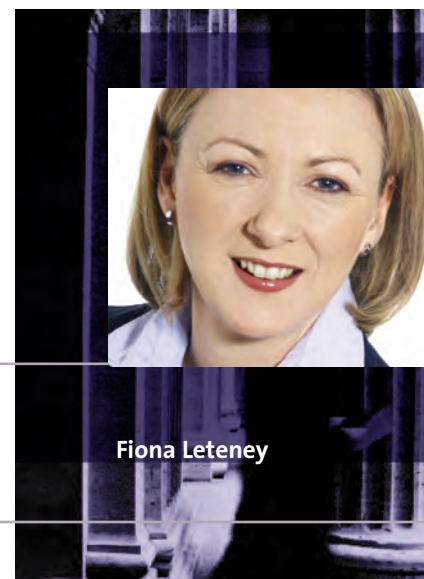


Listening to the users



Fiona Leteney

What do you think of e-learning standards?
Time to hear from users.

If you are reading this I would like you to do me a huge favour! RESPOND! Please email me at leteney@bizmedia.co.uk. Alternatively visit the new *e-learning age* website and answer the questions online at www.elearningage.co.uk.

It isn't that I'm short of friends or emails for that matter; I just want to know what you honestly think about the e-learning standards (AICC/SCORM). The feedback will be published in my next column in the July/August edition of *e-learning age*. I will need your responses by 14 June.

So why do I want to know?

Well, it all started at the beginning of April during a particularly enjoyable and inspiring week, when among other things I heard Patrick Dunn speak on "user-centred design" at an Alternative Learning Technologies Conference, and then spent an even more enjoyable evening talking to a friend over a glass of bubbly (as you do) who turned out to be quite a guru on "user centred design".

That week there were definitely "ah-ha" moments, pennies dropped and the realisation that my engagement with "users" (I don't mean subject matter experts) had been during a pilot stage when most of the work/learning design had actually been done. As Patrick and my friend both said, by engaging with the end-user at the earliest possible moment using prototypes and then taking on board their ideas, the rest of the implementation and likelihood of achieving "buy-in" for the project is a piece of cake. It's obvious really.


So what has this to do with you and the response I want from you about e-learning standards? Well, it is never too late to engage with my audience/reader!

I've only been writing this regular column for about 18 months and although I do tend to think like most people it is maybe a tad arrogant to assume I know what you want to hear or read about.

LETSI (Learning-Education-Training Systems Interoperability), the new e-learning standards organisation that is taking over the responsibility for the development of SCORM from ADL, had its founding sponsors meeting in Seoul, Korea on 13 March. On the letsi.org website it was noted that "ADL (US government) spends approximately \$1million a year to fund SCORM and LETSI cannot approximate this through fees." There are also plans for SCORM 2.0; as you can imagine it will require much development

time and effort to produce the next version so my question is: How many people actually use SCORM 2004 or the standards in general? My gut feeling is that there are a core few (probably including the aviation industry and the MoD) who are committed and squeezing every last drop out of the standards. However I wonder if there is a "silent majority" who are using the bare minimum just to get by.

I hope I'm wrong but my little survey is just a means of testing this. Please let me know just where you are up to – I can take the good the bad and the ugly. Ask any questions about standards you want – if I can't answer them I'll find someone who can.

I look forward to hearing from you. 

So what do I want to know?

1. What is your role in e-learning terms?

- a) Buyer of e-learning (bespoke or off-the-shelf).
- b) Instructional Designer.
- c) Developer/programmer in a sophisticated tool e.g. Flash.
- d) Author of e-learning using the rapid tools.
- e) LMS administrator.
- f) Something else – please specify.

2. How do you use the e-learning standards?

- a) I/we just specify AICC/SCORM to the supplier to ensure content launches and tracks through the Learning Management System.
- b) I/we only ever track a few things like: status (complete, incomplete, not started, pass,

fail), assessment score and time taken.

- c) I/we create the content to do the tracking and book-marking rather than using the LMS.
- d) I/We use all the data elements available to us, even the optional ones.
- e) I/we use SCORM 2004 and simple sequencing.

3. Please give your views on the standards

i.e. do you find they

- limit creativity.
- are useful for interoperability.
- are confusing.
- are over simplified or
- anything else you might think.

Please do not feel constrained to just one answer – or the format – if they don't fit your situation. I would genuinely like to hear your views on how AICC or SCORM is being used.