

## **ELIG Newsletter December 2008**

### **Letter from the ELIG Secretary General, Richard Straub.**

Dear ELIG Members & Partners

I am pleased to send you the final ELIG Newsletter for 2008. The importance and uniqueness of our network has been validated in 2008 by having more than 20 organizations joining our group. We have made our mark in various major initiatives and strengthened our capability to act by involving experienced experts as senior ELIG advisors.

Yet this year-end is very different from previous ones. During the last few months of 2008 we have experienced changes and volatility like never before. We are seeing significant impact on public sector institutions, companies and on individuals. Learning, unlearning and re-learning at ever increasing pace are becoming more important than ever.

It is quite obvious that our industry has a vital role to play in this turbulent environment. With powerful technologies at our hands we have tools to better prepare individuals and organizations to weather the storm. They greatly facilitate access to learning resources, speed up learning processes, allow for flexible and individualized approaches and support for communities of learners. We hold the keys for a quantum leap in efficiency and effectiveness of lifelong learning. However, there is still a long way to go from the current state of fragmentation and the lack of broad-based compatibility into a coherent user-centric environment supporting lifelong learning at all levels. This is the challenge and the opportunity we have in front of us. The current recession is a moment of truth where we need to demonstrate the value that our industry can provide in a new light. We can also expect a new sense of urgency and readiness by all stakeholders to listen to our (positive) message.

We have taken one step last year by putting in place a small working group on the subject of industry value proposition. We plan to strengthen our activities in this field. Our industry point of view will require communication to policy makers, public and private sector decision makers and to individual knowledge workers. It will be multifaceted messages with strong validation by actual best practices case studies. Based on the preparation work done by the working group we will consult the broader ELIG community to put this communication as a major objective in our work in 2009. We will also seek synergy with national initiatives in this field as well as with the activities around the European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

From the DECOM workshop in Sestri Levante we have numerous elements for specific content and publishing industry related requirements. We will finalize the declaration in January and will embed it in an overall industry context that we are in the process of redefining.

Regarding the ELIG Governance, we have received a number of declarations of interest for joining the ELIG Executive Committee. I have been asked by some member companies to give them a bit more time to consider this step. We therefore extend the nomination period until January 10.

I know that in today's environment it is even getting harder to dedicate time to subjects beyond driving short term business transactions. However, there is also a strong conviction that collaboration between peers across companies and across the value chain is more important than ever: no one has the capacity to "go it alone". Hence an international network like ELIG has an important role to play in helping members to benefit from each other's experience and to work together to shape the future of the emerging Knowledge Society.

To you and your families best wishes for a Merry Christmas, a happy Holiday Season and a good and successful New Year.

*Richard Straub*

On behalf of the ELIG Executive Committee and the ELIG Team

## Welcome to new ELIG members

### New Core Group Members

BRIDGE2THINK AG is a global learning solutions group with operations in Australia, Germany and Sweden with its headquarters in Basel, Switzerland. Led by a team of highly experienced international solutions professionals, BRIDGE2THINK offers a unique range of products and services to provide generic online learning resources for the development of managers and leaders. It assembles available first class content in a blended fashion and customises the deployment with its online tool BRIDGE2KNOW. The ELIG main contact is Nils H. Jörgensen, CEO, Chairman and Co-Founder.  
(<http://www.bridge2think.com> & <http://www.bridge2know> )

## News

### ELIG has an outstanding Online Educa Berlin 2008!

With two high-profile events at the 2008 Online Educa Berlin, ELIG enjoyed a highly successful event, not only raising our profile but also providing valuable contributions to some of the key debates of our times.

IBM provided a **keynote** slot to Richard Straub, ELIG's General Secretary for which he took the title of "Open Education - transforming education to meet the needs of the 21st century". This presentation explored some of the issues and challenges facing the learning industry at the end of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In addition it was an opportunity to raise awareness amongst OEB delegates of ELIG's vision and mission. Richard's full presentation is available on the ELIG web site (<http://www.elig.org/node/18>).

In addition to the keynote address, ELIG delivered a very successful **Expert Panel Session**, led by Richard Straub and with presentations from colleagues at Cambridge University Press (Eric Baber), Blackboard (Diana Childress) and Elsevier (Stephen Bradley). Together they explored the challenges facing educational publishers in the changing world of Web 2.0., user-created content and Open content. Discussions with the delegates following the presentations highlighted some important themes that will be integrated in to the DECOM Declaration (see below). A background article to the Expert Panel Session can be found at [http://www.icwe.net/oeb\\_special/news110.php](http://www.icwe.net/oeb_special/news110.php) and the Panel Discussion presentations are available on the ELIG web site (<http://www.elig.org/node/18>).

### **The DECOM Declaration: a progress report**

Following the DECOM event last month (full details at <http://www.decom2008.com/index.html>), the discussions and recommendations from each of the Hot Topic Tables are now being collated into a single document, drawing out critical themes facing educational publishers today. The **timetable for progressing to the final document** is as follows:

- By January 5: The draft document will be circulated to a consultation group comprising each of the DECOM Table Moderators, the DECOM Panel Members and ELIG members who took part in the 'Publishing meets e-Learning' work stream during 2008.
- 16<sup>th</sup> January: Deadline for feedback from the consultation group, which should be sent to Matty Smith ([matty\\_smith@btinternet.com](mailto:matty_smith@btinternet.com)).
- 21<sup>st</sup> or 22<sup>nd</sup> January: A follow-up teleconference call with the objective of finalising the recommendations
- 30<sup>th</sup> January: The DECOM Declaration will be published.

### **EFT/ELIG Report on e-learning markets in the Near East and North Africa.**

The shortened version of this important piece of research, undertaken by the European Training Foundation and supported by ELIG, is now available on the ELIG web site (<http://www.elig.org/node/13>). Key findings detailed in the report highlight the need for sensitivity towards the diversity of cultural environments in the area and difficulties around access to both learning and the labour market, the necessity of shifting the emphasis from tertiary and higher education to lifelong learning in the region, the negative impact of skills gaps in the areas of basic ICT literacy and ICT for quality teaching and learning and the experimental nature of the use of e-learning in the region with a need to establish programmes at either national or regional levels. A fuller version of the report will be disseminated in the New Year.

### **ELIG supports the European Year of Creativity & Innovation, 2009**

ELIG is in discussions with Euractiv and EU organising team of the European Year of Creativity & Innovation with the objective of identifying how we may most effectively contribute to the events. The full agenda for the year has not yet been finalised and there are continuing **opportunities for**

**involvement by ELIG**, especially towards the second half of the year. In launching the European Year of Creativity & Innovation for 2009, the European Commission is taking a much wider perspective than is usual. This theme runs both horizontally and vertically through the Commission, drawing in activity from each of the Directorates. Activities currently planned for the year can be found at [http://create2009.europa.eu/index\\_en/agenda\\_of\\_the\\_year.html](http://create2009.europa.eu/index_en/agenda_of_the_year.html) and details of ELIGs role will be advised once details are finalised.

## **ELIG to seek involvement with EDEN 2009 Conference**

EDEN, an ELIG Consultation Group member, is holding its 2009 Conference "Innovation in Learning Communities", in Gdansk, Poland, 10-13 June 2009. ELIG will be discussing with EDEN, opportunities for **significant involvement** in this event. The EDEN Conferences have become the major academic and professional distance and e-learning events in Europe gathering over 500 delegates. The format of the conference successfully combines cutting edge presentations, experience sharing workshops and showcases the latest researches and products. More details of ELIG involvement will follow in the coming months but meanwhile members may wish to consider sponsorship of the event, details of which can be found at <http://www.eden-online.org/eden.php?menuId=410>.

## **Calendar**

*With this section, we aim to give an overview of activities and events where ELIG will be represented. We would welcome ELIG members providing us with information on conferences and events in which they play a role as organisers, participants, presenters. These events are all listed on the ELIG website under the Calendar link, which also has the facility to add comments to the entries. If any ELIG members are planning to attend an event listed on our calendar please consider posting information about it so as to enable others to get an idea of which other ELIG members will be attending and with whom they might network.*

## **Key Events**

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Forum on e-Learning Excellence in the Middle East** (<http://elexforum.etqm.ae/>) will be held in January in Dubai, UAE in 2009. The Forum aims at bringing together e-Learning professionals, experts, practitioners, researchers and educators from around the world to discuss the future of education and e-learning development and implementation in both the academic and corporate world. **ELIG will have a stand at the Forum** and we welcome our members, attending the event, to call in and see us. If you are thinking of going to the Forum ELIG members will receive a reduced rate for enrolling in the conference (1300 AED instead of the standard rate of 1800 AED). Our members can also get exhibition space at the event on a first come - first served basis. Please send a message to Shazia Khan ([S.Khan@etqm.ae](mailto:S.Khan@etqm.ae)) with copy to Matty Smith ([matty\\_smith@btinternet.com](mailto:matty_smith@btinternet.com)), should you be interested either in attending the Forum or renting exhibition space.

## Other events

### **Learning Technologies 2009 Conference & Exhibition - London Olympia 2, 28-29 January 2009**

(<http://www.learningtechnologies.co.uk/>). This is a major e-learning event with over 120 exhibitors, 50 free seminars and more than 3,000 visitors as well as a full conference with keynotes from Tony Buzan, George Siemens, Donald Clark, Jay Cross and Charles Jennings.

**2009: European Year of Creativity & Innovation.** Still being finalised but details confirmed so far can be found at [http://create2009.europa.eu/index\\_en/agenda\\_of\\_the\\_year.html](http://create2009.europa.eu/index_en/agenda_of_the_year.html)

**EDEN 2009 Annual Conference: "Innovation in Learning Communities". 10-13 June 2009. Gdansk, Poland .** Full details at <http://www.eden-online.org/eden.php?menuId=410>.

## **New Publications available on the ELIG website (<http://www.elig.org/node/18> )**

**"Exploring the market for e-Learning in the Near East and North Africa: Challenges & Solutions"**. A shortened version of this report, the result of cooperation between the European Training Foundation (ETF) and ELIG, is now available. Details of dissemination of the full report will follow in the New Year.

**"Competing in a Global Economy through Open Education"**, by Michael King, Vice President, IBM Education Industry and presented at Online Educa Berlin. This paper explores the impending skills gap in the workplace; the reasons why it will occur and why the Education Industry needs to have a clearly defined response which the author describes as 'Open Education'.

## Contact

If you have inputs or questions please contact the ELIG Team:

For questions & suggestions relating to the ELIG Working Groups and the Newsletter – Matty Smith ([matty\\_smith@btinternet.com](mailto:matty_smith@btinternet.com))

For Policy related inputs & suggestions – Elmar Husmann ([huselmar@de.ibm.com](mailto:huselmar@de.ibm.com))

For general items – Richard Straub ([straubr@fr.ibm.com](mailto:straubr@fr.ibm.com))