

Growth and maturity in online education

Diverse customer experiences demonstrate a single, simple truth – the Philips Online Learning Center is a valuable educational resource.

The principal advantage of the Philips Online Learning Center (OLC) is its ability to offer a wide audience personalized access to quality medical courseware via a familiar and ubiquitous medium – the Internet.

Taking a leadership role in online learning for the healthcare industry, the OLC has proven itself a welcome complement to traditional instructor-led education. With over 100,000 registered users and more than 250 tutorials, case studies and webcasts, this fast growing digital environment is being used in many different ways to satisfy the educational needs of busy medical professionals.

A broadening reach

Creative relationships spur growth. Organizations that cater to the medical community have sought to enhance their educational offerings by aligning themselves with the OLC. Content diversity, accreditation of content and ease-of-use are some of the reasons why.

“These partnerships are a win-win situation,” says Paula Sanderson, Director of Online Education for Philips Medical Systems. “We benefit by adding content to the OLC in areas where we don’t have the expertise. Our partners benefit by gaining access to an extensive library of programs and use of a proven delivery tool.” As a result of these partnerships, the subject matter of the OLC catalog is expanding dramatically. “We expect to add an additional 60 new courses to the Online Learning Center in 2007,” says Barbara Lebron, Online Course Developer for the OLC. “This will bring the offerings of the course catalog to over 300 courses in 2007.”

So, how do an association, a manufacturer, a technical college and a healthcare provider view the ‘best practice’ application of this new tool?

Hybrid learning techniques at ASRT

“What we’re looking to do is to tie multiple delivery methods together to create a very robust educational environment. We can tie an article from our scholarly journal to a program on the OLC which in turn can point back to a textbook for further study.” - Greg Morrison, Executive VP and Chief Knowledge Officer

A partner for two and a half years, the American Society of Radiologic Technologists (ASRT) is exploring innovative ways to maximize use of the digital environment. “With today’s new technologies and the hybridization of equipment, the radiology profession is evolving,” explains Greg Morrison, Executive Vice President and Chief Knowledge Officer. “Suddenly what have been disparate disciplines are being merged together – like nuclear technologists performing computed tomography examinations. Many never trained for this eventuality and we need to provide opportunities for them to continue to grow.”

Morrison believes that learning is as much about context as content – knowing where to find the appropriate information and how to learn. “We want to deliver content in a way that our members can personalize their learning experience to meet their actual needs,” he says. To that end, one method ASRT is using is to define a threaded learning experience, with the OLC acting as the link between articles in the organization’s scholarly journal and supporting medical textbooks. In this manner, users are provided a ready set of multi-media learning tools that work in a coordinated fashion.

“We have a significant promotional plan in place,” says Morrison. “We will be adding a minimum of 20 new courses to the OLC by October of 2007. I would anticipate that in just one year, we will have increased the volume of content by 50% - if not more. We are trying to make the digital environment the environment of choice for all ASRT members.”

Stronger customer relationships at Bracco Diagnostics

“The analytic power behind an online educational service provides Bracco with the measurement tools necessary to proactively service, satisfy and retain key customers.” - Pam Intile, Director of Customer Education

When survey results showed their customers wanted more education delivered more frequently, Bracco Diagnostics (a leading developer of contrast agents) discussed creating a virtual university where customers could get their courses for continuing education (CE) requirements, their certificates and generally keep track of their individual CE records.

“We considered creating our own tool, but soon realized how expensive it could be,” says Pam Intile, Director of Customer Education. “After analyzing several options, we had heard of the Philips Online Learning Center and decided to discuss the potential for using the OLC for our

program. After demonstrations and discussions we decided that the OLC's ease-of-use and depth of content made the most sense." Bracco entered into a relationship with Philips and soon thereafter the Bracco e-Learning Center was born.

With 21st century tools like the OLC, Bracco's redefined educational platform is being leveraged as a company strength. This commitment is designed to build customer loyalty and influence strategic relationships.

Intile has seen positive results in just six months. "Since launching the Bracco e-Learning Center, overall customer satisfaction in education and in-service training has jumped by 11%. And satisfaction in CME or CEU in-service programs has also increased 11%. We're making a difference with our online education effort."

Digital studies at Northcentral Technical College

"Healthcare education is what we do. Online learning is how we do it. Together with Philips' radiography and sonography courses, our ability to reach a broader audience is huge." - Marianne Rhodes, Relationship Manager

A brand new \$20 million dollar Health Sciences Center graces the campus of Wausau Wisconsin's Northcentral Technical College (NTC). "We decided when this was built that we would make the Center a hybrid learning facility," says Marianne Rhodes, Relationship Manager at Northcentral. Key to the Center's success is inclusion of the Online Learning Center as the primary web-based continuing educational vehicle.

Rhodes adds, "Our job was to determine the most effective delivery format available. One of the key reasons the OLC was selected was because of its flexibility. Our professional educators find creating content for the OLC simple and straightforward. Our classroom materials can be prepared for correlative segments on the web, and for us that means our content can go a lot further."

NTC programs cater not only to undergraduates but to working professionals as well. And Rhodes sees how the digital environment is presenting new avenues of growth. "We suddenly find we are doing more international education via the OLC. Now our online content can reach imaging professionals worldwide."

Career advancement opportunities at Kaiser Permanente

"Philips offers such a wide spectrum of specialty ultrasound CMEs that they fit perfectly within the specialties and subspecialties of our Kaiser system." - Michelle Wilson BS, RDCS, RDMS

As a member of Kaiser Permanente's national committee to select an Ultrasound vendor, Michelle Wilson (Sonographer V) was looking for some differentiating factor to be included as part of the final contract. "We asked Philips to think out of the box. One of the best ideas they had was to offer 300 free CMEs to our sonographers through the Online Learning Center."

"As part of an emphasis on education, Kaiser recently implemented a sonographer's career ladder," continues Wilson. "Based on employee incentives to become more educated, it rewards sonographers, who strive toward multiple certifications, with an increase in compensation. So providing online CMEs is completely consistent with that mindset."

Employee retention efforts in a competitive healthcare industry have led Kaiser to establish an Ultrasound school where sonographers like Wilson can stay abreast of trends and pursue specialized interests. "Because the field of ultrasound is always changing, Kaiser spends millions of dollars keeping up with the latest technologies," notes Wilson. "We can maximize the use of this technology and at the same time pursue our individual careers with tools like the Online Learning Center."

Meeting industry standards

The Philips Online Learning Center is now 'Sharable Content Object Reference Model' or 'SCORM' compliant. This widely accepted distance-learning standard means any third party SCORM compatible learning module can easily be plugged into the OLC.

"It opens up new doors for us," says Paula Sanderson. "In fact, we just contracted with Business Performance Technology, Inc. to publish four new management courses on the OLC and they dropped right in." Now any author, who develops content using Microsoft PowerPoint™ for example, need only use a plug-in tool such as Macromedia Breeze Presenter™ to make their content web-ready and SCORM compliant at the push of a button.

"SCORM module creation and deployment is becoming the normal modus operandi for most of our authors," says Bob Carter, Executive Producer of the Online Learning Center. "Before SCORM content creation our authors had to develop their course using a structured authoring

environment. While flexible and entirely Internet driven, this authoring tool did not allow the author to design course content using tools they were familiar with. Now they can use any third-party SCORM authoring program to create their course and then, using a simple upload feature, transfer their course to the LMS (Learning Management System) for content delivery, testing, and tracking. We have seen a sharp increase in the number of courses being offered because of this feature.”

Prepared for the future

The remarkable growth of the Online Learning Center has recently been marked by a significant milestone. “We just registered our 100,000th user in October 2006!” says Sanderson. “But more importantly, we’re looking to reach 150,000 to 175,000 by the end of 2007. This growth will be possible through new partner relationships and content expansion into underserved areas such as nursing which will be especially important for our patient monitoring business.”

The Philips Online Learning Center is a tangible example of a tool of the future – hard at work today.

Visit the Philips Learning Center at <http://theonlinelearningcenter.com>