

KnowHow to KnowNow

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Learning has always been in real time. The way we train and educate has not - until now. Lars Hyland sets out an exciting future which puts technology firmly at the heart of the learning process.

What a difference changing one letter makes to that old term "KnowHow". KnowHow means retaining knowledge in your head so you can apply it at an undefined point in the future. Clearly there are basic skills and knowledge that we need to retain internally. However, it is a fallacy to think that short term, event driven training will be retained long and accurately enough, to be actioned confidently and competently at the point of need.

Unfortunately much of what is offered in training and education is based on this "just-in-case" model. This is woefully ineffective if there is no immediate and sustained opportunity to apply the new learning. Technology finally appears ready to challenge this



model in quite fundamental ways.

Moving resolutely into an always online world our old assumption of having to carry everything in our heads no longer applies. KnowHow shifts emphasis from

retaining facts to knowing how to find and retrieve what we need when we need it. I call that "**Kno**

wNow". That "N" makes all the difference and represents the Network: The network of knowledge, people and tools that enable us to perform more reliably at precisely the time we need to. It represents a firm shift towards real time ubiquitous performance support.

How mobile learning is going mainstream

Is this science fiction? Not really. Just look at the behaviour of anyone with an iPhone. They're using apps that are location aware and they have ready access to a personal and professional network of friends and colleagues just a tweet/phone call/email away from providing answers and support. We don't even need the latest technology to benefit. There are increasingly frequent stories of people in developing countries using basic mobile phones that send and receive texts to teach new farming skills, medical knowledge and to keep in touch across huge distances. There are even people studying degrees one text at a time. Ironically, this may prove to be hugely more efficient and effective than the bloated campus-based model of learning we are currently struggling to reform.

This mobile revolution will transform education. Already some forward thinking schools are equipping students with iPod Touches to access learning resources, complete assessments, share and collaborate with each other on projects. However the majority of educational institutions still need to overcome the knee-jerk reaction of banning such devices from the classroom in a vain attempt to keep existing methods workable. This will have to change as students become evermore inventive.



'Imagine health workers arriving at an emergency, pointing their camera at a patient to call up his or her's medical records quickly and automatically.'

Also on the immediate horizon is a new genre of applications - Augmented Reality. These tools provide real time, on location digital support to the immediate location, visually and intuitively. Imagine engineers arriving at a location and pointing their phone's camera at the equipment requiring maintenance. Automatically the camera adds visual pointers to previous maintenance records, a direct link to the last engineer who visited, even short videos taken by that engineer demonstrating any known peculiarities or issues. Or imagine health workers arriving at an emergency, pointing their camera at a patient to call up his or her's medical records quickly and automatically. All this is possible through the latest generation of smart phones. If you don't have one

now, you will do within the next year or two. The applications are just too compelling to ignore.

How real time access to knowledge is transforming performance

KnowNow also manifests itself in the way we prepare for new experiences, such as new jobs. Staff induction is a much more engaging and supportive experience when learners can access relevant training and reference information on a personalised portal throughout their initial days. Not only does this mean that face-to-face activities can concentrate on coaching, mentoring and observed practice it frees individuals to learn at their own pace. Indeed, at Brightwave, we have pioneered a comprehensive onboarding model that provides new starters with learning opportunities prior to their first day. Giving staff access to a pre-joining experience provides a more robust route to confidence and competence in their new role. It also delivers very strong returns on investment - lower induction costs, better staff retention and faster time to full productivity.

Technology at the heart

So while much of education and training still dwells on digitising traditional practices, the real prize is in fundamentally reinventing the way in which we support learning. Rather than getting in the way with our “learning interventions” we should be building ways to nurture natural learning. This can only be done economically by putting available technology at the heart of our education and training systems, and not as a digital appendage to longstanding, unchallenged, habitual methods.

KnowNow – spread the word.

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Note to editors - About Brightwave

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