Quick News Digest from IT Skills Research (Mar 08)

IT Skills Research's latest [Quarterly Survey of Market Conditions](#) shows that the final quarter of 2007 saw the strongest growth in business – and in profits – in the IT training industry since the halcyon days of 2000-2001. As if to reinforce the point, **Xpertise** has reported 2007 revenues up 40%: IT training revenue was up 18%, professional skills training (ITIL, PRINCE2) up 15%, soft skills training down slightly, and Learning Services (i.e. managed services) contributed £4m. **Learning Tree** reported final quarter revenues up 19%, its best performance in five years, and says it is aiming for worldwide revenues of $300 million by 2010. **Oracle University**'s global revenues were up 17% (though helped by the declining dollar – they were up 10% at constant exchange rates) and **SAP**'s Education revenues were up 7%. **Parity Training** reported 2007 revenues up slightly at £18.6M after three years of decline, and says it has significantly changed the mix of its training business: commoditised technical training declined by 25%, while its main areas of focus – project management, service management, business systems design etc – grew by 14% to £11.1M and now represents 60% of its business.

QA-IQ has been awarded UK Oracle University Partner of the Year for 2007 in recognition of the growth in its Oracle training business and its high quality delivery – and has been engaged by Manchester City Council to develop and deliver the training for its acclaimed project management programme as part of a three-year contract. Publishing group Trinity Mirror is the latest organisation to purchase **Atlantic Link**'s Content Point authoring tools, with a view to expanding the use of e-learning across the company. e-Learning and compliance courseware business **Intellego** has announced two wins for its newly acquired subsidiary Copia: an unnamed high street pharmacy and beauty store, and a similarly anonymous mobile phone operator. And Endsleigh Insurance Services has chosen **NetDimensions**' Enterprise Knowledge Platform (EKP) as its learning management system foundation.

KnowledgePool has acquired **Business Training Partnership** (BTP), a vendor-independent managed training services provider: KnowledgePool says BTP had 2007 revenues of £8m, and has a current run rate of £12m. Specialist IT distributor **DNS Arrow** has acquired the Training Services Division of **Anix**, and now claims to be the UK's largest IBM-authorised training provider. In recent months DNS Arrow has also bought InTechnology's training business and server-based computing distributor Centia. **CIO Connect**, the networking organisation for CIOs, has been bought out from the National Computing Centre (NCC) by its own management team; the NCC also owns the Institute of IT Training. And **ILX Group** has agreed banking facilities totalling £6.0 million with Barclays Bank; it says the facilities will be used to refinance £2.2 million of existing debts, to make the earn-out payments due to the vendors of the Corporate Training Group, and to fund the future growth of the business.

People on the move include industry stalwart **Paul Byrne**, who has been appointed Head of Sales at Video Arts and its sister company Tinopolis Interactive. Byrne was Managing Director of PPI Learning (formerly Spring IT Training) prior to its collapse in December 2006, and was previously with Parity Training. And Tata Interactive Systems has established a presence in the North-East of England with the appointment of **Jayne D'Silva** – formerly of RedTray and SkillSoft – as an account director.

Among those with new launches this month, **Xpertise** has added Siebel training to its existing portfolio of Oracle courses; Siebel was acquired by Oracle in 2005, and is recognised as a leading CRM solution for large organisations. Course-Source has announced the launch of a new, dedicated and 'mostly free' e-learning portal to go live when the NHS Connecting for Health Essential IT Skills (ECDL) portal closes on 22 March. **Kaplan IT Learning** has released STT InfoShare, a new e-learning lesson deployment solution for STT Trainer. e-Learning vendor **Giunti Labs** has expanded its international presence by establishing an office in Lund, Sweden covering the Nordic countries. It now has a market presence in Italy, Germany, Sweden, the UK and the USA. And **KnowledgePool** has introduced a strategic learning diagnostic service, which it says offers "an independent and confidential assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of an organisation's learning operation and a benchmark of the results against best practice".

A new **shortage of skills and talent** in IT and business is threatening business growth according to analyst firm Gartner, which says there are shortages of people with experience in roles such as project management and business process analysis – "people with drive, initiative and leadership skills". An NCC **survey of IT salaries** and employment trends says there are clear signs of skills shortages re-emerging after a period of relatively easy markets: the NCC says that 73% of those indicating the need for new skills plan to acquire them by re-skilling and training existing staff. But **IT jobs in the financial services sector** are being hit by the credit crunch, with many companies cancelling or postponing large-scale IT change programmes, according to the latest quarterly report by executive recruitment company Heidrick & Struggles. It says a number of major investment banks have reduced IT staff, with cuts ranging from five to 20%. Also in the research space, the *Megatrends in e-learning* project, part of the EU's Leonardo da Vinci programme, has published an analysis of **failed e-learning implementations**, looking at examples which represented investments of over €150 million but all of which failed.