eLearning for District Administration

Introduction

On today's world, while organisations across the planet are striving to produce just-in-time information for its members to enhance overall efficiency, they realised that effectiveness of any information bank would vastly depend on customised delivery of relevant information. The search of such focused customisation methodologies moved the decision-makers quickly towards Knowledge Management (KM) practices, which is an outgrowth of many far-reaching societal evolution as well technological changes over the last several years.

LearnITy™ is an advanced KM solution, primarily focussed at the broad arena of eLearning. The development of LearnITy is based on a unique synthesis of ideas drawn from fields of knowledge management, learning theories, intelligent tutoring systems, distributed computing, and adaptive multimedia. The current practices of the eLearning industry such as standard compliance (SCORM) and web-based technical architecture (XML, Java) have been adopted right from the beginning.

LearnITy, may be used by the district administration for its just-in-time (JIT) information management and internal training requirements.

LearnITy is the ideal tool for building and managing information banks on an Intranet or Internet where relevant information from different bodies of a district's administrative mechanism can be blended or compared with on-line information from other government bodies and presented to the administrative decision makers in a jiffy. For example, fund utilisation of a poverty alleviation scheme can be corroborated with online rainfall data from the meteorology department and survey data from the department of primary education over a period of time. The information outflow can also be restricted to group of predefined end-users with various level of access.

The uniqueness of LearnITy lies in its customised intelligent delivery, direct re-purposing of existing content and last but not least phenomenally low cost of ownership compared to the leading KM / LCMS solutions.

In gist, LearnITy provides:
- High quality focussed information delivery
- Easy implementation and deployment, and any time/any place accessibility
- Cost effective learning and information management solutions
- Measurable results

Benefits of LearnITy™

▪ **Instant, global deployment and updates** –

With deployment of LearnITy, it would be possible for the administrative officials or designated users to upload any relevant information to the knowledge pool on a real-time basis without knowing any web technology or mark up language. Also global changes can be made to the content quite easily and the changed content can be made available instantly.

- **Convenient - anytime, anywhere - access to the knowledge pool** –
  Deployment of LearnITy would makes it possible for the users of all security level to gain access to relevant information any time of the day, any day of the week (e.g., Sundays), and any week of the year (e.g., during vacation). If LearnITy is deployed on a server that has a valid internet address then access is available to the staff members from any location of their choice (home, work, cyber-cafe, hotel, etc.)

- **Self-paced format accommodates all levels and schedules** –
  In case of introduction of any new system or procedure, the departmental staffs would be able to learn it at their own pace based on their own schedules. This would also promote the district administrations change management objectives by ensuring better understanding and adaptation of the introduced system across the workforce.

- **Better HR environment in the organisation** –
  With the deployment of eLearning, every single employee of the organisation may be provided access to training and self-development. Unlike instructor-led training, accommodating more people in training programs does not lead to a large increase in the training budget since once the training content is prepared, it can be made accessible to any number of people without incurring significant additional cost.

- **Relieves the Trainers from the tedious job of covering the basic material** - eLearning permits the faculty to focus on more important topics during the instructor-led contact programs since the learners can grasp the basic material themselves. This saves time and money by enhancing the productivity of the trainers.

- **More cost-effective than in-person training** – Considering the direct cost of travel and accommodation along with indirect cost of loss of work-time during travel as well due to fatigue after travel.

- **More measurable than other forms of training** –
  For departmental trainings it is possible to track the progress of the staff-member through the course and provide feedback on the formative as well as summative evaluations that the stuff go through.

Proposed Approach of the Solution

In implementing any Knowledge Management project there are certain fundamental aspects that need to be addressed. Some of the prime aspects are addressed here with suggestions an approach that may be suitable for a District Administration.

Content and it's basis of incorporation in the knowledge bank-

In case of any government administrative department the basic content is already available mostly in the form of printed or handwritten materials. However, the structure and format of those materials may not be entirely suitable for Web-based delivery (e.g., displaying large amounts of textual material is discouraged for web-based delivery where it should be converted to some of the electronic format moderately sized "chunks" that may be displayed one at a time). The task of this selection and "chunking" of the content will certainly be the most crucial part. It is advisable to start with just one very important well-focused line of administrative requirement.

Conversion of Content to Online Format

After the basic content has been structured, it needs to be converted to suitable electronic formats (MS Word, PowerPoint, HTML, Flash, etc.) which is commonly called digitising. This conversion service may be provided by AUNWESHA if the district administration desires. Even the job may be performed by some third party contracted by the district administration under guidance and supervision of AUNWESHA.

A system should be evolved to digitise only a gist relevant legacy data to start with. In parallel available electronic information should be chunked and made plug-able wherever relevant.

Interface design and implementation

Since the delivery of the content may be either through a dedicated network or the Internet, the presence of a basic interface screen (launch pad) is necessary. AUNWESHA will provide the necessary services for designing (in consultation with the DM office) and implementing the lightweight interface screens that may be deployed over Internet also.

Hosting the Knowledge Bank

An initial detail planning is required for hosting the Knowledge Bank, based on factors like importance of the information, JIT requirements, traffic and security concerns. The launch pad and the other elements of the solution also needs to be hosted (even may be on a different location depending on the design plan).

The Delivery Engine and Tools

The software engine and other associated tools will be provided by AUNWESHA in the form of its LearnITy™ solution. Work involving installation, configuration, and customisation of the software and other implementation related activities (such as training the users) will also be performed by AUNWESHA.

Operation and Maintenance

The whole system will require proper and maintenance by qualified personnel. AUNWEHA will be happy to provide the required service under contractual obligation.