration to the tutorial offer by ANFIA Service to the Italian associated members and also by the foreign Partners to their workforce.

Afterwards, the participants discussed and focused, in view of future developments of the product considered, on a more precise initial assessment of the project target (new-entrants or managers/professionals/experts); to this first stage, a more organic contents map should follow, already present on the current platform, in order to address the different users directly towards those matters of their own interest, according to a user-friendly logical procedure.

Among those proposals put forward and collected to improve and integrate the platform, some were mentioned, such as the organized progression of different multi-media contributions like clips and textual and hyper-textual documents, also taking into consideration the possibility of making notes directly on the screen; the inclusion of modules for the continual updating; the possibility to be personally supported by a tutor who can also be contacted by phone and that should be in addition to the "virtual" tutor already provided by the system through an electronic mailbox.

While thanking again the Partners of the Project and all who supported us in achieving this 2-year pathway, let me mention ISFOL, the National Agency of the Leonardo Project, and UNACOMA (National Association of Italian Farm Machinery Manufacturers), that attended the PEREQUAL Project, forerunner of the E-LASTIC Project – they were represented at the Final Conference by Claudio Vitali and Girolamo Rossi respectively.

Finally, I wish to express a very last thank to all the companies that experienced the use of the platform, and that I personally invite to continue to provide us with their precious contribution to identify tutorial paths and more and more innovative solutions, that allow to better and more effectively respond to those specific requirements of the automotive sector and help it grow and be more and more competitive.

Guido Rossignoli, Director General, ANFIA



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