

ELIG sets learning priorities in Europe for 2009

Date: 11-07-2008 02:06 PM CET

Category: [Business, Economy, Finances, Banking & Insurance](#)

Press release from: [Giunti Labs](#)

Agency: **Bob Little Press & PR**

Exploring a compelling vision of learning in the 21st century; demonstrating how 'learning' can ensure economic survival in the light of the current global financial crisis, and promoting technology for 'upskilling' learning as well as building knowledge and skills within professional communities are the priorities for The European Learning Industry Group (ELIG) in 2009. These priorities were agreed at the organisation's annual general meeting (AGM), which was held in Sestri Levante, Italy, at the end of October and hosted by Giunti Labs, a leading learning and mobile content management solution provider, whose CEO, Fabrizio Cardinali, is chair of ELIG.

ELIG's Secretary General, Richard Straub, outlined ELIG's achievements in 2007/08 – exploring the market for e-learning in the Near East and North Africa; establishing a number of working groups, as well as public policy groups which had held regular meetings with European Union (EU) officials.

The 50 or delegates at the AGM, drawn from the group's membership of leaders in the field of learning within the EU, also heard Elmar Husmann, a senior policy advisor to ELIG, explain that ELIG needs to re-think its positioning with regards to the EU. Husmann stated: "E-learning has largely disappeared from the EU policy agenda.

"Consequently, we need to take a broader vision of next generation learning that is enabled by information and communications technology. This will include supporting informal learning and knowledge creation via social networks."

Earlier, delegates heard the views of thought leaders in learning from the USA and Europe, including Rob Abel, CEO of the IMS Global Learning Consortium; Pascal Debordes, e-learning Director of Cegos; Michael King, Vice President of Global Education Industry for IBM, and David Worlock, Chief Research Fellow at Outsell, Inc.

Worlock revealed that, according to Outsell statistics, the information industry grew by 6.6 per cent in 2007 to reach \$390bn globally.

Within this sector, the greatest degree of growth is in search aggregation and syndication – which is growing annually at 26 per cent. The next fastest growing sector is HR information (15.4 per cent)

"The current market is full of discontinuities," he observed. "What will change this is the growth of parental and individual purchasing power for learning materials; custom publishing, and the current recession putting pressure on organisations to determine the true return on investment of both learning and assessment."

Debordes outlined the findings of Cegos's research into the corporate learning markets in EU countries. He revealed: "We found that the biggest budgets for corporate training occur in France but much of this money is spent on administration rather than on training.

"The UK spends about a third of French budgets on training but provides its workers with broader access to training materials – and appears to be better at evaluating the return on investment (ROI) from these. Forty seven per cent of surveyed companies in the UK are assessing ROI compared with only 26 per cent in France.

"Nonetheless, learners across Europe have the same expectations of e-learning materials – notably that they are user-friendly; have high quality content, design, graphics and interactivity, and contain 'concrete' examples and exercises," he said.

King observed: "Open platform education is the engine of innovation in the 21st century – especially since, between 2010 and 2020, the USA, Europe, Japan, China and India are predicted to face a shortfall of some 32m well-educated, technically

specialised professionals. Consequently, education should enable open access for all; encourage open data and business processes; promote open communities of learning and open technologies to deliver the learning.”

Abel discussed three areas within learning where standards are being set: content; applications, and student administration. Among the key issues, he said, were how you measure the return on investment in learning technology and how educational institutions are developing technology strategy for supporting improvements in access, affordability and quality of educational experiences.

The ELIG AGM concluded with three breakout sessions, facilitated by Richard Straub, Elmar Husmann and Matty Smith, of Henley Business School and a Senior Advisor to ELIG.

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Giunti Labs is a leading Online and Mobile Learning Content Management Solutions provider with global headquarters in Italy and offices in London (UK), Frankfurt (Germany), Lund (Sweden), Boston (US), as well as Sydney and Perth (Australia).

Giunti Labs provides a wide range of solutions, in response to any content, learning and knowledge management need, covering:

- 24/7 multi language learning content production
- LCMS and Digital Repository Platforms
- Delivery solutions for mobile & wireless
- Consulting and professional services

Giunti Labs is part of Giunti Group, a leading educational and cultural heritage publisher with roots back to 1841. Over the years Giunti has built a catalogue of huge dimensions (over 7.000 titles) and acquired new brands in Italy and worldwide.

In 2008, Giunti Labs acquired the HarvestRoad Hive digital repository system, which manages any form of content used in online learning, corporate training and knowledge management initiatives. HarvestRoad Hive can interface with practically any ERP, Learning or Course Management System and is already integrated with several commonly used course management systems, authoring and content assembly tools.

Giunti Labs

Abbazia dell'Annunziata,

Via Portobello - Baia del Silenzio,

16039 Sestri Levante (GE), Italy

Contacts: Minna Leikas, Giunti Labs, +39 3474435167, m.leikas@giuntilabs.com

PR contact: Bob Little, Bob Little Press & PR, 23 Sherwood Avenue, St Albans, Herts, AL4 9QJ, UK +44 (0)1727 860405, bob.little@boblittlepr.com

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