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The other side of e-learning: What can go wrong?

Zoran Löw

1st Policy Workshop on
Creating University E-Learning Vision and Strategy

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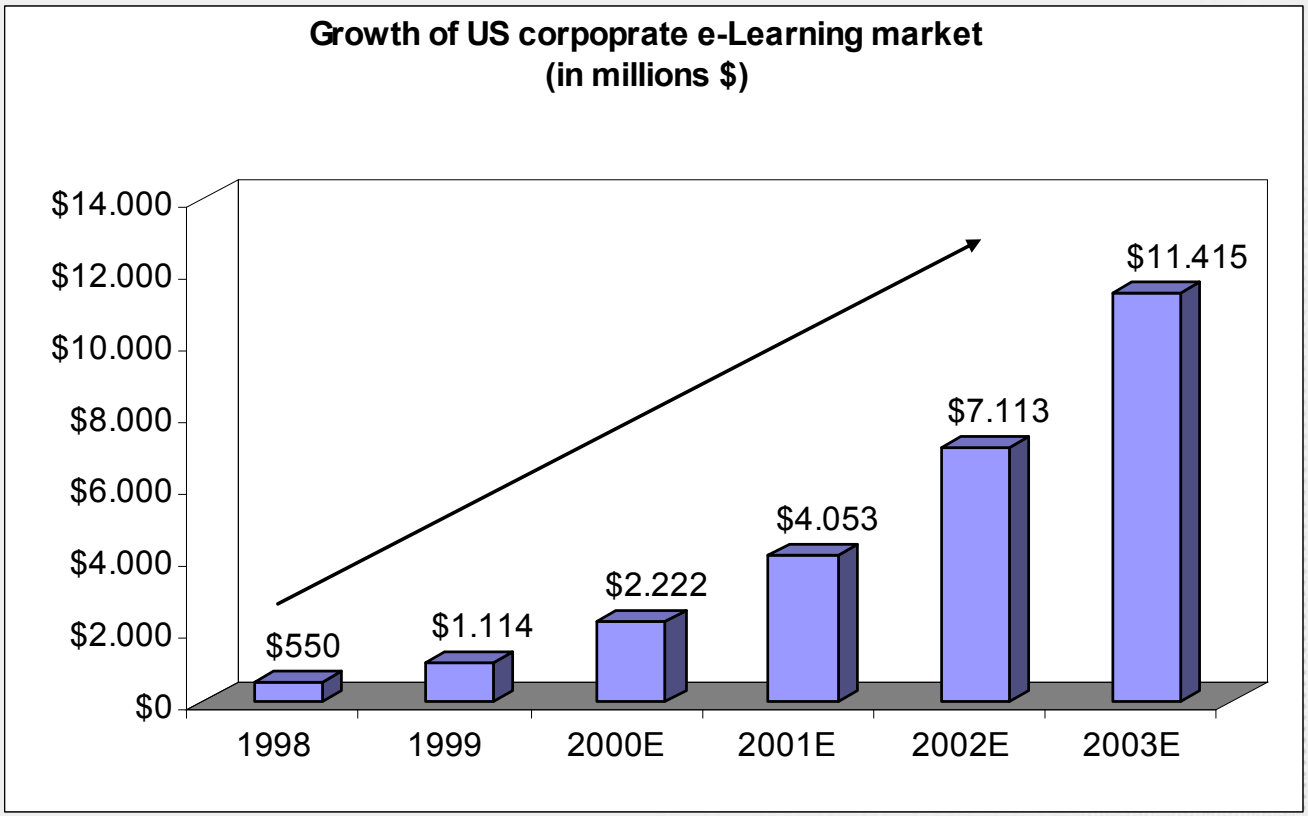
The Next “Big Killer" Aplication Myth

The next big killer application for the Internet is going to be education. **Education over the Internet** is going to be so big it is going to make e-mail look like a rounding error

John Chambers, CEO Cisco Systems

The Shiny Road ahead...



International Data Corp., 2000

Mighty drivers

- **Time Shifting**: “shifting time” for learning. Learn whenever you want
- **Rapid distribution**: rapid distribution of learning, skills and knowledge when a process of change occurs
- **Distance Distribution**: providing common information and learning experiences to every corner of their operation and the globe
- **Logistical Cost Suppression**: spending less on the travel and lodging elements of the learning budget, allocating a high percentage to direct learning activities
- **Performance Aiding**: continual performance support and monitoring

Great statistics...

- Cutting costs
  - 50% do 70% (Training Magazine)
- Time savings
  - 35% do 45% (Deloitte Consulting)
- Knowledge retention
  - Face to face training: after one month?
    - 20%
  - e-learning: up to 50% (Gartner Group)

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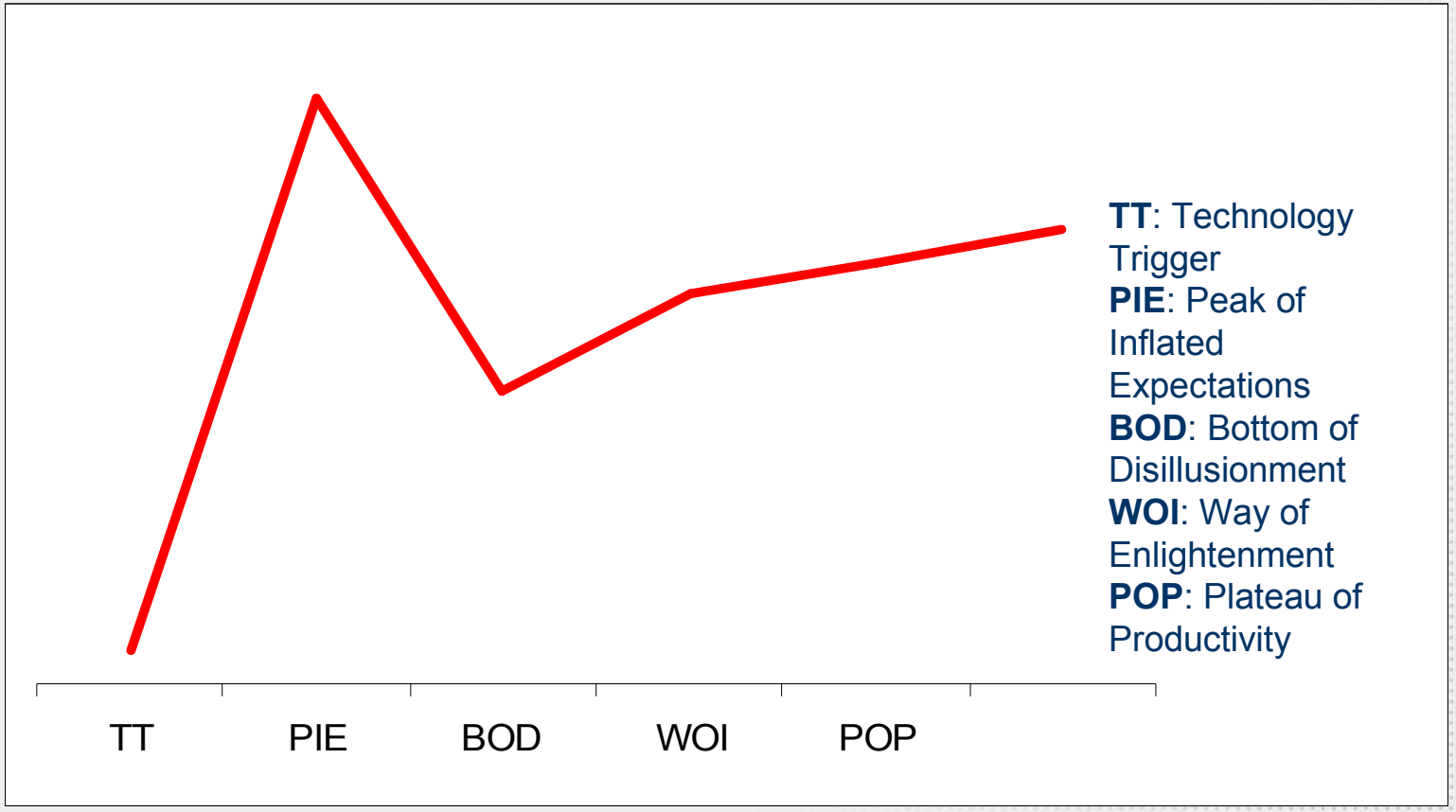
E-learning conceptual framework

The Gartner Hype Cycle



TT: Technology Trigger
PIE: Peak of Inflated Expectations
BOD: Bottom of Disillusionment
WOI: Way of Enlightenment
POP: Plateau of Productivity

Failures

- Failure has more often been the outcome of large-scale ventures into e-learning
  - Western Governors University (WGU)
  - Fathom
  - Open University of the US (US OU) – 20M$ loss
  - NYU Online
  - Universitas 21
  - UKeU

Prof. Paul Bacsich, Sheffield Hallam University

E-learning lesson

The ‘e’ in front of the ‘learning’ had misled everybody into believing that the emphasis should be put on the ‘e’ rather than on the ‘learning’, but ill-conceived, obsolete training programs (like ill-conceived, ill-managed businesses) had no more chances to succeed on the Internet than in the real world. Even fewer, since in the real world, the inertia effect allows many of outdated models to remain in place

Lack of understanding...

"There's this idea that you just sit back and watch, and it will all happen before you. Like the Dire Straits song, it's like having 57 channels but nothing on the TV".

Paul A. Whitelaw, Australian Victoria University

What about Croatia?

- University
  - CARNet, FER, FOI and some other early adopters
  - No strategy, standards, methodology; passive content
  - No serious impact so far
- Industry
  - E-learning as a buzzword in HR and IT
  - Lack of knowledge, driving force and fear of taking resposibility
- State
  - Total confusion
  - Typical: succesfull pilot project in Central Office for State Administration, no will to go further (lack of funding as an excuse)

A first corporate case in Croatia

- A successful pilot in autumn 2003
- Contract for LMS and five starting contents in September 2004, for 500 clients
- January 2005 – everything in full function, tested on 4 locations
- 2005 - change of Board, “downsizing”, cutting costs (also HR and training, including developing and buying new content)
- God only knows the outcome

Corporate market in Croatia now

- Low key approach and confusion
  - Lot of pilots (for very little money)
  - Implementations via outsourced LMS
  - Unrealistic expectations about content, it's cost, speed of development etc.
  - Low or no understanding of a business model and ROI

About the facts

- The ratio for creating an high quality fully interactive e-learning course (development time versus finished hours)
  - On average: 220:1
  - Simulations: from 750:1 to 1300:1

brandon-hall.com

The Barriers to Progress

- Lack of understanding of the capabilities of the technology and a lack of leadership by top management
- Poor communications with the users
- Reluctance to spend
- Inability/unwillingness to change
- Poor quality e-learning developments, or the introduction of e-learning for the wrong reasons
- Failure to link the e-learning agenda to other key issues such as widening participation, quality, student retention, flexible learning, fee-paying courses etc.

Manchester Metropolitan University - Pan University E-learning Special Interest Group

The way out?

- Strategy
- Transformational tactics
- Support

The strategy

- Get support of University management
- Form competent, motivated and not too large steering committee
- Develop a vision
- Develop a strategic plan
- Develop, or even better, choose standards
- Form small centers for support at faculties
- Start education of teachers and others included

Transformational tactics

- Concentrate on large enrollment courses (larger impact and cost savings)
- Don’t bolt on new technologies to existing physical system
- Don’t stay with an unaltered concept of classroom instruction, redesign the whole course
- Move from an entirely lecture-based to a student-engagement approach

Donald Clark, Epic

E-learners must be given support

E-Learning Network committee member Phil Green:

"Learning content can be accessible online. It can be accessible to students whenever and wherever they want. Also, it can be perfectly matched to the needs of students as well as their way of learning. Still, more and more studies show that, unless the student does not have the acces to live person (mentor), the effectivness of that content is greatly reduced".

e.learning age, February 2003

Good luck!

The number of students enrolled in distance education grew from over 753,000 in 1998 to 2.2 million by 2002

International Data Corp., 2003