

Willis College e-Learning

Willis College Invited To Share Knowledge

Dr. David Johnston, Chairman of the Advisory Committee for Online Education from Industry Canada invited Willis College of Business & Technology to comment on the various research papers prepared for the Advisory Committee and to provide a perspective from the private training sector. Rima Aristocrat, President and Dr. Keith Wilson from Willis College submitted their paper titled "[Building a Canadian e-Learning Model](#)". As the Advisory Committee is comprised of a number of university, college and corporate presidents, it is hoped that the experiences of a private institution will assist the committee in its mandate to provide independent advice to CMEC and Industry Canada on ways to optimize the on-line educational opportunities.

Building a Canadian e-Learning Model: Executive Summary

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In order to transform post-secondary education in the next decade, significant changes have to take place in the way Canadian institutions react to the opportunities presented by online learning. To ensure that both public and private post secondary institutions are in a position to take advantage of these opportunities and benefit from the potential presented by online learning, they must collaborate. Obstacles to this process include accepting the Internet as a valid alternative and augmentative learning tool, embracing the retraining of instructional staff, recognizing industry certification providers, and acknowledging that no single institution can provide a total solution.

Market Changes. Success in future online education is in direct proportion to adaptation to industry needs. Technical training in addition to university/college education is a competitive advantage to the job seeker. The educational consumers today are more demanding, requiring increased resources at both public and private institutions, undoubtedly fuelled by the advent of the Internet and the speed with which it has grown.

Financing Change. Although the scope of profitability with e-Learning initiatives is great, there are a number of caveats to consider. Some include fiscal restraint, overwhelming competition, attracting private investment for sustainability

Strategic Alliances. Pooling of resources and expertise in e-Learning is a critical factor in the development of these initiatives. Consortia of education institutions hope to spearhead these developments but government involvement is required to ensure national leadership. Partnerships between private and public institutions in the United States have proven to be very successful. Canada needs to recognize the advantages of the formation of similar partnerships to allow more efficient use of development strategies and resources.

Quality Control. E-Learning is such a new mode of delivery that the development of standards is

essential. Standards will drive the e-Learning market as courses will be richer and more effective. Adoption of industry certifications will produce a better-qualified and more competitive candidate. Establishing standards at the beginning of development will alleviate problems that may stem from fragmented or lacking infrastructure.

Credit Transfer. One of the main obstacles that a learner may encounter is the non-transferability of credits between institutions and programs. Essential to e-Learning is the ability to embrace a continuum of education, but it highlights the need for partnerships between all levels of education.

Lifelong Learning. In an effort to better themselves and remain competitive, consumers must stay pro-active lifelong learners. E-Learning is the only model that will facilitate continuous education.

E-Learning Delivery. Technological advancement has enabled interactive and adaptive delivery of online courses. Use of smart-engine technologies permits pro-active course delivery, creating a custom-learning environment, specifically tailored to the individual learner.

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