The ESRI Virtual Campus: Looking Back and Envisioning the Future

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ESRI background

- Global GIS company
  - Headquarters in California, USA
  - Privately held
  - Established in 1969
- 4,000 employees
- 1,000,000+ users in over 200 countries
- $700M+ revenue in 2007
ESRI Educational Services

- Provides customer, partner, and employee training
  - Instructor-led classroom training since 1988
    - 45 courses
    - 36,000+ students in 2007
  - ESRI Virtual Campus launched in 1997
    - 136 e-learning offerings
    - 215,000 students in 2007
  - ESRI Press formed in 1998
    - 123 books in print
Overview of the ESRI Virtual Campus today

A successful e-learning portal

- Extensive content
  - 133 Web courses
  - 3 Virtual Classroom courses
  - 48 podcasts
- 500,000+ members
  - 40% are university students
- Learner support
  - Learning pathways
  - Library
  - Partnerships

A successful e-learning portal
Initial vision for the ESRI Virtual Campus

Training for everyone...anywhere, anytime

- Affordable just-in-time training
- 24/7 availability to worldwide customer base
- Provide industry-focused training
- Support different learning styles
- Asynchronous training

Training for everyone...anywhere, anytime
The ESRI Virtual Campus debuts: 1997-1999

- Launched with one course
  - Adapted from instructor-led materials
  - Taught popular ESRI technology
- Created using proprietary system
  - Hard-coded HTML pages
- Interface modeled after university campus
The ESRI Virtual Campus is a destination: 2000

- Content created specifically for the Web
- Proprietary content management system
  - Knowledge Base
- Virtual Campus Publishing Program
  - Attract third-party authors with industry expertise
- Community clubs available for industry user groups
- Virtual Campus interface has its own identity
A mature ESRI Virtual Campus: 2001-2007

• New training formats
  – Asynchronous and synchronous
  • Live training seminars
  • Instructor-led Virtual Classroom
  • Web workshops
  • Podcasts
• Content Studio
  – Friendly authoring tool
  – Standardized learning components
  – SCORM publishing
• Improved course design
Features of ESRI’s current course design

- Module-based
- Easy to navigate
- Some interactivity
- Software exercises provide hands-on learning
- Linear with lots of text
Revisiting the ESRI Virtual Campus today

- Training and Education Web site ("gateway")
- One-stop shopping for all ESRI training products
- Access e-learning content and instructor-led class registration
- Interface consistent with other ESRI Web sites
Lessons Learned

• Extensive & broad vs. short & focused
  – Course completion rates tell the story
• Customer input crucial
• Free campus
  – Enabled university curriculum adoption
• Third-party authors
  – Challenging to work with
• Community
  – Not successful
• Integration with other business systems
  – Critical for long-term success
Looking to the future
...Continually evolving to meet needs

Unified Content Management

Certification

Convert to a New LMS

New Course Design

Extended Virtual Classrooms

Blended Learning with ESRI Press

2008

2009

2010

2011 and beyond

Social Networks

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New course design

• Same course navigation, but...
• Replacing "book online" design
• Interactive dynamic content
• New technology and media
  – Enhanced learning experience
  – Less text, support for more learning styles
  – Not “technology for technology’s sake”
Extended Instructor-led Virtual Classroom

- Multi-week synchronous training
  - Reuse foundational content
  - Slower learning pace
  - Allows more study and exercise time
  - Scheduled instructor office hours
Blended learning

- Traditionally
  - Instructor-led course with supporting materials
- Web course reinforced by book
  - Book linked to Web site and pedagogy
- Blending training and education
  - Existing courses: Training
    - Teach skills
  - ESRI Press books: Education
    - Teach concepts, broader understanding in context
Certification

• Certify ESRI partners, users, and employees
• Certify on ESRI products
  – Software-based vs. job-based
• First GIS software company to do this
Research and Development initiatives

• Simulations
• Education “bazaar” – ESRI hosts others’ material
• Sub-sites for specific user groups (e.g., K-16 students and teachers)
• Practice exams for certification
• Pre- and post-assessments for classroom and e-learning
• Build your own e-learning (modular materials)