

# e learning

THE MAGAZINE OF DISTRIBUTED LEARNING

VOLUME 1 • NUMBER 1

JANUARY-MARCH 2000

## CASE STUDIES

# DEVELOP A GLOBAL ONLINE ASSESSMENT TOOL

THE GEO LEARNING CENTER HELPS THE CLUB MANAGER'S  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA ANALYZE, TRACK AND ADDRESS  
THE TRAINING NEEDS OF ITS MEMBERS.

GeoLearning Inc. of West Des Moines, Iowa has a simple mission: provide organizations with access to high-quality training and educational content delivered via the latest online technologies. The "GEO" in the company name stands for Global Education Online.

"Just as our name indicates, we are positioning the company to be a leading provider of Internet- and intranet-based training solutions for organizations around the world," says Linda Russell, CEO of GeoLearning. To date, more than 30,000 students from 65 countries have taken or are registered to take Web-based courses using GeoLearning's new online system, the Geo Learning Center.

GeoLearning also develops customized online learning solutions for organizations. One such client is the Club Manager's Association of America (CMAA).

According to Gordon Welch, a vice president of CMAA, the organization wanted to develop an online assessment tool for its members. This was no small feat: CMAA has more than 5,800 members from 21 different countries, all of whom are private club managers. The decision to use online technology was made in the beginning of the project.

"When we were discussing this project, one of our first

thoughts was that it would not be a good tool on paper. I indicated to our team that I had talked with a representative from GeoLearning, and after careful research and a review of their capabilities, we decided to use them," Welch recounts.

The result was a customized program called the CMAA Image Assessment. The program takes the club manager through 10 different image areas. Each area has five to 10 mul-



iple choice questions that focus on topics ranging from business operations to board relations. Once all of the questions have been answered, the program automatically scores the results and indicates areas that may need further development. Each participant can then access a tailored, online report of recommended development courses that are available from CMAA.

One of the unique features of the system is the ability for CMAA administrators to analyze the overall results of the tests to determine future training needs. GeoLearning also has developed an editing system so that changes to questions and answers can be made online and go live in just a few minutes.



## CASE STUDIES

### AN ADVANCED ONLINE TRAINING SYSTEM

Founders of GeoLearning, Frank and Linda Russell, have been in the training and development industry for more than 20 years.

"Because of our experience in the industry, we understand how important content is, not regardless of the delivery method," says Frank Russell, GeoLearning's president. "But the Internet adds so many new possibilities. It's an exciting time to be involved in the industry."

The Geo Learning Center the Russells have developed is an enterprise training system. It is a customizable online university, containing a fully integrated open architecture system for the development, management, tracking and delivery of Web-based training. It has an online training administration system, authoring tool, test and survey engine, e-commerce package, online research library and a host of communication features.

GeoLearning clients may choose to develop their own proprietary courseware using the Geo Learning Center development tool, or they can select from more than 1,000 GeoLearning generic courses to include in their system.

GeoLearning's extensive online library includes titles on a wide variety of subjects including IT skills and PC applications, safety skills, ISO 9000, leadership and development, sales and customer relations, sexual harassment, basic supervisory skills and many others.

Training via the Geo Learning Center provides employees with the experience of a classroom coupled with the convenience of self-paced instruction. Various chat rooms and electronic calendars facilitate communication and information sharing.

But the most unusual element of the Geo Learning Center is the 3-D interface that simulates a bricks-and-mortar training facility. Students can enter a virtual training environment and walk through halls to classes and conference rooms. The three-dimensional design makes navigation easy and intuitive, and learners get up to speed faster and enjoy it more.

"The system was designed as a multistory building to host a variety of training and development services," explains Linda Russell. "It's complete with such familiar sights as elevators, corridors, training rooms, and even balconies. So users can move around and visit various levels, seminar halls and classrooms, use the resource center, or stroll into the student

lounge to chat with other students."

More than 1,000 asynchronous courses are offered in a wide variety of areas such as computer skills, soft skills and safety training. Live Web-casting events are also possible through the system and a variety of rooms can host large and small events — the technology provides for streaming video and audio, presentation slides and sharing screens online.

"The design and graphics of this site are just amazing," one user says. "It's easy to navigate and is user-friendly; the realism of the site is beyond anything I have ever seen."

Students who visit the center can conduct research at the best libraries in the world using the Online Resource Center. Articles, periodicals and books are all available to read or download. The Resource Center has a direct link to the largest bookstore in the world and a multimedia store with more than 1,000 training-specific computer-based training and CD-ROM programs.

The system is flexible, employing an "open architecture" design that can be customized with organization-specific



content and logos. In terms of delivery, the system can be installed on a company's intranet, or GeoLearning will host it on an extranet or their own Internet site.

"It is one of the most flexible delivery systems available," says Frank Russell, "giving clients a variety of options to choose from to meet their organization's specific business needs."

*To experience this online learning site, please visit the Geo Learning Center at [www.geolearningcenter.com](http://www.geolearningcenter.com).*