



Creative corporate elearning ■ History of the journal ■ Elearning & LMS in schools
Marshall Breeding & library technology ■ Videogame archives ■ YouTube in Further Education

welcome



This issue we include two features on the MMIT National Conference. This highly stimulating event provided great opportunities

for networking and learning and the presentations are also available on our blog: <http://mmitblog.wordpress.com/>

Warm regards,

Catherine Dhanjal, Managing Editor

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Our special focus on blended and elearning sought to bring views and experiences from those across a variety of areas: schools, further education, corporate world and museum. If you would like to contribute to any future special feature sections or regular sections, please contact the editor.

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07



14



20



30



35

contents

News

Winner of the MmiT print bundle; Edinburgh City Libraries wins award; iFoolish etch a sketch; cover photo: Deptford Lounge	3
Report on MMIT National Conference	4
Marshall Breeding: the future of library systems	5
BFI News: Revolution: The Director's Cut	6
Film news: European Film Gateway 1914	7

Reviews

Book review: Library of Congress Essential Headings	8
Book review: Pebblegogy	10

Features: focus on blended & elearning

Integrating LMS and elearning in schools	12
Research into use of YouTube in further education	14
A wake up call for publishing and IT in the corporate sector	16
Roman holograms at Vindolanda	19

Features

History: The first ten years of the MmiT journal	20
The role of library assistants in the digital age	26
Technology provision in a New York public library	29
Videogame preservation	30
Report from Consortia Conference 2012	32
Report from EDGE conference 2012	33

Technology roundup

Online file storage: Google Drive vs Dropbox	34
Loaning Kindle eBooks	35

and finally...

Coming soon; cartoons	36
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Western learning & publishing industries need a 'Sputnik effect'



Fifty years ago, President Kennedy issued a wake-up call to Americans over the Space Race. Today, the publishing and IT industries in western economies need a similar, urgent call to improve western workforces' skills and renovate their old, outdated educational establishment, reports Bob Little

Fifty years ago, John F Kennedy — the then president of the United States of America — committed his country to the Space Race, saying, "We'll do it right and do it first, before this decade is over." President Kennedy gave that speech on 12 September 1962 and, some seven years later — just within the deadline he'd set — the USA won the Race by putting a man on the moon.

According to Fabrizio Cardinali, chair of the European Learning Industry Group (ELIG) and senior vice president of business development of one of the leading mobile and online learning content management solutions providers, eXact learning solutions, western publishing and learning industry leaders need similar vision and commitment if they are to help western learning and professional development organisations continue to compete and survive global competition.

combine creativity and innovation to be successful...

While this is true for the US, Japan and any developed economy now facing competition from emerging nations' innovation and R&D, it is even more urgent for a stagnating Eurozone, Cardinali believes.

Cardinali draws parallels between the world's historic industry challenges — such as the one faced by the US aerospace industry during the Cold War, with its sudden

awakening after the launch of the Soviet Union's Sputnik at the end of the 1950s — and the peculiar challenges and opportunities currently facing the West's publishing and learning technologies developers in their task to help their economies survive increasing competition, both for delivering appropriately trained students and skilled workers in global markets.

"We need to combine creativity and innovation in order to be successful," Cardinali said. "Interestingly, such a combination occurred in Europe during the Renaissance, and many are researching the forces that occurred in those days to make that happen.

"The aim is to create the circumstances that will bring about a 'renaissance 2.0' perfect knowledge storm. Fortunately, with many 2.0 instances patented by many markets, Europe still has the copyright on the Renaissance, at least intellectually."

According to Harvard University's Professor Frans Johansson, the unique factor of the Renaissance was what he terms the 'Medici Effect'. In other words, wise investment bankers brought together a set of skills from different disciplines to create multi-disciplinary creativity. This is something you can't reach with mono-sectorial innovation — that is, with publishers, educationalists and technologists trying to pursue this by themselves, each in their own ivory tower — said Cardinali.

For Michael Gelb, a leading pioneer in creative thinking whose works have been featured in the *New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *Training Magazine*, many of the people who lived in Florence during the Renaissance displayed seven habits of creative genius.

Starting with its best known icon, Leonardo da Vinci, the wealth of creative genius that shone during the Renaissance seems to share these seven habits: an insatiable quest for knowledge and continuous improvement, together with the ability to manage ambiguity and change; learning from experience; sharpening senses and body/mind fitness, up to 'whole brain thinking' and a systemic view of the world.

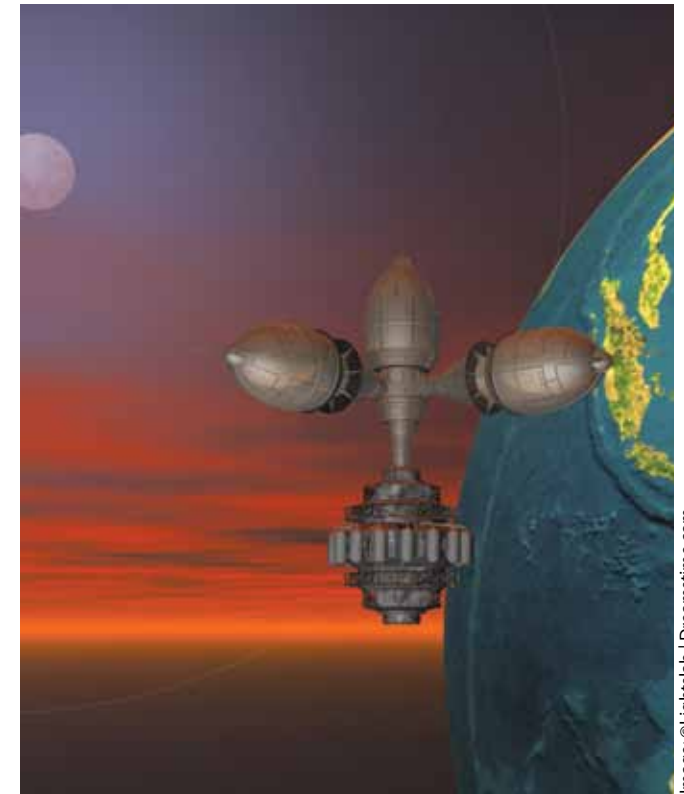


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For Cardinali, a 'Sputnik effect' is needed to restore such habits among western entrepreneurs and thought leaders in the publishing and learning industries. These entrepreneurs and thought leaders now need to collaborate to conceive new generation solutions and business models, not only to survive in their own businesses but to also help western economies survive global challenges, by inventing the



Image shows Fabrizio Cardinali



Photo: © Jf123 | Dreamstime.com

'next big thing' in educational technologies.

The USSR launching the Sputnik in 1957 — thereby becoming the first nation into space — gave a wake-up call to the American aerospace industry, which had been resting on its laurels in the wake of its world war glories. This call was heeded and the Americans reached the Moon first, in 1969. Cardinali believes that western publishing and learning industries today face a similar challenge since countries with emerging economies — starting from India and China — are carrying out research and development in 'learning-related things' faster.

"Moreover, we've got the issue of demographic drift," he

said. "This means that we, in the West, are relatively few and we're getting old as a population."

Factors contributing to the West's challenges include:

- 1bn workers from the emerging 'new economies' (including China and India) have joined the global labour market since 2000
- 70 percent of India's international trade is involved in providing outsourced services to Western economies
- Government spending on research and development in the new economies has risen by 3.5 percent annually since 2000
- In China, by 2020, science and technology innovation will

be contributing 60 percent of the country's economic growth

- By 2020, China's reliance on key foreign technology will decline to below 30 percent — compared with more than 50 percent now

These figures come from *China Daily*.

Other relevant statistics include:

- 8 percent of the population of Pakistan is under 30
- The number of workers at Chrysler who are in the 'over 45' age bracket has risen from 41 percent in 2002 to 68 percent in 2011
- A recent AARP survey has shown that, in the USA, half of working age Americans expect to work into their 70s whether because of financial necessity or lifestyle choice
- In Japan, the number of people between 15 and 64 is expected to decline by 740,000 a year for next decade
- In Finland, the employment rate for those aged between 60 and 64 has doubled since 1990 and 21 percent of corporate training programmes are now attended by employees who are over 50 years of age
- The rising median age will cut Europe's growth by at least 1 percent annually for the next three decades

emerging economies are carrying out research and development in 'learning-related' things faster

According to figures from Outsell, while education and training market revenues in the Americas have remained around the \$60bn a year mark from 2007 to 2010, these revenues in the Asia Pacific region have risen steadily in that period from around \$8bn to some \$25bn a year. Significantly, revenues for education and training spending in EMEA have fallen consistently from some \$28bn to only \$15bn.

"In 1962, President Kennedy said, 'We need to reduce our missile gap' and then set in motion the processes to bring this about," said Cardinali. "Today, the West needs to reduce its learning 'missile gap'. But we can leverage the long-lasting educational experience and creativity we have on our side. To do this, we need to understand the essence of creativity

▶ and genius and use this knowledge to detect excellence and encourage talent development and performance support in the peers, students and colleagues who show it. Moreover, innovative learning and publishing technology should be generated by multi-disciplinary teams, working together to create innovative learning experiences and solutions for our workforces. Something desperately needed is an increase in the depth of creativity in today's learning technologies."

The last time that creativity was high on Europe's agenda was during the Florentine Renaissance. As Professor Frans Johansson states in his book and teaches at Harvard University, the Medici family's investments encouraged people both to think laterally and to collaborate in multi-disciplinary teams. In other words, it created the conditions to encourage creativity, leading to new applications of existing technology and the discovery of new technological horizons which have remained at the foundation of many sectors and fields, including contemporary science.

"In the learning industry context, we need the West's competing companies to come together, to collaborate and cooperate," said Cardinali, who added: "We tend to be defeatist. We expect — and wait for — creativity and technological innovation to come from large, global companies. Yet, during the Renaissance, Venice had

a population of just 90,000 people; Rome had 35,000 inhabitants and Renaissance Florence only had 40,000 inhabitants. In those days, it would have taken three months to go from Florence to Amboise in France, as Leonardo did when he took the 'Mona Lisa' on a donkey ride to the French court."

Cardinali's point is that creativity and innovation are not the sole preserves of large or fast developing organisations. Rather, 'adaptive' and 'personalised' might be the key features of next generation technologies and of the most effective contents used to teach our children and train our employees.

"In addition, technology innovators tend to compete, one against the other," he said. "All of Renaissance Florence was pervaded by a unique mood — or an 'aere' (air) as written in old Italian contemporary poetry — of cooperation and competition. This meant that artists worked together, experimenting in cross-sectorial innovation far more than in vertical silos, which is how contemporary science separates subject matter domains and expertise. These are arbitrary demarcation lines which weren't there during the Renaissance but were subsequently shaped by modern science.

"As an industry today, we need to reengage in lateral thinking and competition, still competing but taking risks together," he said. "The key issue here is speed. In other words, we must do things rather than just talk about them. At the very least, we need to do what China or India is doing in terms of investment in skills development and new learning technologies. Moreover, we need to do it as fast as they are doing it but we need to find our own creative and innovative strategies and solutions to the issue of performance support and talent development."

When it comes to being successful at surviving the increasingly challenging issues surrounding global competition — and establishing something of a world

lead — Cardinali turns to Charles Darwin for inspiration.

"Darwin's precepts teach us that it's not the smartest, the 'best' or the wisest who'll survive the current economic challenges," said Cardinali. "Nor will it be the best trained trainee and the best taught student. Rather, those who survive will be those who're the most adaptive.



Image: © Jose Antonio Sánchez Reyes | Dreamstime.com

Cardinali turns to Charles Darwin for inspiration... it'll be the most adaptive companies that will survive

"Similarly, it's not the most expensive or even the best educational design content that will succeed and stand the test of time. Those who'll be the most successful in the marketplace are those who can adapt most quickly to new jobs and profiles.

"In a similar way, the best digital content that will survive will be the content that's designed to better adapt to new learning delivery technologies and devices." ■

Fabrizio Cardinali outlined these views in a presentation at the Corporate Plenary at Online Educa in Berlin, the world's largest educational technologies event. To see this presentation, visit www.online-educa.com/audio-video-1019

For further insights from Cardinali and the eXact learning team, visit www.exact-learning.com/blog

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Image: © Atigun | Dreamstime.com | 'Florence'

coming soon...

August: focus on Web 2.0 & 3.0

November: focus on mobile technology

Our Group chairman, Anthony Hugh Thompson provides a history of the MMIT Group and journal each issue from May to November this year. MMIT is 38 years old this year!

Plus our regular items:

Features

News

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Your articles, photographs, reviews, thoughts and suggestions for the journal are always welcome, just contact Catherine Dhanjal on catherine.dhanjal@theansweruk.com or call +44 (0)800 998 7990.



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