

Summer 2010

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## Top players score on client care

This year's Top 50 list shows that investing in strong customer relations pays off **p16**



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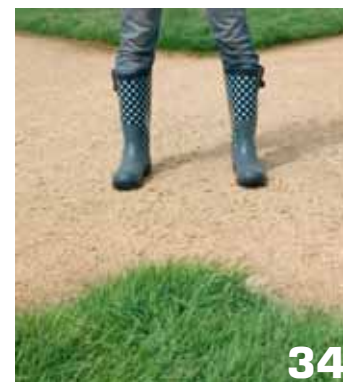
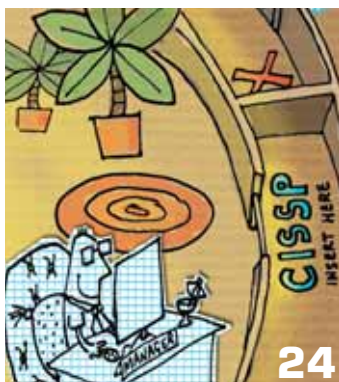


Learning Solutions





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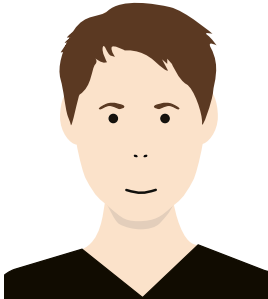
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# Bringing out the best in people



Over the last few weeks, while working on the Top 50 feature, I spent a lot of time talking to various IT training companies. What struck me was that, while all agreed that the market in 2009 had been extremely tough, they also all commented that in one way or another, the recession had had a positive impact on people and the market. Whether it is

refocusing on core areas, deepening customer relationships or inspiring the classroom, it seems that, often, hard times bring out the best in people.

In that sense, most companies were fairly positive about the coming year. One CEO, for example, was looking forward to working in what they called an 'almost mature market', meaning a market that knows what it wants and looks to build capability rather than just ticking off training requirements. Another training company commented that the current climate also requires closer collaboration between training providers and playing on each others' strengths – all good developments, I'd say.

Building capability is also the topic of Alan Bellinger's article on page 28. He argues that the way we do training is changing and training companies, L&D departments and HR need to take these changes on board if they want to be successful in the years ahead. Clive Shepherd agrees and stresses the importance of not burying your head in the sand, especially when it comes to responding to customer demands and taking on board the ever evolving technology.

Of course there are quite a few who already tap into all these possibilities – for example, instructional designer Stephanie Dedhar, who won the IITT's newly introduced Instructional Designer of the Year Award this year. Turn to page 12 to find out more about her job, her thoughts on good learning design and how technology can help make learning fun.

The market situation for individuals is still very tough, but one of the areas to move into the limelight as a seemingly 'recession-proof' bet for individuals looking to distinguish themselves from the masses is security, and on page 24, Gary Flood investigates the various pathways to a career in IT security.

Another feature looks at what makes a good IT project manager at a time when project success has become more vital than ever. So all in all, it seems things are brightening up for those in the IT arena who invest in the right skills.

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# Update

A round-up of the latest news and developments for IT training professionals

Demand for IT professionals, on an executive level as well as among graduates and students is rising. In a survey of almost 1,000 businesses carried out by Studentgems.com, over 70 per cent of IT companies said that they have a **surplus of work** and could make use of students and graduates. Over 60 per cent of those firms would consider paying students to work on specialist projects.

Statistics from InterExec, an agency working with UK and international headhunters for executives seeking £150k to £1million+, also show that **demand for senior IT professionals** has increased significantly in the first two months of 2010.

Research released by e-skills UK to support their manifesto, which was published in March, showed that the technology professional workforce has continued to **grow throughout the recession**. Growing at four times the UK average for the coming decade, 110,000 new people a year will be needed to enter IT careers. In addition, IT literacy skills are also now a prerequisite for employment for everyone, with 92 per cent of new recruits required to have IT skills.

This development, however, stands in contrast to figures suggesting that **fewer and fewer students choose to go into IT**. Expert David Braben, founder of video game

## On the rise: system developers in demand



SQL, C#, .Net and Linux skills have been in increasing demand over the last months, according to a report from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation (REC). The highest demand in terms of occupation was for system developers (24,900 vacancies), followed by system administrators (4,600 vacancies).

developer Frontier Developments, said that over the last nine years computer science courses have noticed a 52 per cent decline in interest. Speaking at the recent Westminster Education Forum Keynote Seminar: ICT at school and in the home, the expert said the introduction of ICT GCSEs has led to a decline in computer science teaching. A 2009 survey of over 220,000

students, which was carried out by the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HSECU), found that fewer than ever are choosing to go into IT, with numbers falling by around 15 per cent.

In addition, the UK is suffering from **wider skills gaps** than ever, especially in leadership, management and technical roles. Research by the Institute of Leadership and

Management (ILM) suggested that often managers are appointed and promoted without either appropriate training or support. ILM's chief executive Penny de Valk said that as many as 60 per cent were 'reluctant managers' who were moved into the role with little or no management training.

The **importance of training** is also reflected in a

survey conducted by Home Learning College, which showed that lack of training led almost a fifth of the 3,000 British workers surveyed to leave a job. Almost half said that relevant training would help to compensate for not being offered a pay rise or promotion. Almost 60 per cent never received financial help from their employer towards the cost of gaining a professionally recognised qualification.

This means that the recent introduction of **Time to Train** has come at an opportune time. Employees in companies of 250 workers or more will have the right to request time for study or training after legal changes came into effect early in April. The right will be made available to all employees from April 2011.

At the same time, **IT roles are expected to change** dramatically by 2020, according to a report from the Recruitment and Employment Confederation's (REC) Technology group. The report suggests that the role of IT professionals will become more strategic and aligned to business objectives.

**Technology trends** that will define the role of the IT professional include the convergence of cloud computing with software as a service and virtualisation; increasing data flows and data storage and the effect this has on knowledge management and creating value for the business; data security, disaster recovery and business continuity; green IT and clean technology; managing mobile devices; VoIP and converged networks; and virtual working as collaboration tools, user communities and web conferencing.

## Supplier briefs

### City University London launches MSc for clinical engineers

City University London is introducing a new MSc in Clinical Engineering with Healthcare Technology Management in September 2010. The course has been developed for those with responsibility for the engineering systems in hospitals.

The course is aimed at recent graduates and current healthcare professionals with a background in engineering or informatics as well as other physical and biological sciences. The course is offered both full-time and part-time.

### CrossKnowledge acquires Mohive

CrossKnowledge acquired Norwegian learning content management systems and e-learning software provider Mohive. Through the acquisition, CrossKnowledge is looking to strengthen its technological capabilities and offer its clients the possibility of creating and deploying their own content. By joining CrossKnowledge, Mohive will benefit from the structure and investment power of an international group, in particular in the area of research and development.

### Data protection qualification launched

PDP Training has developed a new qualification for data protection and privacy workers, the Practitioner Certificate in Data Protection. The qualification was developed in consultation with the

Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and aims to define and further legitimise the professional status of data protection workers. Qualification requirements include a five day course and a written examination.

### Melad Ghabrial Director of Worldwide Product Management

Global Knowledge has appointed Melad Ghabrial as Director of Worldwide Product Management. Ghabrial will be responsible for the evolution and execution of Global Knowledge's product strategy across its worldwide operations and strengthen its relationships with leading technology partners, including Cisco, Microsoft and VMware.

### New Skills Funding Agency comes into effect

A new system for allocating government funding to further education and training in England came into effect in April. The Skills Funding Agency will fund and regulate further adult education and skills in England.

There will be four direct routes into training for employers and learners: Train to Gain, the National Apprenticeship Service, and the Adult Advancement and Careers Service, as well as further education colleges and training organisations.

### Kaplan IT Learning acquires Atlantic Link

Kaplan IT Learning acquired rapid e-learning authoring software provider Atlantic Link. The acquisition of Atlantic Link supports Kaplan IT Learning's strategy of providing a variety

of training products, services and solutions across a global market.

### Access Intelligence buys Cobent

Cobent, training and compliance solutions deliverer, has been acquired by York-based software and computer services supplier Access Intelligence for £5.2 million. Michael Jackson, Executive Chairman of Access Intelligence, said the acquisition is in line with the company's plans to focus on providing compliance solutions via software as a service.

### SFIA and CompTIA form partnership

The SFIA Foundation and CompTIA have formed a partnership to help organisations to develop the skills of their workforce more effectively. The mapping information between the CompTIA qualifications and SFIA can be seen on the organisations' respective websites. This collaboration further strengthens the hand of those organisations that invest in the development of a skilled workforce.

### Remote learning course for Cisco certifications

Technical training provider Vortex 6 has partnered with remote learning specialist Retendo to offer interactive Cisco training over WebEx. Courses will be offered for all Cisco Certified Network Associate (CCNA) and Cisco Certified Network Professional (CCNP) classes and will be delivered in two-hour sessions twice a week over a five-week period.



**Alan Bellinger**

## Can't you see? It's intuitive

I was taken aback by a question I was asked the other day. It was 'We have a new process that takes 20 minutes; how long should the learning intervention be?' It was one of those 'Socrates is a man, Socrates wears glasses, all men wear glasses' moments.

My response was along the lines of, the length of the training intervention is a function of the complexity of the process, not the time the process takes to complete.

But in addition to the simplicity of the process, there are three other considerations. The first is the criticality of the process – is it dangerous if it's done incorrectly? In such a situation, however simple it is, you can't run the risk of someone doing it incorrectly. Then there's the issue of the value-add the process represents; with a high value-add process it's important that it's done correctly in order to capture the benefit. And finally, there's the issue of compliance – however intuitive the process, we need to be able to get the tick in the box to prove that we've done the training.

The problem is that it is difficult to decide on a course of action without understanding the value that the learning intervention creates. For those issues of problem avoidance (critical/dangerous processes and compliance) the core benefit that the training intervention will create is that it reduces risk. But apart from those scenarios, the value of the

intervention is that it will reduce the lead time to competence of those performing the process.

So now we're looking for two numbers – by how much will it reduce the time to competence (which, in turn, is a function of simplicity/intuitiveness), and how do we monetise that time reduction?

It's not too difficult to come up with the improvement in the lead time to competence; nor is it difficult to estimate the number of times the process will be performed during that time. Let's assume we can show that it would take someone nine weeks to become proficient at the process if they weren't trained, and just one week if they were trained; this means we have cut the lead time to competence by eight weeks. Let's further assume it will take them an average of 100 per cent longer whilst they're not competent and the process is performed daily. We now have a performance benefit of over 13 hours (20x5x8=800 minutes). Now we need to put a monetary value on that performance benefit.

It is reasonable to assume that the value-add an individual represents to the organisation is equal to the cost to the organisation of employing that individual. And so, if this process is being performed by high value-add employees the benefit will be substantial. The reverse is also true.

Phew – and such a simple question!

## BCS Information & Technology Training Specialist Group

### Best practices for accessible learning

The I&TTSG held an online meeting, hosted by IBM, on 24 March entitled 'Best practices for accessible learning'.

The main speaker was Julian Cable, Learning Specialist with IBM UK, and he was supported by colleagues Heather Hasner and Marc Johlic.

A great turnout was rewarded with an interactive presentation and online discussion around what accessibility means and why it matters. The discussion moved on to accessibility considerations for instructor-led course development, with interesting examples of both good and bad practice. There were also some great ideas on how to create presentations to maximise their accessibility for

screen readers in particular.

Did you know, for example, that a screen reader will read the content of a PowerPoint slide based on its screen order rather than as we may 'see' the content from top left to bottom right? It makes sense when you think about how PowerPoint works, but it was a very useful reminder of how that impacts accessibility.

A student handbook and a copy of the slides are available on the I&TTSG website at: [www.bcs.org/ittsg/events](http://www.bcs.org/ittsg/events)

Our next event is a re-run of the 'snowed under' event from January, 'Making Change Work through Engaging Users' on 2 June at BCS, London.



**I&TTSG committee member Kevin Streater**

## Profile

Kevin Streater joined the Open University in September 2009 as executive director – employer engagement for the IT and telecoms sector after 18 years in a variety of service delivery, project management and training roles at Sun Microsystems. At Sun, Kevin's final position was as customer learning manager, where he led a team developing learning solutions for Sun's top customers and took a leading role in promoting the global

use of the SFIA competency framework.

Kevin joined BCS whilst at university in the mid-80's and is a Chartered IT Professional and an IITT Fellow. In the I&TTSG he is responsible for external relationships.

He lives in Essex and spends a lot of his free time involved in various activities relating to his role as chair of Richard Cloudeley's Charity, an endowed charity in Islington that dates back to 1517.





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# On the ground

How do you best create joint responsibility for course success?



The key to any successful course is communication.

Before the course begins, I would always suggest conducting a learning needs analysis to set learning outcomes. Trainers should speak directly with the client to tailor the course for the

individuals involved. Course objectives, delivery format, timing and any prerequisites should be discussed and agreed.

Where possible, clients should try to ensure the delegates have a similar knowledge base. Whilst it is possible to run courses with mixed abilities, the most successful and productive courses are those in which delegates' skillsets are at roughly the same level.

A pre-course questionnaire can assist in ensuring the training course will have maximum impact. Delegates are more likely to respond to training if they have a say in

what they are learning.

The client can also assist by spending a small amount of time preparing their delegates for the course. On the day, the trainer can then give delegates the opportunity to use their own work examples. This results in delegates learning the hands-on skills they require rather than a standard generic overview.

## Top five tips:

- Speak directly to the client to fully understand their needs.
- Ensure the client contributes to and agrees learning outcomes.
- Where appropriate, seek

delegate contributions.

- Ensure the client understands and agrees course content and delivery.
- Speak with the client after the course to discuss course evaluations.

Howard Teale, Indicia Training

More advice and tips at:  
[www.bcs.org/ittraining](http://www.bcs.org/ittraining)

## Next issue

How do you best tailor your training to a global workforce?

# Breaking developments

How to use multimedia to enhance your training programme



To have a positive impact, multimedia should be used only where it adds real meaning to the learning experience. Here are some key pointers to bear in mind when developing your training sessions.

## Before the training

- Use e-learning as pre-learning.
- Take advantage of social

networking (such as Facebook) to build discussions in advance and to help you better understand knowledge levels.

- Thoroughly test everything online, ensure all formats are compatible, particularly if you're not using your own equipment. And have a back-up plan for any unforeseen technical hitches.

## During the training

- Enhance PowerPoint presentations with interactive video and audio clips.
- Consider alternatives to PowerPoint – for example Prezi or Adobe Director.
- Draw upon images and diagrams to illustrate concepts.
- Connect live with other

groups (for example via Connect Pro or WebEx) to create wider interaction.

- Include free clips from videosharing sites such as YouTube and Video Jug to emphasise key points and add variety.

## After the training

- Gather feedback via forums/social networks.
- Use online 'homework' research projects or online assessments to further embed new knowledge.

When used effectively in face to face training, multimedia can engage, maintain interest and add variety. When employed in a live webinar, speed, convenience, audience reach

and cost-effectiveness can be added to the mix of benefits.

Matt Turner, Brightwave

Trainers: this is your page – please send in your views for the next issue, or any comments about this week's advice, to the editor:

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## Advisers:

Jooli Atkins, Matrix FortyTwo and Dave Britt, BCS Trainer of the Year 2006.

## Next issue

How can you effectively integrate and use blogs in learning?





## In the learner's shoes

Stephanie Dedhar, Senior Instructional Designer at Saffron Interactive, was the first to win the newly introduced IITT Instructional Designer of the Year Award. In this interview, she explains what her job is all about and what is important when trying to engage the learner.

### **For those of us who don't know, what exactly is an instructional designer?**

Instructional design is quite a unique job, I'd say. It's not really new as such, as training has always been around, but today many people associate it with e-learning. In the project life cycle, instructional design is basically the first part – the learning design. It is all about gathering information from the client, doing research, defining learning outcomes and objectives, developing a learning strategy and creating storyboards.

The job has definitely evolved over

recent years. When I first started, people usually asked for one hour e-learning courses. Now they want much smaller chunks, and much quicker. Also there's more demand for including social networking, videos and so on. Most of these things were around when I started, but hadn't really made it into L&D.

### **So how did you end up as an instructional designer?**

This job is actually my first after finishing university. I studied modern languages at Cambridge – which seems totally unrelated – and

**It's a very creative job... and that creativity has to be delivered within time and budget constraints**

Stephanie Dedhar

was looking for a writing-based job. My job agency suggested I apply for an instructional designer role. It had the writing side, but also included a lot of project and client management. So I applied and got the job.

### **Is there a typical career path?**

I don't think anyone would necessarily say 'I want to be an instructional designer' – mainly because, unless they were already in the industry, they probably wouldn't know what it was. Here at Saffron

most come from an arts, literature or media background – probably because there is a lot of writing and research involved. But I know there are also many in the industry who come from an IT background.

It's a very creative job – you have to adapt to different company cultures, different tones of voice, different subjects and audiences, and you have to keep up to date with constantly evolving technology. And that creativity has to be delivered within time and budget constraints.

### **What qualities should an instructional designer have?**

On a practical level, you have to be very organised and good at prioritising – I often manage multiple projects and teams (suppliers, developers, clients and so on) at the same time.

I also think you have to be very enthusiastic and excited about learning new things. With every new project there is something new to learn and you deal with so many different topics all the time. The way I see it, if you don't know anything about the topic at the beginning of the project, you should be an expert in it by the end.

You also have to be a very good communicator because it's all about making potentially complex and complicated topics more accessible and easy to understand.

### **And what are the challenges of your job?**

It's really about finding new ways to engage people and to change behaviours at the same time. Learners today have much higher expectations and businesses want courses produced cheaper and quicker. Rapid development is very popular, but sometimes there are unrealistic expectations as to what can be done. So it's also our responsibility to educate our clients, to explain why we do things and to help them understand why we do them in a certain way. I find it's

much better to have open conversations beforehand rather than make false promises.

### **This year you won the newly introduced Instructional Designer of the Year Award – how did it feel?**

I didn't expect it at all, even though I was very excited about the BT data protection project and thought it was something really special. The whole thing was really driven by the project, not by me saying 'I want to get an instructional designer award'. I was really proud of the project, but when I found out that I'd been shortlisted and who I was up against, I didn't really think that I would win. I was very surprised – and delighted – when I got it.

### **You received the Award for a data protection training project. How did you make this type of compliance training engaging?**

I'm really pleased that it was a compliance project that won the award – compliance training has a bad reputation, but hopefully this will show people that it doesn't have to be dull and dry, and can be more than just a box ticking exercise.

I used a lot of video and scenario-based elements and went for a 'day in the life' approach. Based on this, one of our graphic designers created a 3-D office building, which was the course map and the basis for the design for the whole course. The videos for the training were filmed on green screen, and then set in the office building. It was the first time I'd done that, and it was great fun – trying to work out where the actors needed to stand so it would work with the computer-generated backdrop.

The other aspect was that BT wanted me to use their 'One Voice' approach – using everyday language and a conversational tone. I'm convinced that the words you use to say something are as important as

what you're saying, and I got really good feedback on the tone of voice used for this course.

### **Classroom learning and e-learning – do you need a different approach?**

The way I tend to think about e-learning is that it's actually very similar to classroom learning. You have to think about the things that make classroom learning engaging when you adapt it to e-learning. For me there are three main things: first of all, there's discussion and collaboration. You can do that online by bringing in people's life experiences or by using case studies and anecdotes, for example, and by using a conversational tone – basically writing the text as if you are speaking.

Secondly, an important thing in classroom learning is eye contact. One way to transfer that into e-learning is by using 'you' (rather than 'staff' or 'employees') and by focusing on the point of view of the learner and not the company.

Thirdly, you need to include opportunities to practise and use role plays and activities. This actually works better with e-learning, I think. It's a safe environment to try out things and people don't have to be afraid to embarrass themselves – no one's going to laugh at them.

### **What's your advice for someone interested in a job like yours?**

I think one of the most important things is that you need to forget your preconceptions. You have to come into it with an open mind and you also have to be part of driving everything forward when it comes to technology and looking at different ways of delivering training. It is really important not to get into the mindset of 'I am a trainer'. You have to put yourself in the shoes of the learner, see things from the audience's side and evaluate your work from their perspective.

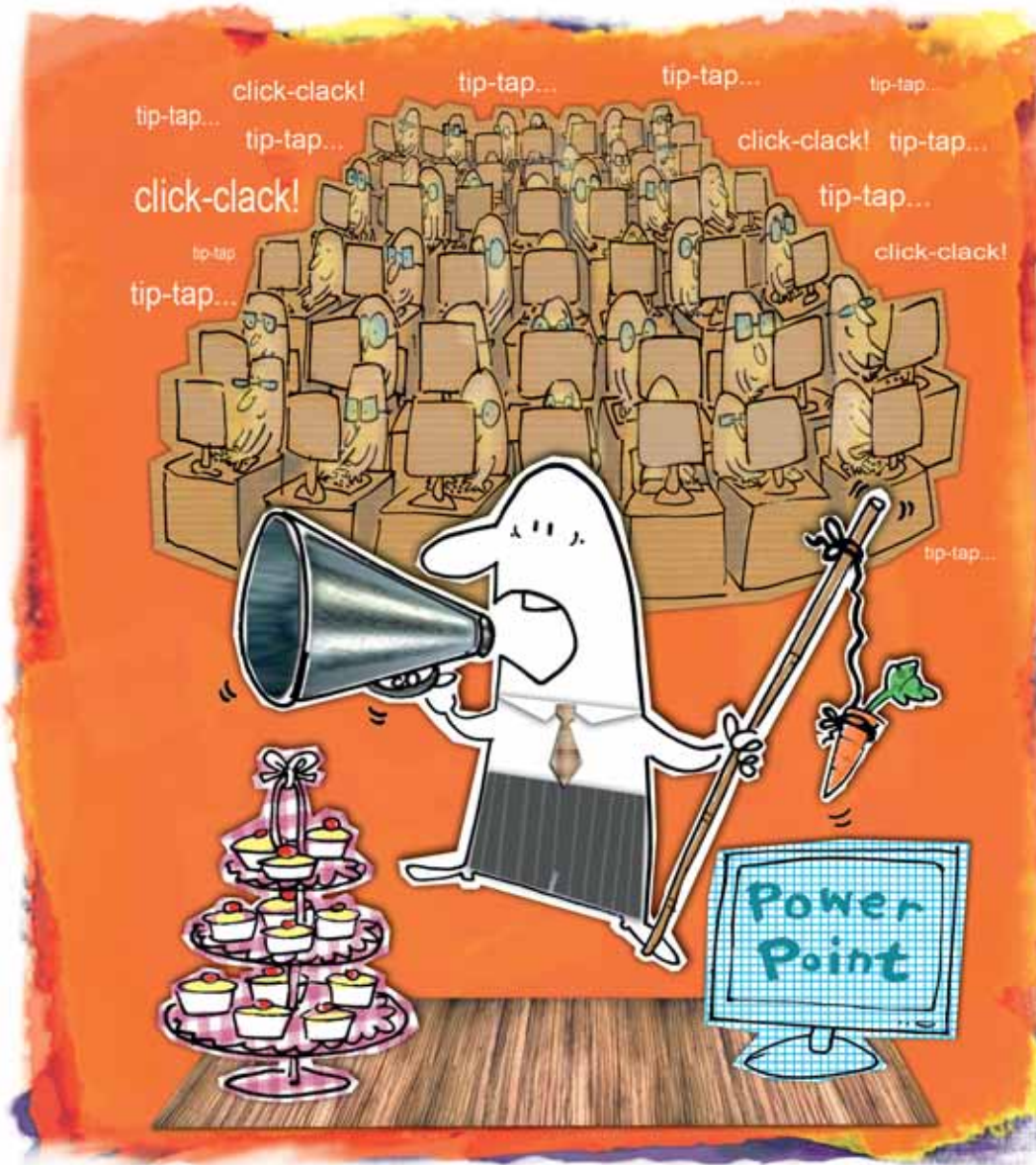


**You have to be part of driving everything forward when it comes to technology**

Stephanie Dedhar



# Equipping IT project managers



IT projects are renowned for being challenging, and various certifications look to pinpoint and address the elements needed for managing such projects. Jutta Mackwell spoke to a number of experts to find out what skills can help to bring an IT project to a successful finish.

A post on the BCS Project Eye Blog back in November 2009, which picked up on the failure of the government's C-Nomis project, sparked a lively debate among blog readers as to why so many big IT projects fail. Suggestions ranged

from failure to monitor progress, to lack of accountability and ownership to arbitrary political pressure. However, one recurring message seemed to be that IT projects fail because of inexperience or simple incompetence.

**IT projects – different from 'normal' projects?**

'Poorly trained project managers' has been identified as one of the top reasons for project failure by the Office of Government Commerce. This, as Brendan D'Cruz, Head of Department: Business & Computing at the University of Wales, Newport, points out, applies in particular to IS/IT projects.

'In some organisations the role of managing the project may be given to a well educated subject expert rather than a qualified project manager, thus resulting in a fairly ad hoc approach to project management without the use of the most effective tools and techniques,' explains Brendan, who is also a member of the BCS Project Management Specialist Group. 'Appropriate investment in training for project managers, developers and users is critical for the future of successful project management.'

## The technical side

So what exactly are the particular challenges of IT projects – and are they really that different from 'normal' projects? Eddie Kilkelly, Chief Operating Officer at ILX Group, one of the main providers of (IT) project management courses, explains: 'The principles of IT and generic project management are the same – in any project you have to understand what you are trying to do. The challenge [of IT projects] is that underneath the managerial area there is a technical layer, and I'd say it is nearly impossible to manage an IT project if you have no concept of technology. A broad understanding of IT is essential.'

Bob Hughes, Chairman of the BCS Project Management Panel and former Chief Moderator for the ISEB Foundation Certificate in IS Project Management, argues along the same lines, saying that while the principles are the same, the application for IT projects needs



different skills in order to address the particular challenges such as:

- complexity, e.g. software tends to be more complex and needs a lot more testing efforts;
- conformity / changeability, e.g. software is easier to change than hardware or organisations, which means usually software has to change and;
- invisibility, e.g. progress is less easy to see.

He explains: 'IT project management tends to have greater emphasis on areas such as the technical stages of project life cycles, software and hardware prototyping to reduce specific types of risks and estimation of effort needed to implement IT, and qualifications such as the ISEB Certificates in IS Project Management are therefore often recommended as a "top-up" to the Prince2 practitioner qualification.'

'Generic qualifications such as Prince2 tell you what you need to do, but not how to do it,' Eddie Kilkelly agrees. 'You're left with questions such as "How do I estimate?" and "How do I control?"' IS-specific qualifications help to put a methodology in the right context where these questions can be answered.'

### Focus on communication

It seems then that IT project management skills go way beyond methodological and technical knowledge. 'On top of my list for really excellent IT project managers are interpersonal skills and commercial awareness,' says Melanie Franklin, Chief Executive of Maven Training. 'You need to be able to explain in layman's terms what you are doing and why it is useful. In IT we tend to get excited about shiny new things, but you need to be able to explain to others why this is useful in commercial terms.'

These interpersonal and commercial skills are addressed in requirements put down for

assessments such as the APM Certified Project Manager Interview and the ISEB Higher Certificate, which include for example communication, vision, flexibility, self-awareness, responsibility, judgment and staff motivation.

### Engaging the end-user

The success of IT projects can also make or break with the engagement of the end-user. 'A key principle is to try to involve users or their representatives throughout the project, for example, getting them involved in specifying and evaluating user interfaces, testing systems and so on,' explains Bob Hughes.

'Combined with coordinated communications, learning has a large part to play in managing change associated with IT projects. Sadly, the delivery of the new system being the project end is often the perception of IT project boards,' adds Jooli Atkins, Managing Director of Matrix FortyTwo and Chair of the BCS Information and Technology Training Specialist Group. 'A great IT project manager needs to be technical, understand the business need and fully engage users through change management.'

'You need the buy-in from users,' agrees Eddie Kilkelly, 'and the best way to get that is through regular contact and communication.' Too often IT projects are completed without the training requirements being properly considered during the project life cycle, and several high profile projects have subsequently either been delivered and then not used, or their use delayed whilst user-specific competency issues are addressed.

Brendan D'Cruz agrees: 'Training is an essential part of preparing the user community for system usage and of change if the project is ultimately to be successful.'

For this reason, IT project managers need to know what they are doing on a psychological level. 'When you introduce a new system,

you often move people from being unconsciously competent of what they are doing to being consciously incompetent – you have stolen some innate knowledge, so now they have to work to get it back and relearn, through no fault of their own,' explains Melanie Franklin.

'In a way the old system represents all that they were capable of, in spite of its shortcomings,' adds Jooli Atkins. 'One experience we had with a move from one Office suite to another in a large organisation was to ask users to write down all the things they love about their old system and, on another flipchart, all the things they hate. We were then able to reassure them that they were keeping all the things they love and that the things they hated were no longer there to annoy them. This small step recognised that the users' feelings were important and helped them to accept the new system more easily.'

'Many IT project managers are technically highly competent and understand how to use the project management tools to deliver the best system for the business, but rarely do they combine these skills with a good understanding of the impact of the system on the users. The deliverable for any IT project should be competent, confident users of the system.'



**A great IT project manager needs to be technical, understand the business need and fully engage users through change management**

Jooli Atkins,  
Matrix FortyTwo

### Useful links

Project Eye Blog:  
[www.bcs.org/projecteye](http://www.bcs.org/projecteye)

Overview of accredited project management qualifications and how they link together:  
[www.prince2.com/accredited-project-management-training.asp](http://www.prince2.com/accredited-project-management-training.asp)

Article by Jooli Atkins on how to best integrate end-user training into the project life cycle  
[www.bcs.org/ittraining/just-too-late-training](http://www.bcs.org/ittraining/just-too-late-training)



# Top players score on customer care

No one can deny that 2009 was a tough year. Yet as the Top 50 list shows, most of the players are still in the game and, with the slowly recovering market, many look to strengthen existing client relationships even further.

At first sight, the 2010 Top 50 IT training companies list presents a rather gloomy picture: revenues in 2009 were down, for many companies in two digit percentage figures, and the few who managed to end up with no change or a very tentative growth in revenue compared to 2008 stand out. Figures show that the 2009 UK IT training market has taken a dip similar to the one in 2002, after the dot.com bubble burst and the stock market was hard hit.

‘This was the single fastest decline in the history of the industry,’ says William Macpherson, CEO of market leader QA. ‘This was partly due to the general recession, but I think there was also an overreaction from the market caused by the ferocity of the recession. This was worst in the financial and business services sectors, which are especially large users of IT training.’



**That was the single fastest decline in history**

William Macpherson  
CEO of QA

While the estimated 15 per cent decline in revenue in 2009 is only one percentage point under the 2002 figure, it doesn’t necessarily reflect on the amount of training that has been going on. ‘The actual volume of training may not have declined that much, but pricing has also fallen,’ says David Pardo, MD of Pardo Fox.

‘There has been a lot of competition on price, even since before 2009,’ agrees his colleague John Durbin. ‘The problem is that once you are in a recession, you cannot raise prices.’

The pressure to cut cost played to the advantage of one of the newcomers to the Top 50 list, Floatdene Green, whose revenue grew by 50 per cent in 2009. ‘It’s all about cost – circumstances force companies to look for alternatives,’ says Director Derrick Johnstone.

Apart from PPI Learning Services, which went into administration in July, 2009 didn’t result in any other major casualties. Some of the major changes in the market were the acquisition of Remarc by QA in September 2009, the merger in February 2009 between The Projects Group (TPG Academy) and PMProfessional Learning to form Aikona Management, and in January 2010, WWP Training and Key Training Solutions joined forces.

New Horizons, whose UK franchisees went into administration in April 2009, launched its own directly run UK business in June, and found that despite the large, though expected, drop in revenue, the business was seeing growth. ‘Obviously the termination of the franchise agreement meant that we went from working with established and mature franchise partners to



starting from scratch,' says Michael Smith, New Horizon's Director for Europe. 'I'm very pleased with the progress.'

### Still profitable

Overall, the picture is not quite as bleak as it might look. 'The figures are down, but the industry hasn't been as badly hit as others,' says David Pardo. 'IT training is not quite as susceptible as other sectors, and there have been successes among the niche and innovative players.'

So while for most companies revenue has fallen, several still report that their overall profit rose during 2009. For example, Alan Pettman, who joined Global Knowledge as Managing Director in November 2009, says that the company's profitability rose by around 14 per cent over the last year.

Learning Tree, a London-based training provider, found itself in pretty much the same situation. 'In 2009, there wasn't much good, but it didn't come as a surprise – the writing was on the wall and we shaped our business accordingly, which meant that while we declined in revenue terms, we still remained profitable,' explains Managing Director Richard Chappell.

He also found that there was more growth in areas outside the UK, in particular the Middle East and Africa. 'We've seen quite a strong growth there, and it's really helped. We've managed to focus our troops in the right areas, and it continues to offer good opportunities.'

Looking at countries outside the UK has been a successful strategy for a number of companies, among them Firebrand Training. 'The last 12 months have been brutal,' says Director Robert Chapman. 'It is interesting because we still grew as a group. This has been the first full year of trading in the Nordic region, and our revenue grew from zero to £1million there. Taken over all the countries we're operating in, our revenue has grown.'



**In the past we shied away from e-learning, but we've now realised that we can use it to play to our strengths**

Richard Chappell,  
Learning Tree

## E-learning joins the team

Over the turbulent last year, more e-learning companies have joined the ranks of the Top 50 IT training providers. 'The lines between "traditional" IT training companies and e-learning companies are beginning to blur,' explains David Pardo. 'E-learning is now a serious part of the mix. There is a huge diversity of training needs, which means there also needs to be a great diversity in delivery. E-learning is now happening on a modest scale, after there's been 15 years of talking about it.'

'About three or four years ago, introducing e-learning into the training mix was not necessarily the done thing. Today it's almost natural to integrate technology in the classroom, and e-learning is often used for prerequisite training,' adds John Durbin.

'E-learning is also used much more in classroom training,' says Brendan Scullion, Kaplan IT Learning's Regional Director Europe and Middle East. 'We've also seen a change in that e-learning used to be mainly for large corporations, but now companies with as few as 250 end-users are deploying e-learning.'

This move is also reflected in the increase in rapid authoring tools, and Kaplan reacted to this development through the acquisition of rapid authoring tool provider Atlantic Link earlier this year. 'Before our training was very much application focused, but we've seen a decline in demand for

larger projects training such as SAP and Oracle,' Brendan explains.

Still, the UK is proving to be more conservative in its embrace of e-learning than, for example, the US. While the e-learning growth rate overseas is quite steep, in the UK it has stayed under what had been expected. 'One of the obvious reasons for this is the geography – in the US you have a lot more distance to cover,' explains David.

Despite the continued popularity of classroom-based training, companies such as Kaplan IT found 2009 'pretty steady, as many companies looked at e-learning as a way to reduce training cost. There was a move away from classroom-based training towards small snippets of training, even in e-learning lessons,' says Brendan.

This development has also encouraged other 'traditional' training companies to take on e-learning. Learning Tree, for example, is currently moving into the arena of virtual classrooms and remote training. 'In the past we've shied away from e-learning, but we've now realised that we can use it to play to our strengths,' explains Managing Director Richard Chappell.

'Technology-based learning will consolidate its position,' agrees David Pardo, and so it looks like this trend towards e-learning will continue, especially as technology develops and allows for increasingly richer learning experiences.

Yet cost control and tight budgets were certainly a necessity to survive 2009. 'We've looked at the cost of everything, marketing budget, venues and so on, but we didn't cut corners in terms of customer services,' says Melanie Franklin, CEO of Maven Training, one of the few companies that have shown tentative growth over the last year.

### Looking for value for money

Difficult market conditions brought about by staff cuts and budget constraints have made customers discriminating, and 'value for money' was certainly one of the key trends in 2009 as companies were looking long and hard at which training would add value to their



business and justify digging into their tight budgets.

However, apart from Floatdene Green and Firebrand Training, very few training companies seem to have cut down on their prices over the last year. 'Cost cutting is not worthy of discussion anymore,' says Global Knowledge's Allan Pettman. 'Whereas it used to be that service brought you to the table and price won the day, it is now price that brings you to the table, but service and experience make the difference.'

'I've seen two strong trends over the last year,' says Melanie Franklin. 'One is the individual perspective. The question I get is "how does this course affect my employability and my marketability?"' The market is still very tough for people trying to get into contract work. They now have the time to do the courses, but they also don't want to part with their hard-earned money if they don't get anything in return. On a corporate level, the contribution now has to fit the business strategy. Companies expect people to be qualified and then they build capability.'

Ian Steward, Service Development Director at Logica, noticed similar



**It is now price that brings you to the table, but service and experience make the difference**

Allan Pettman,  
Global Knowledge

developments: 'Companies are cutting down on headcount, so training needs to be more effective and directive. It's not just "where do we make our savings?" but "how do we get more out of the individual?"' Training has become wider – it's moving into recruitment, training, career development, succession planning and so on. Customers are asking for more integrated services.'

One company for whom this approach has certainly paid off is Intellego, whose revenue grew by 39 per cent. 'Our growth was based on increasing the sales of our own published products and a move towards a greater element of service,' says Angus Forrest, Chairman of Intellego. 'Whereas we might have supplied a system previously only as a distributor, what we've been trying to do is supply additional services such as pre-training consultancy and content development.'

Similarly, training outsourcing provider Redtray's aspiration for 2009 and the year to come is to be able to provide truly blended learning solutions for its customers. Over 2009 it acquired several businesses, among them PPI Learning Services, thereby expanding its service offering. 'We now have everything in-house, from e-learning, LMSs and technology to NVQ and Skills for Life qualifications and IT professionals' development,' says Jon Buttriss, Redtray's Marketing Director. 'We really, really can provide blended learning now, and we were able to talk to clients about what they want – we have everything, that's our strength. That's how we managed to continue through 2009.'

Being flexible in training delivery is something that has also paid off for New Horizons. 'We've seen an immense growth in mentored learning – it's now about 30 per cent of our global revenue,' says Michael Smith. 'Companies want flexible delivery. For example, if you went to a Windows 2008 server course, it would be typically from Monday to

Friday. Many customers have fed back that it is very difficult to release staff for that type of training, especially as there's less staff doing the same amount of work.'

## Offering bespoke solutions

The tough year has also brought about a real focus on the impact of training on change management. 'The market in 2009 was very choosy, very business-case driven,' says Allan Pettman. 'Companies tended to choose courses with a tangible return, either giving them a competitive edge or reduced costs. Data centre courses were huge – if you get the data centre right you save yourself a lot of money.'

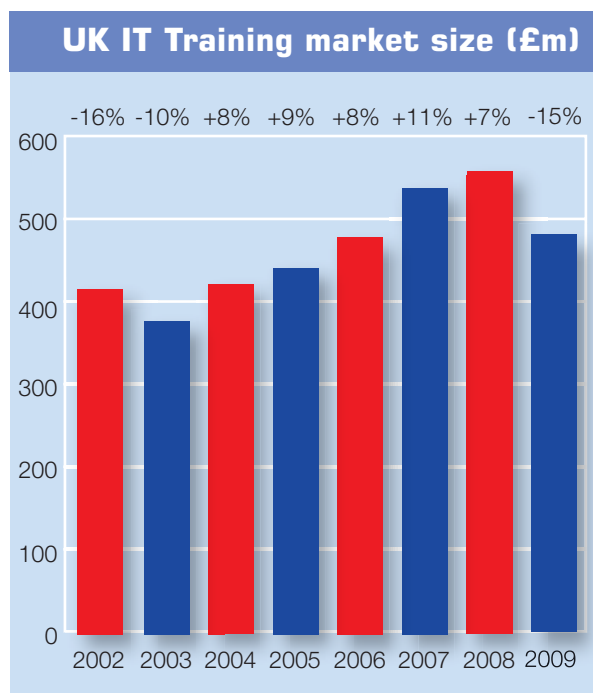
Many training companies also commented that off-the-shelf training has had its day, and that clients have very specific ideas about the kind of training they are looking for. 'I'm finding that as companies want more value for money and more from their employees, they need more bespoke approaches,' says Ian Steward of Logica.

'Clients are now informed enough to know that taking a PowerPoint presentation and adding some bits doesn't change the hearts and minds of people – they need bespoke training,' explains Jon Buttriss.

Learning Tree's Richard Chappell agrees: 'Client-specific training has grown. Rather than looking at standard courses, companies come and say "this is what we actually need". Every hour spent in training needs to be bang on the mark.'

In this sense, the recession has actually had a positive impact. 'Recession is a great opportunity to review where you spend your money,' says Firebrand's Robert Chapman. 'When it's easier to make money, it's also easier to be lazy.'

'A lot of mothballs have been taken away,' agrees Melanie Franklin. 'There is a much higher level of professionalism. It has changed the way companies operate. There is now a much closer relationship between individuals and companies



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– it's all about managing career development.'

Richard Chappell sees the same development: 'In the past, people often came on training courses because their company had the budget and it was their turn. Now people come because what they need to learn is business-critical. Attendees need to go back to work on Monday after the course and apply what they have learned. The classroom is now highly charged and highly motivated, which is great.'

## Investing in relationships

As a result, good business relationships have become essential building blocks of successful training companies. 'I found that when the going gets tough, there's a flight to trust,' says Melanie Franklin. 'Training is very much a relationship business – people want to work with someone they trust. There has been a change in



**Recession is a great opportunity to review where you spend your money. When it's easier to make money, it's also easier to be lazy**

Robert Chapman,  
Firebrand Training

## Top training courses

In terms of course popularity, companies haven't really seen much change in 2009. Favourites were virtualisation, IT security, ITIL, management courses, business analysis and project management such as Prince2. Yet, as Melanie Franklin points out, while a few years ago a Prince2 qualification meant that you looked special, it has now become a basic management skill. 'It has shifted down a level: before it was at company level, but now it's moved to graduate induction programmes, for example.'

Other areas that did well and are thought to continue to do so are business analysis and data centres. Many also believe that the new Microsoft products will give the market a boost and that cloud computing needs will contribute significantly to training needs over 2010.

perception: training partners need to be professionals, real partners. It's about the added extra that shows that you know your stuff.'

QA's William Macpherson agrees: 'We continue to be value-focused, but we've also looked to deepen relationships. We found that clients are wanting more integrated training solutions, rather than just "a course" and consequently are increasingly working directly with full service companies rather than through brokers.'

Richard Chappell also found that onsite business grew over the last year, and Redtray's Jon Buttriss explains that the company tended to concentrate more on the bespoke, quality end of the market rather than on rapid development. 'We got closer to our customers,' agrees Intellego's Angus Forrest. 'We've moved higher up in the decision making tree and sought to deliver the best value we can.'

## Outlook 2010

While the very tentative recovery in the first quarter of 2010 is reflected in the companies' predictions for the year to come, most training companies do see light at the end of the tunnel. 'There will certainly be growth, but probably quite modest,' predicts David Pardo. 'I also see a continued need for training in "professional" skills for IT people – for example, personal, interpersonal, customer-facing, management and business skills.'

'The market continues to be a tough place,' says Jon Buttriss. 'However, we've had a great first quarter, a lot of it based on aspects such as understanding the customer and offering integrated and end-to-end solutions.'

'I don't think we're out of recession yet, but I'm generally optimistic,' says Firebrand's Robert Chapman. 'You can't go on not training your people. Other companies will start offering training and your people will start to leave,' Melanie Franklin agrees:

'There is still a war for talent, and a well-defined career development path gives your company a competitive edge.'

The move towards greater flexibility in training delivery will certainly continue, suspects Floatdene Green's Derrick Johnstone, and Brendan Scullion, Kaplan IT Learning's Regional Director Europe and Middle East, agrees: 'There is definitely a move towards mobile devices. We found that the iPhone and smartphones are generally too small, but notepads are certainly something people are looking at.'

## Changing perceptions

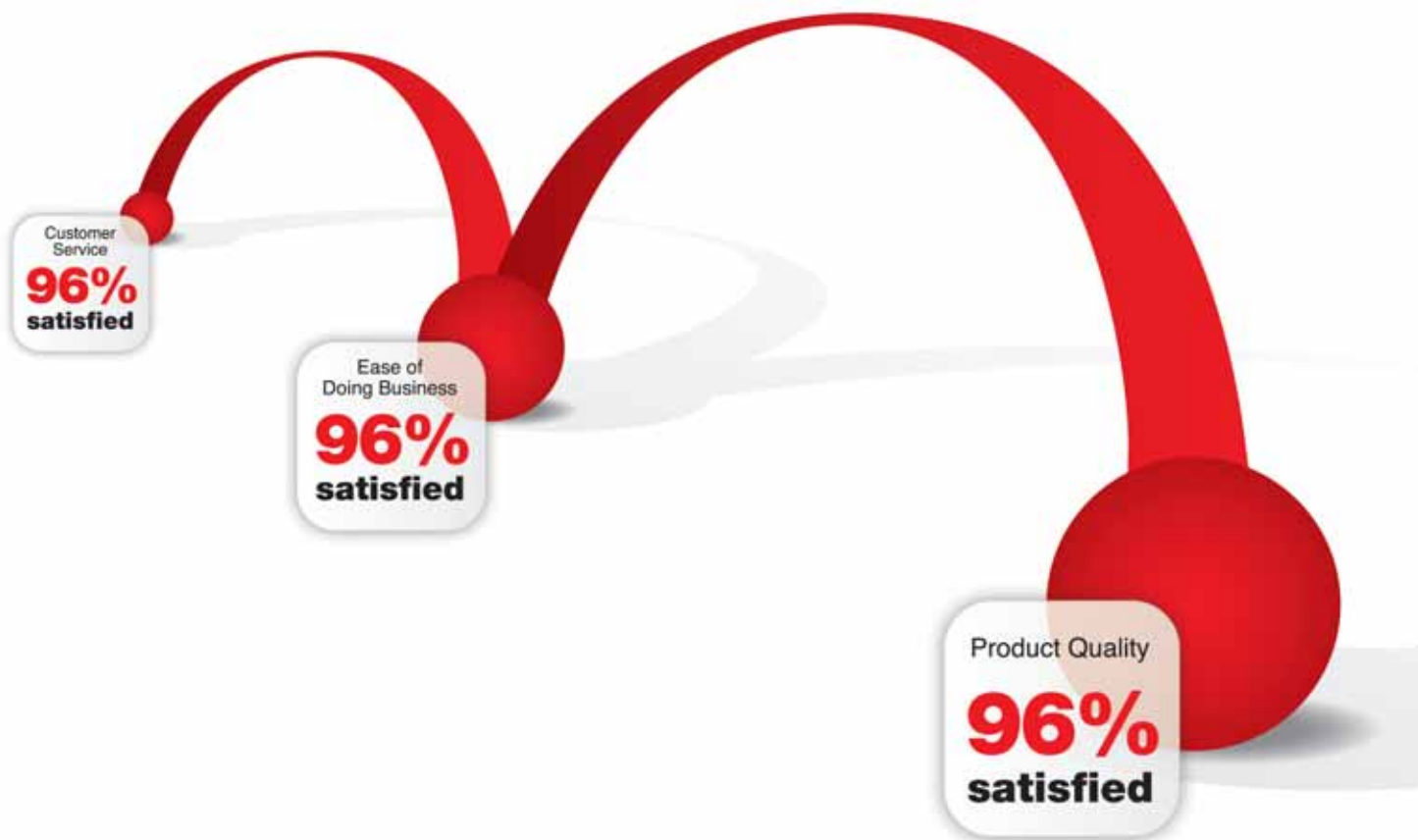
However, the real change in 2010 might well be the way training is approached and perceived. 'IT training is no longer about just doing a training course,' says Melanie Franklin. 'It's about transferring our expertise into a company. It's no longer done in an abyss – the structure of the company is now involved. Training now increasingly falls into the world of HR and we all need to look at the bigger picture. I have the suspicion that the role of the "normal" trainer is disappearing fast.'

While there is a need for closer collaboration between training provider and customer, some also see a necessity for training providers to work together more closely. 'I see a change in the IT training landscape in that we need to work with each other and use each others strengths,' says Logica's Ian Steward. 'It's still competition, but a different kind of competition.'

It seems then that collaboration, strong customer relationships and integrated services will be key to making the most of the year to come and benefitting from the timid shoots of economic recovery. Building capabilities and enabling people to succeed in their jobs is now certainly on top of the list of IT training companies' aims and objectives for 2010.



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## Top 50 The full list

Rank 2010	Rank 2009	Company	Revenue £m	Change %	Website
1	1	<b>QA</b>	82.0	-15	www.qa.com
2	2	<b>IBM Training</b>	21.1e	-15	www.ibm.com/training/uk
3	3	<b>Learning Tree International</b>	19.9	-17	www.learningtree.co.uk
4	4	<b>SAP</b>	17.7e	-21	www.sap.com/uk/education
5	6	<b>SkillSoft</b>	17.6e	-2	www.skillsoft.com
6	7	<b>Parity Training</b>	16.0e	-2	www.paritytraining.com
7	9	<b>ILX Group</b>	14.7e	-4	www.ilxgroup.com
8	11	<b>Assima</b>	13.9	-1	www.assima.net
9	8	<b>Oracle University</b>	13.7	-14	www.oracle.com/uk/education
10	10	<b>Global Knowledge</b>	12.5	-13	www.globalknowledge.co.uk
11	12	<b>ThirdForce</b>	9.0	-20	www.thirdforce.com
12	14	<b>RWD Technologies</b>	8.2e	-20	www.rwd.com
13	–	<b>Element K / NIIT</b>	8.0e	20	www.elementk.com
14	22	<b>Redtray</b>	7.9	11	www.redtray.co.uk
15	21	<b>FDM Group</b>	7.8	7	www.fdmgroup.com
16	15	<b>Firebrand Training</b>	7.7	-5	www.firebrandtraining.co.uk
17	16	<b>Training Synergy</b>	6.6e	-16	www.trainingsynergy.com
18	18	<b>Sun Microsystems</b>	6.5e	-17	www.uk.sun.com/training
19	17	<b>HP Education Services</b>	6.0e	-25	www.hp.com/uk/education
20	–	<b>Aikona Management</b>	5.9e	5	www.aikona.com
21	24	<b>Arrow ECS</b>	5.7	0	www.arrowecs.co.uk
22	27	<b>Verridian</b>	5.1	6	www.verridian.co.uk
23	26	<b>Steria Learning Services</b>	5.0e	-3	www.sterialearningservices.co.uk
24	31	<b>Bray Leino BroadSkill</b>	4.9e	7	www.brayleino broadskill.co.uk
25	34	<b>iTrain</b>	4.8e	17	www.itraineducation.co.uk
26	29	<b>PremierIT</b>	4.8	4	www.premierit.com
27	23	<b>Fast Lane</b>	4.7e	-23	www.flane.co.uk
28	25	<b>EMC</b>	4.6	-13	www.emc.com
29	32	<b>Symantec Education Services</b>	4.4e	0	www.symantec.com
30	–	<b>Kaplan IT Learning</b>	4.4	-21	www.stt-trainer.com
31	33	<b>Red Hat</b>	3.5e	-17	www.redhat.com
32	30	<b>Ideal Training</b>	3.5e	-22	www.idealts.co.uk
33	38	<b>Maven Training</b>	3.3	5	www.maventraining.co.uk
34	40	<b>WDR</b>	3.2	5	www.wdr.co.uk
35	39	<b>Afiniti</b>	3.0	-10	www.afiniti.co.uk
36	36	<b>Brightwave</b>	3.0e	-21	www.brightwave.co.uk
37	42	<b>Globaltech Solutions</b>	2.8	8	www.gts-uk.com
38	41	<b>Quanta</b>	2.5e	-9	www.quanta.co.uk
39	37	<b>SAS Software</b>	2.5	-22	www.sas.com/uk
40	–	<b>Floatdene Green</b>	2.4	50	www.floatdene.net
41	–	<b>Datrix Training</b>	2.4e	13	www.datrixtraining.com
42	19	<b>PPI Learning Services</b>	2.4e	-66	in administration
43	–	<b>Intellego</b>	2.3	39	www.intellego.co.uk
44	45	<b>StayAhead Training</b>	2.2	10	www.stayahead.com
45	43	<b>WWP Training</b>	2.2	-12	www.wwp.co.uk
46	20	<b>New Horizons</b>	2.2e	-71	www.newhorizonsclc.co.uk
47	44	<b>Happy Computers</b>	2.0e	-15	www.happy.co.uk
48	–	<b>2e2 Training</b>	2.0	0	www.2e2.com/training
49	47	<b>Interskill Learning</b>	1.9	-17	www.interskill.co.uk
50	49	<b>Kaleidoscope Training</b>	1.9e	-11	www.kcct.co.uk

### How the top 50 was compiled

This table of the Top 50 training companies by revenue was researched and compiled by Pardo Fox Ltd. The revenues shown in the table are for each company's financial year ending in 2009 or cover the calendar year 2009, and relate to IT training delivered in the UK. Eligibility is open to any company with revenues derived principally from the sale of training to employers for their staff, excluding colleges, universities and firms selling to private individuals or delivering publicly funded training programmes, and companies such as Logica or Accenture who offer training as part of an integrated IT service. Where a company's actual training revenue is on public record, that figure has been used. For those with no published turnover, an estimate has been made based on available data, shown by an 'e' next to the revenue figure. Some revenues given in last year's table have been restated, and growth relates to the updated figure.

This information has been carefully researched, but we cannot guarantee its accuracy or completeness, and we will not accept liability for any direct, indirect or consequential loss arising from its use. For further information, please visit [www.pardofox.com](http://www.pardofox.com).

### Footnotes to Top 50

**QA** acquired **Remarc** in September 2009, and the revenue figure quoted is their notional combined revenue in the calendar year. **Parity Training** was acquired from Parity Group by **ECS Ltd** in February 2009. **Sun Microsystems** was acquired by **Oracle** in January 2010. Since the two had traded independently throughout 2009, they are listed separately. **Arrow ECS** was previously known as **DNS Arrow**. **PPI Learning Services** went into administration in July 2009. **New Horizons'** UK franchisees went into administration in April 2009. **New Horizons Corporate** terminated the franchises, and launched its own directly run UK business in June. **Aikona Management** was created by the merger of **The Projects Group** (TPG Academy) and **PMProfessional Learning**.



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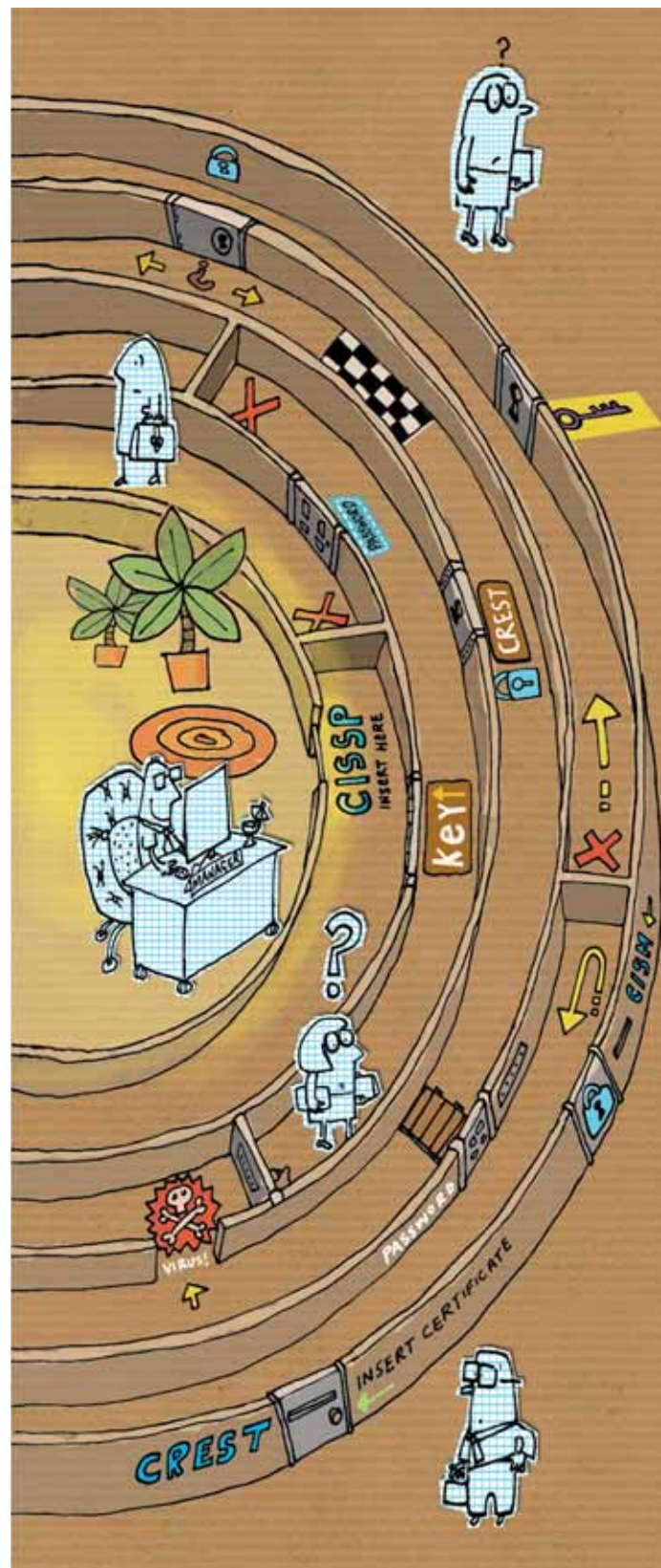
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If you needed any more incentive to get into security as an IT professional, then how about this: a CISO, or chief information security officer, the IT leader in a company whose sole job is managing the way

There is a lot of debate in the field as to what the best specific qualification might be at the top end, but in general a combination of a good introductory Masters course, a clutch of industry and vendor-specific certifications from the major suppliers, culminating in at least one, possibly more, of the various experience-based qualifications seems to be the best



route (see box), whether you want to move into the managerial or technical side of IT security.

But what you might get in terms of letters after your name and deep knowledge about best practice in information security procedures is going to be only half the battle in getting that huge salaried, high-status C-level job, it seems.

'In some ways the best qualification for such a business management role would be an MBA,' says Neil O'Connor, Principal Consultant at independent IT security consultancy Activity IM. 'Being a CISO is more about people, budgets, business strategy and proactive leadership of the technology function. You have to be a good translator and communicator. In fact, the ability to write a decent report is paramount to a consultancy like ours, as our output is so often a document a business person has to be able to read.'

Others, such as IT security expert Paul Maloney, Managing Director of Technology Management and Consultancy, agree that the ability to translate between the two worlds of business and technology are key to reach CISO status, but Paul also finds that it's 'hard to see if the technical experience with MBA or technical experience with CISSP [Certified Information Systems Security Professional] is the best combination.'

Paul himself started in general IT, and then took the opportunity of a 2005 redundancy to self-study to advance his career in security, choosing the CISSP qualification as well as Prince2 and business continuity skills. 'The process of getting the qualification was quite tough, but it was great to be forced to learn things you didn't know you needed to know, like my coursework on encryption algorithms; I'll never have to calculate one myself probably, but now I do know how to talk to someone who does and I could follow it. CISSP also makes



**Being a CISO is more about people, budgets, business strategy and proactive leadership**

Neil O'Connor,  
Activity IM

## What is the 'ideal' path into security?

So you've just graduated or are trying to get into IT. You may then be fortunate enough to be given a chance to learn the ropes by someone like a major financial institution, but more likely you'll have to carry on training.

A good first stop on your career in IT security would be getting the Security+, a very popular entry-level qualification from CompTIA, which is recognised by Microsoft, among others.

Then you will want to gain a Masters degree, either part-time or sponsored by a company – the one at Royal Holloway is the granddaddy of them all, being the first ever such course in the world (1992) and still has a very high reputation, but many UK universities now offer equivalent courses, such as the new specialist Masters degree starting this autumn at City University, London, in Resilience, Assurance, and Risk Management for Computer-Based Systems.

As a next step you probably need to get some vendor qualifications, but be cautious they don't limit you to being

knowledgeable about just one product set.

Then you will probably face a T-junction: either you become a technical security guy or a managerial one. On the much more technical 'hacker' side of IT security, penetration testing, the most relevant qualifications are the CREST (Council of Registered Ethical Security Testers) and UK Government CHECK system, administered by the GCHQ. If management is more you, you would want to get something like the CISSP or even an MBA.

There is also a thought that it'll be information security practitioners who will end up licensed to practice in the same way doctors or accountants are. Indicative for this are developments like the IISP gaining more acceptance and US Senate Bill 773, the proposed Cybersecurity Act, which among its proposals has a wide-ranging call for a professional IT security licence for anyone working with 'federally relevant' computer systems – which, some people argue, could mean all of IT.

you do CPD, so I have been to attend conferences I wouldn't have gone to otherwise. It makes you look outside your own speciality and get the wider view.'

## What certification?

However, anyone looking to get certifications in security soon realises there are many bodies vying for your and your employer's attention.

One widely recognised security qualification is the CISM, Certified Information Systems Manager, available from ISACA, a global non-profit association of IT governance, security and assurance professionals (ISACA is also well known for its older IT auditor

qualification, the CISA, Certified Information Systems Auditor plus an IT governance qualification, CGEIT) CISM came on the market in 2002 and is now held by 12,500-plus security professionals worldwide.

Then there is (ISC)<sup>2</sup>, established in 1989, with some 68,000 certified members from more than 138 countries to whom it delivers lifelong career support with programmes of certification, advanced education and member services. More than 3,500 of these are in the UK.

Its main certification is the CISSP (Certified Information Systems Security Professional), though it also offers other security certifications,



for example the SSCP, the Systems Security Certified Practitioner. To get to CISSP status, applicants must be endorsed by an existing (ISC)<sup>2</sup> member and have accumulated prerequisite years of experience in one or more of the security disciplines or domains covered by an (ISC)<sup>2</sup> credential. Once these requirements have been confirmed, applicants must pass the exam for the desired credential and adhere to the (ISC)<sup>2</sup> Code of Ethics.

The IISP, the Institute for Information Security Professionals, was set up five years ago by a combination of industry, academics and the UK government in an attempt to build the first 'competence-based' skills framework for information security. You become an M.Inst.ISP (or Member of the Institute of Information Security Professionals): no exams are sat and there are only 240 of them in the world so far, 95 per cent in the UK, but this body claims government backing for its definition of which 35 core skills are relevant for security.

## Overload?

Despite (or because of) its current popularity, security is in danger of overheating as a profession, worry some commentators. 'I see security following the same general pattern as IT did itself 30 years ago – starting very buoyant then everyone came in,' warns Vernon Poole, Head of Business Consultancy at IT assurance, security and forensic service provider Sapphire. 'At the moment there's a premium in being in security but will there be another glut?'

'Yes this is a "hot area" – just look at the HMRC issue,' agrees Fred Piper, Director of External Relations for the Information Security Group of Royal Holloway College. 'Now I read about encryption in *The Sun* newspaper. Is it a good area for employment? There is definite interest from employers but also increasing competition for those



**You can spot the security guy in the coffee shop as he's the one who takes his laptop to the toilet and then wraps the strap around his table leg**

Paul Maloney,  
Technology  
Management and  
Consultancy Ltd

well-paid jobs, too. When we started we were the only university in the world offering such a course, now there are 20 to 30 in the UK alone. The market isn't saturated yet, but you need to differentiate yourself.'

To do that you need to choose your career and training path carefully, suggests Mark Gerhard, CEO and CTO of Jagex Games Studio, a UK games company best known as the company behind RuneScape, a global multiplayer online computer game. 'When the MCSE started, people could go out and get £35k jobs at once with it, then soon there were 100,000 holders and it got devalued. So a qualification in itself is not enough – you have to stay as up to date with the market and the technology as you can to continue to be relevant.'

## Right personality

There is also, frankly, the issue of personality. It takes a certain sort of person to be good at this stuff. 'Security people can end up being a bit like policemen – a bit suspicious of everyone. We tend to be the ones sitting with their backs to the wall in the restaurant so we can watch who's coming in,' jokes John Colley, who looks after European strategic development issues for (ISC)<sup>2</sup> and, as a former CISO himself (Head of Risk Services at Barclays and Group Head of Information Security at the Royal Bank of Scotland Group, among other such roles), should know what he's talking about.

Paul Maloney agrees. 'You can spot the security guy in the coffee shop as he's the one who takes his laptop to the toilet and then wraps the strap around his table leg. We're also terrible people to go to the airport with, as we know why and what the screening people are doing – and also when they are doing it wrong.'

Neil O'Connor describes the perfect security consultant as follows: 'They are professional, articulate, knowledgeable and interested. They also have to want to

contribute and make new directions, not just follow a routine. If you go home at night and study networks and live and breathe it, go into penetration testing. If you are more into the core principles, go into the more people and policy-oriented side. But whichever route you take, there is a great future.'

## Useful weblinks

(ISC)<sup>2</sup> guide to security as a career:

[www.isc2.org/careerguide](http://www.isc2.org/careerguide)

As an example of vendor qualifications in security, look at the business security portfolio of products from Microsoft:

[www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/certification/view-by-technology.aspx#section](http://www.microsoft.com/learning/en/us/certification/view-by-technology.aspx#section)

The (ISC)<sup>2</sup> Code of Ethics:

[www.isc2.org/credentials](http://www.isc2.org/credentials)

A representative IT security firm's desired applicant profile:

[www.activityim.com/recruitment](http://www.activityim.com/recruitment)

ISACA's draft Business Model for Information Security, outlining what it sees as the core requirements for best IT security practice:

[www.isaca.org/bmis](http://www.isaca.org/bmis)

Details of the new City MSc plus some of its other security courses:

[www.soi.city.ac.uk/pgcourses/risk-management](http://www.soi.city.ac.uk/pgcourses/risk-management)

To find out more about how to protect yourself online log on to:

[www.cumbria.police.uk/advice-and-information/crime-prevention/on-the-web](http://www.cumbria.police.uk/advice-and-information/crime-prevention/on-the-web)

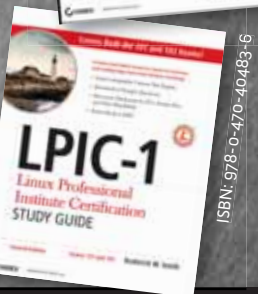
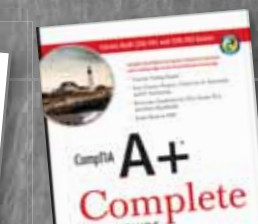
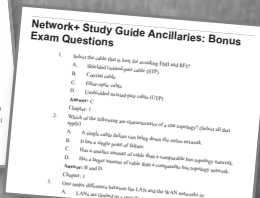
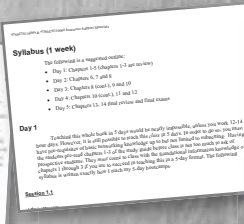
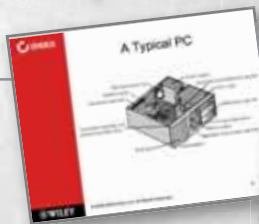
or use a password manager such as Password Safe by Bruce Schneier:

<http://passwordsafe.sourceforge.net>



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# Building capability

The role of IT training is changing fundamentally. It's incumbent on all of us to take these changes on board; after all, there's no place for luddites in the 21st century, argues Alan Bellinger.

Defining the role of IT training used to be simple – it meant training staff on Office and other new system roll-outs, and our raison d'être used to be that we would ensure faster adoption of new technology, be that hardware, software, generic or bespoke applications, or any combination thereof.

In business terms, we could always demonstrate a value-add. After all,

we should always be able to demonstrate that we could reduce the lead time to competence. Sure, there were challenges – the new software was late and changed at the last minute, the role that training could play was misunderstood and there were always those last minute cancellations of attendees. But life was relatively simple.

Now it's complex; and the core

**IT training  
no longer  
simply  
refers to the  
content on  
which we  
train**

Alan Bellinger

issue is that IT training no longer simply refers to the content on which we train. It also refers to the use of technology to transfer skills. I have used the phrase before and it's more relevant now than ever. The next big hit of the internet is on learning & development (L&D) and, so let's make sure we do get it.

## **L&D – not ITT**

I would argue that we're now L&D professionals rather than IT training professionals. IT training implies a close relationship between our job role and the subject matter. But our



role is now much more about building performance rather than technology adoption.

Now let me clarify; I'm certainly not arguing that the old IT training role has been replaced. Our new role of using IT to train is in addition to our traditional role. And, for many of us, applying learning technologies to the subjects on which we traditionally train represents low-hanging fruit.

## Informal learning

Using IT to train is absolutely critical in the current climate. After all, it is essential that we are able to do more for less. But what are the various aspects that we need to take into account? One of the main drivers is that we are required to support the L&D goal to make a much greater contribution to informal learning; and it's impossible to do that without using technology.

I must admit I don't buy the argument that the title 'informal learning' doesn't get traction with management because it sounds so abstract – the argument often goes 'why should I pay for informal learning – where's the business value in that?' Firstly, it's pretty easy to show the business (or public) value, but I prefer the argument that, by L&D getting involved in informal learning, it's actually formalising the process, fast-tracking the outcomes and capturing the benefits.

## Content management

There's another area that has a similar profile in terms of contribution and success: it's content management. In many guises, this has been around for at least 40 years; it was originally referred to as knowledge management, and it's one of the changes that comes with the wider role of IT training.

If we're seen as people who develop Office skills, then there's no way that we'd be perceived as being able to make a contribution on content management. But when you

add to our role responsibility for using technology to transfer skills, then this is right in the middle of our bailiwick – and the techniques are so similar. Needs analysis, skills assessment, spreading best practice, collaboration – they are all equally relevant to content management, and it's an essential element of informal learning.

To succeed, content management needs strong communities of practice and, regardless of content matter, community management is a skill in its own right. Facilitating strong communities is a critical L&D role. It involves governance, participation and facilitation – all approaches that we understand and on which we can add value.

## Cross-functional working

This highlights another key aspect of this expansion to our role. One of the big issues that organisations are facing in both the public and private sectors in this post-recessionary period is the fact that organisations need to work smarter; and that involves cross-functional working.

It'll take time to break down the politics and turf protection that is inevitable until people understand the benefits of cross-functional working. By getting involved in informal learning, content management and communities of practice, we're facilitating cross-functional working and can demonstrate to the dinosaurs the benefits of this brave new world.

## Collaboration

There's another critical area to add, and that's collaboration. In fact, it's an even sweeter sweet-spot than content management. Collaboration is an area where technology is mature and its application generally immature. Most organisations can show instances in which collaboration has worked effectively for them, but moving it from a technology that is used occasionally to extensively is a real challenge, and it's a 'people challenge'.

The issues that are holding back the wider acceptance of collaboration are a combination of attitudes, responsibility, authority and management support. These are issues that L&D or HR, rather than IT, need to address. There is enormous potential here for us to make a real contribution, but how can we assess that contribution and determine what actions we should take? In the January e-newsletter I wrote about the collaboration maturity model; this is a great way to address those questions.

## The magic trio

The magic trio is the combination of business intelligence (BI), performance management (PM) and talent management (TM).

In my experience over the last few months, most organisations have fairly mature implementations of BI and TM, but PM is lagging behind. Few organisations have made that magic link of using PM to integrate the other two and it's L&D's responsibility to make that outcome a reality.

The magic trio is so powerful because they are so synergistic; BI creates the metrics; PM personalises the metrics to individuals, teams and departments; and TM uses performance as the basis on which to develop the individuals with the greatest talent. By being able to select key individuals on objective, rather than selective, measures, an organisation can cast the net wider and make better decisions. There is also the advantage that individuals within the programme can better understand the performance metrics required in their next role and can develop the competences that would enable them to perform at that level.

I have always been impressed by Charles Jennings' (formerly CLO at Reuters) description of his CLO role; he argued 'I don't train our staff; I build capability'. I suggest that it is that vision that should drive us in our new L&D role – what a great time to be in this industry!



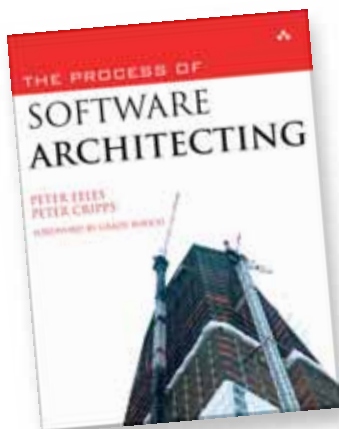
**I'm  
certainly  
not arguing  
that the old  
IT training  
role has  
been  
replaced**

Alan Bellinger



# Book reviews

Our IT experts review a selection of recently published books covering an array of subject areas. For more reviews, see: [www.bcs.org/bookreviews](http://www.bcs.org/bookreviews)



## The Process of Software Architecting

Peter Eeles, Peter Cripps, 432pp

Addison Wesley, £36.99

ISBN 978-0-321-35748-9

Rating ★★★★★

This book aims to provide guidance on carrying out the role of the software architect and comes with a case study describing the decisions an architect might need to make during one particular project.

It starts by defining exactly what architecture, architects and architecting are, and their benefits. I found this section very informative and certainly uncontroversial, although there may be a few headings like 'The Architect Has Programming Skills', which some architects may disagree with.

After describing the terms and concepts used in the book, the authors move on to documenting the software architecture using views, diagrams and models. In this chapter the authors present several different 'Description Frameworks'; the sheer number of documents described here is

quite daunting. Although it's stated that some documents could be omitted on smaller projects, there will be those who insist on the production of all of them 'just in case'.

The chapter on reusable architecture assets emphasises that no complex system is built in a totally original way and that experienced architects always re-use assets that have been proved to work in other systems.

The case study makes up four chapters and introduces a welcome element of practicality, showing how the processes described in the book can be applied in real life. It also looks at some of the problems and decisions that may be encountered during a project.

The final chapter describes how the architect may become involved in other areas of the software development process that were not covered in the case study. This includes involvement with the project team, configuration management and test.

In all, this is a very good book with plenty of examples and warnings for the practicing architect or anyone else involved with architecture. The vast experience of the authors is evident throughout, with numerous UML diagrams and box-outs to clarify important concepts and processes. The price of the book is easily justified by the number of mistakes it will help architects avoid during their first project.

Reviewed by Jason Ross  
MBCS CITP



## IT Service Management: A Guide for ITILv3 Foundation Exam Candidates

Ernest Brewster, Richard Griffiths,

Aidan Lawes, John Sansbury, 200pp

BISL, £24.95

ISBN 978-1-90612419-9

Rating ★★★★★

This book is a companion to another BCS title *IT Service Management Foundation Practice Questions* and these two books together claim that they cover everything a prospective candidate needs to know about the ITILv3 foundation examination.

This is indeed a bold assertion, but given the provenance of the authors it is actually appropriate. The book being reviewed here is effectively a summary of all the ITILv3 publications, and so very similar to the OGC imprint *The Official Introduction to the ITIL Service Lifecycle*, with which it will compete.

However, there are two advantages to the BISL publication – it is £5 cheaper than the OGC one and, more importantly, is written from a

practitioner rather than a consultancy perspective. This distinction is relevant as ITIL cannot be implemented exactly as described in all situations and the authors here draw out areas where these differences are apparent.

The book is up to date, with an early reference to the IT Governance standard ISO 38500, and the content is ordered by a logical progression through the life cycle stages. The bulk of the content is appropriately taken up by processes and functions and the authors clearly articulate the differences between one and the other.

The section on measurement and metrics gives some examples of what can (or should) be measured, but the range of metrics is sparse compared to what today's IT departments report to their users and it is also the shortest chapter in the book.

The companion book covers the examination taxonomy in detail, which is why the ITILv3 exam itself takes up just two pages in an appendix in this book. Both books need to be read together, especially as the test questions at the end of each chapter refer to the other publication.

Together with the book of practice questions, it rates 10/10, but passes the test even when read on its own, although for both together you will be looking to pay nearly £50 retail – or £40 with the BCS discount.

Reviewed by Peter Wheatcroft  
CEng FBCS CITP



### Software & Systems Requirements Engineering in Practice

Brian Berenbach, Daniel Paulish, Juergen Kazmeier, Arnold Rudorfer, 356pp

McGraw-Hill, £44.99

ISBN 978-0-071-60547-2

**Rating** ★★★★★

Inadequate attention to requirements specification and a general misunderstanding of the importance of requirements management is often quoted as a prime cause of failure on IT projects.

The book is aimed at requirement engineers or anyone working with requirements who want to improve their approach and the quality of the requirements they produce. It includes chapters on themes relating to requirements engineering including eliciting, modeling, managing and testing. Additional chapters cover more esoteric subjects such as distributed requirements engineering and threat modeling.

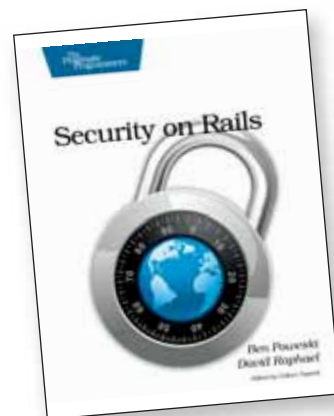
The book takes a holistic approach to the subject and considers requirements at all levels. It clearly articulates the need to ensure that a system is never considered outside of the business context in which it will operate, and the realisation of business goals to which it will ultimately contribute.

Much of the content of the book comes from practitioners who have gained real-life experience of what works and includes anecdotes and tips that really bring the subject to life. Many of the examples relate to the production of tangible products, but it is easy to relate the concepts to the context of requirements for soft systems.

Despite the fact that the book claims to be for relatively experienced practitioners and assumes a degree of knowledge from the reader on the subject, it would be suitable as a reference for anyone working in the field.

The book is a rare mixture of the academic and pragmatic and also includes light-hearted and humorous cartoons, which add to its readability. This book would be a very worthy addition to any system/business analyst's bookshelf.

Reviewed by Dean Bunnell  
MBCS CIP



### Security on Rails

Ben Poweski, David Raphael, 304pp

The Pragmatic Bookshelf, £26.99

ISBN: 978-1-93435-648-7

**Rating** ★★★★★

The intended audience for this book is the professional web developer, with the book providing large amounts of

example code illustrating both the correct and incorrect way to do things. The reader is assumed to have a good knowledge of web application development with Ruby, but no knowledge of application security or penetration testing is assumed.

The book begins with a very good introduction to and explanation of web application security issues, a large part of which can be applied equally well to other languages and environments once the developer understands the underlying issues.

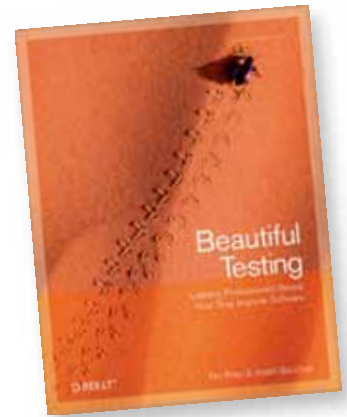
This is followed by an explanation of how to test for security issues and which issues to test for. Coverage in this section is a bit light, as might be expected, but gets the main points across. No great criticism can be directed at this as proper, comprehensive security testing would require a full book on its own.

Different security issues are dealt with in turn by using an example application containing security issues that the reader fixes while working through the book. This method works very well, helping the reader to understand how the issues arise, why they are a risk and how to fix them.

Input validation is dealt with to illustrate how to protect against XSS, SQL injection and CSRF, followed by chapters dealing with authentication, authorisation and cryptography.

Full explanations are given showing how to locate the errors as well as fix them and by the end of the book the reader should have a much greater understanding of how to implement web application security and how to build more robust applications.

Reviewed by Nick Dunn



### Beautiful Testing

Tim Riley, Adam Goucher, 352pp

O'Reilly, £38.50

ISBN: 978-0-596-15981-8

**Rating** ★★★★★

*Beautiful Testing* is a collection of 23 essays by several contributors who reflect on the various aspects of testing.

There are some excellent pieces, covering topics such as the various stakeholders involved in testing projects, open source tester communities, fuzz testing and bug management – for me, the most interesting part of the book.

Some contributions would be of interest to only a narrow set of readers. The book could also have benefited from a helpful testing-related glossary at the end.

I would recommend this book to all those involved in software development and testing, but it will also benefit project managers, software users and others with any interest in testing.

Reviewed by Siraj A. Shaikh  
MBCS CIP

For further information on these books please contact the sales team at C.B.Learning.

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# NEWS



## IITT National Conference 7-8 September 2010

Now in its seventh year, the Institute of IT Training's National Conference & Exhibition is a must for all corporate and commercial trainers, training managers, L&D managers and HR managers who are seeking to expand and develop their skills, listen to expert thought leaders and keep up to date with the latest developments in the field of learning & development.

Expanded in response to feedback from last year's delegates, the event now starts at 1.00pm on the 7 September with a free seminar programme and exhibition (Free Seminar & Exhibition Day) and concludes at 4.30pm on the 8 September (Conference & Exhibition Day).

### **Tuesday 7 September Free Seminar & Exhibition Day (1.00pm-5.00pm)**

The event commences with a new feature this year – a FREE of charge seminar for IITT members, together with the opportunity to visit the growing exhibition area, which features over 20 of the leading training suppliers, as well as the IITT area where you can discuss any aspect of the IITT's services with senior IITT personnel. Note that you do not have to be registered on the conference to attend this half day. Just bring your IITT membership card to get in to the seminar. Non-members may attend the exhibition free of charge.

### **Tuesday 7 September Networking dinner with special guest speaker (7.30pm-late!)**

On the evening of 7 September, those booked on the conference are invited to the highly popular Welcome Reception & Networking Dinner, providing you with the chance to network and exchange ideas and experiences with your colleagues in other companies and make friends with fellow Institute members in a relaxed and informal environment.

### **Wednesday 8 September Conference & Exhibition Day (9.30am-4.30pm)**

The Conference & Exhibition Day features eight sessions grouped into two streams. Additionally, there are popular workshop sessions running throughout the day.

### **Delegate fees**

With an IITT members' delegate fee of £395, the IITT National Conference & Exhibition represents exceptional value for money as a learning event alone. In addition, delegates have the chance to network, to meet industry thought leaders informally and to visit the accompanying exhibition, providing access to the latest training products and services.

Included in the delegate fee are: morning and afternoon refreshments, full lunch and conference materials, including all presentations on a complimentary memory stick. Additionally, you may attend the Welcome Reception & Networking Dinner as well as all of the events on the Seminar & Exhibition Day.

### **For further details**

Contact Marie Pateman  
[mpateman@iitt.org.uk](mailto:mpateman@iitt.org.uk) at the IITT on  
0845 006 8858 or go to:  
[www.trainersconference.co.uk](http://www.trainersconference.co.uk)



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### IITT webcasts 2010

Full details of these webcasts can be found on:

[www.thetrainingprofessional.com](http://www.thetrainingprofessional.com)

#### 12 May Outlook 2007 Business Contact Manager.

Stuart Box of Burningsuit shows how business contact manager combines ease of use with sophisticated functionality and how it can help you manage your contact, prospecting and customer information.

#### 20 May Social learning on a shoe string.

This webinar, presented by Hanif Sazen and Angus Main of Saffron, will teach you how to embrace social learning in your organisation without breaking the bank.

#### 3 June Office 2010: Equipping employees for the next decade.

Office 2010 equips employees to work faster and more intuitively to deliver a

unified experience across the PC, phone, browser and even your social networks. Presented by Roger Mephram of 2e2.

#### 17 June Demystifying Microsoft Project: It's not just for project managers.

Stuart Box of Burningsuit will dispel the mystery that surrounds Microsoft Project.

#### 8 July Outlook 2007: Work smarter and faster with the new work management.

Stuart Box of Burningsuit shows how easy it is with Outlook 2007 to get less frustrated and more organised in your work.

#### 15 July Using Office Online – breaking free from your flash drive!

Sheena Whyatt of Lightning Training takes you through using Office Online. Stop carrying a flash drive. Access your documents from almost any computer.

#### 11 August Get Tweeting – How to set up and use a Twitter account.

Are you using social media yet? If you are not sure where to start, this webcast, presented by Sheena Whyatt of Lightning Training, will demonstrate how to sign up, log in, get following and get tweeting.

#### 15 September Creative charting with Excel 2007.

There are a wealth of options available to you when working with the improved charting facilities available in Excel 2007.

#### 20 October Join In and Link Up – How to set up a LinkedIn profile and start connecting.

LinkedIn is a powerful professional networking site that allows you to establish an online presence and use it as part of your social media strategy. Sheena Whyatt will show you how to get started.

## TPMA becomes stepping stone

Recognition of the IITT's TPMA certificate (ICTP) increased significantly when Microsoft decided to accept it towards its Certified Trainer (MCT) status.

Trainers who are either gaining or renewing their Microsoft Certified Trainer (MCT) status can now use the joint IITT/BCS ICTP Certificate, which is gained through a live assessment of a trainer's delivery skills from the IITT's TPMA service, to satisfy the trainer skills part of the global qualification.

To achieve MCT, a trainer must pass one Microsoft qualification (MOS, MCAS, or any of many technical exams) and

'demonstrate instructional presentation skills'. TPMA is now recognised by Microsoft as fulfilling this criterion.

### Scottish Courts and Ricoh UK adopt TPMA

One company who has recently adopted TPMA for their in-house trainers is Scottish Court Services.

'This is a new L&D qualification and I think it is good to keep current. It was also time we had an L&D standard that was written for the industry by the industry', said Ann Grubb, Training & Development Manager at Scottish Court Services.

'Another benefit is that you receive an

individual report containing your strengths and areas for development. Also, your scores are benchmarked against those of other organisations. As a training manager, I can use the scores and comments from my team's report in their development.'

Global company Ricoh is another company who have adopted TPMA. Craig Wilcockson, Ricoh UK's Head of Learning & Organisational Development, is delighted with the service. 'TPMA will allow our business to ensure that our IT, technical, soft skills, sales and leadership training is assessed and performed to the highest of standards.'



**Clive Shepherd**

# Training providers at the crossroad

Over the past 18 months, as in learning and development we have battled with almost unparalleled levels of uncertainty and pressure on resources, I have found myself engaged more and more often in discussion with training companies looking to reinvent their offerings.

Of course this is not the first time that training providers have had to struggle with tight market conditions. But this may well be the first time that customers are beginning to question the basis of the service offering. So what's changed?

First of all, customers can no longer afford for their employees to be off-job for protracted periods. That's because they don't have the spare capacity they once had to cover the time lost, and they need all hands on deck. They are also short on budget and, as we all know, external training is one of the easiest expenses to cut. We have to accept that fact and realise that training is typically a medium to long term investment, and many organisations have not been sure they are going to have a medium to long term.

Customers are also more aware of the environmental impact of excessive employee travel. A good proportion of those cars on the motorway or planes in the air are carrying people to training events, and not always in situations where face to face contact is essential to success. The environment may not be the biggest issue on anyone's agenda right now, but it will return as economic conditions improve.

Finally, there is an increasing awareness that stand-alone classroom interventions have a limited impact on job performance. However enjoyable they may be at the time, and however high the

knowledge assessment scores might be at the end, these are no guarantee that what is learned will be retained, applied and then put to good use.

So what is the impact of all these changes? Well, one obvious result is that customers will be ordering fewer external courses. And, as any training provider knows, the real profits are made when classrooms are close to full, when all fixed costs have been covered and every additional participant makes a direct contribution to the bottom line. Half empty classes are the road to ruin.

The second effect is that the customers want their courses to be shorter, often much more so. This means less of a return for each sale made as shorter courses will obviously be cheaper than longer ones. It might also impact on outcomes, because only so much can be effectively taught in a given time and trainers are not miracle workers.

To cap it all, customers are also asking for more flexible, lower-cost alternatives that take advantage of new learning technologies. This is not unreasonable given the proliferation of new learning media and the opening up of bandwidth, particularly when the topic is IT-related.

Unfortunately, from my discussions it appears that some training providers are floundering in responding to these pressures. Sometimes that's because they have limited awareness of what new learning technologies have to offer, and typically much less than their customers do. And given that there is no shortage of information available, in some cases this could be put down to 'burying your head in the sand and hoping it will all go away'.

For many providers, their only experience is in providing classroom



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courses, typically from a catalogue of off-the-shelf options. Often they subcontract much of the delivery of the courses, typically to trainers who are used to being block-booked by the day and having no responsibility to their trainees once the classroom event is completed. It's not easy to shift to a blended model where parts of the programme are delivered in short chunks online in a virtual classroom or where trainers have to support learners as they apply their new skills back on the job.

If a training provider moves to a blended delivery model, then they are in a very different business. Within the team they need a much better understanding of the design of learning interventions as well as the ability to develop materials that are a lot more engaging than the usual handouts and PowerPoints. On top of this they need the development tools and delivery platforms, and the people who are willing and able to use them.

This is not an insignificant change. It will take time and it will be painful. The alternative, I fear, is a slow and inevitable decline and that will be much more damaging in the long term.

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