

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service
Meeting on 16 December 2002

Expansion and Development of
Cyber Learning in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the development of cyber learning in the civil service.

Background

2. Computer Based Learning (CBT) has gained in popularity since the early 1980s. Learners, instead of going for classroom courses, study in front of a computer terminal. Due to the complex system requirements, CBT then was only popular in multinational corporations or large IT vendors. By 1997, the maturity and steady improvement of web technology has made e-learning a potentially more superior mode of learning for most organisations compared with classroom teaching, as far as certain subjects are concerned. Whilst classroom training has numerous advantages, the provision of more web-based learning opportunities enable our civil servants to pursue training according to their own time and needs. This in turn helps to foster the development of a continuous learning culture.

3. The Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) first started to offer e-learning facilities and services through setting up an e-learning centre (titled Cyber Learning Centre, or CLC) in March 2000. It aims at providing an alternate means for government employees to learn anytime anywhere.

4. From 2001-02, the Government has launched a three-year T&D Programme to strengthen training in the civil service. One of the initiatives is to promote continuous learning in the civil service. A total of \$400,000 has been provided to enhance the existing cyber learning

platform and on-line learning resources during the financial years 2001-02 and 2002-03. During the period, another \$1.3 million have been allocated to departments to strengthen their learning facilities and resources, e.g. Learning booths so that officers can learn during breaks and after office hours.

New Developments

5. Drawing on the experience of the CLC, CSTDI engaged a IT service provider to develop a learning portal, the Cyber Learning Centre Plus (CLC Plus). It was launched in September 2002. The CLC Plus is an upgraded version of the CLC and has more learning resources systematically classified and located. A leaflet introducing the CLC Plus is enclosed at **Appendix A**.

6. The features of CLC Plus include quick search, site search facilities, discussion forum and, most important of all, a comprehensive learning management system. In terms of contents, there are 8 domains of e-learning resources, 118 web courses, more than 100 items of job related reference materials and numerous web linkages with other systems. CLC Plus covers a wide range of learning areas to address the needs of different level of staff. Practical subjects such as languages, communication, China studies, information technology and government practices are available for enhancing the day-to-day effectiveness of all levels of staff. For middle managers, interactive courses in management skills and HRD practices are provided to develop their managerial competencies. For directorate officers, the Leaders' Corner provides resources on leadership development and sharing from top executives both within and outside the civil service for their continuous learning.

7. Apart from serving individual users, CLC Plus also serves as a central learning platform for departments to offer department specific learning resources for their staff.

Learning Profiles

8. CLC Plus is open to different levels of civil servants (including NCSC staff). As at November 2002, the CLC has attracted more than 30,000 users and recorded 250,000 visits. Users spread across all departments, grades and levels. They range from directorates,

senior management, middle management to front line officers and supporting staff. The most popular subjects include : English language (54,000 visits), Chinese language (49,000 visits) and information technology (48,000 visits).

9. With user registration growing steadily on average by 800 each month, CSTDI is making continuous effort to promote self-learning while enriching its CLC Plus content. Promotional programs such as 'Learning Expo', 'CLC Plus Open House', 'Roving Exhibition', 'Treasure Hunt Game' (CLC Plus access contest), 'Pre-approved Registrations', 'New User Referral' and 'The Most e-learned Department Contest' had been run in the last twelve months.

10. A user satisfaction survey conducted in June this year shows encouraging results. 96% of the users are satisfied with the usefulness of learning resources provided by CLC. About 36% of the users, an increase of 9% from last year's survey results, reported that over 20% of their learning information is gathered through CLC. To promote the usage rate through greater participation by all the registered users, CSTDI will continue to enhance the usefulness of the CLC Plus content, advertise them through different channels, actively recommend the e-learning solution to departments, enhance the system functions and simplify the user registration procedure.

Investment

11. In 2002-03, a total of \$1.5 million will be invested in the CLC Plus of which about \$0.7 million is one-off development cost while \$0.8 million for recurrent maintenance. A further \$2.4 million will be used for developing, acquiring and subscribing to about 70 new learning resources.

12. The cost of e-learning is significantly lower than that of the conventional classroom training. Significant cost savings could also be achieved in selective subjects like PC training. However, not all subjects can be conducted through cyber learning effectively.

13. Blending web-based learning with classroom programme will be adopted in the coming years to maximise cost-effectiveness. The approach used is to deliver knowledge intensive sessions of the training programme through e-learning and use classroom training to develop skills, discuss concepts and stimulate new ideas.

14. Comprehensive personalisation features are being developed to provide dedicated and customised learning to all government employees at anytime anywhere.

Other Cyber Learning Developments in the Civil Service

15. Apart from the CLC Plus developed by CSTDI, some departments have been considering e-learning as an option. By October 2002, 14 departments including HKPF, Housing Authority, CSD, SWD, ICAC, ED, C&E and ITSD have developed in-house e-learning capabilities. CSTDI has been providing advice to some of these departments in developing e-learning. So far, 11 departments have used 130 CSTDI web-training items/packages on their e-learning platform and two departments use the CLC Plus to host their e-learning resources. To promote more use of e-learning, CSTDI plans to promote the hosting service to more departments. Departments who plan to venture into e-learning business may use the CLC Plus platform as the pilot system or launch their courses on CLC Plus as a long term strategy.

16. In terms of financial support to departments/bureaux, CSTDI has launched a scheme to help them accelerate their learning capacities since 2000-2001. Over 40 departments/bureaux have received funding support from CSTDI. The total allocation for 2000-2003 amounted to \$5.47 million. To date, departments' efforts have resulted, among other achievements, in the establishment of 4 cyber learning centers and 9 departmental learning resource centers.

17. Most of the departments spent their funding procuring learning material mostly on job-related subjects, customer service and IT.

The Way Forward

18. CLC Plus is already one of the most advanced e-learning centres in the public sector. It is also a show case among local corporations which practise e-learning. CSTD I has been invited on many occasions to share experience in public conference, and with other government departments.

19. The future directions of e-learning include :

- (a) combining e-learning with classroom training whenever practical;
- (b) expanding the CLC Plus as a resource and information centre so that users at different levels can find most of their learning resources in one portal;
- (c) taking up the central hosting role for departmental learning resources to reduce duplication of resources in platform development; and
- (d) exploring the feasibility of courseware exchange with other corporations to share mutually needed resources.

CLC Plus

logo of CLC Plus and CSTDI

Introduction to the website

CLC Plus is a learning portal built on the strength of the existing Cyber Learning Centre (CLC). On top of the wide variety of web courses that are currently provided in the CLC, CLC Plus enables learners to enjoy one-stop access to a full spectrum of Training and Development (T&D) information and learning resources that span across eight different categories.

CLC Plus is not only a premier place for government officers to learn anytime-anywhere but also an environment that nurtures life-long learning culture.

Procedure to enroll as a CLC Plus member

1. Visit the CLC Plus website <http://www.info.gov.hk/cstdi/clc>
2. Click on “Register NOW”
3. Click on “Download Registration Form”
4. Complete the form with your signature and department’s chop and fax it to 2117 0726
5. You will be notified of your userid and password via your email account in around one week’s time

Enquiries	:	Tel	2231 3889
		Fax	2116 0812
		Email	clc@cstdi.gcn.gov.hk

Website Content

I. Training Programmes

Latest information on training and development opportunities, including:

- training courses and seminars offered by the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI)
- a wide variety of interactive web courses on Chinese Language, Putonghua, China Studies, English and Communication, Government Practices, Information Technology and Management (Please see the Appendix - “List of Web Courses” in this leaflet.)
- an interactive database that captures management and executive programmes organized by both local and overseas institutions
- Three-year T&D Programme for Civil Servants

II. Language Corner

Useful Internet resources for improving language proficiency, including:

- English Net – provides useful tips on English ranging from usage, writing, pronunciation to verbal communication, plus consolidation exercises
- Chinese Net - provides useful tips on Chinese writing principles, usage, grammar, pronunciation, plus consolidation exercises and games
- Putonghua Corner - provides useful web resources such as job aids, articles, games and links to useful web sites to help consolidate learners’ knowledge of Putonghua

III. E-Reference

A collection of useful references and tips at your finger tips, covering:

- writing skills and inter-personal dynamics
- information technology development and applications
- achieving customer satisfaction
- human resource management / human resource development
- hints on learning
- publications of CSTDI

IV. Leaders' Corner

A one-stop online resource to support the continuous learning of directorate officers, including web packages on leadership, self-assessment tools, media and work tips, and other useful resources

V. Event Updates

Latest events organized by CSTDI, local or overseas organizations

VI. Mainland and HKSAR

Latest development of the mainland China and HKSAR:

- China Update - a wide variety of information about China, including its climate, geography, political, economic and other systems; and regular updates on cultural events, current affairs, and major policies, political and latest economic developments in mainland China
- HKSAR Update - comprehensive information about the HKSAR, departments and related organizations of the Government, and links to the laws of Hong Kong, the full text of the Basic Law and useful information about the promulgation and implementation of the Basic Law

VII. E-Tools

Links to dictionaries and glossaries, and templates of common official writing

VIII. Reaching Out

Links to other organizations such as local universities, institutions, overseas governments, and libraries

Appendix - List of Web Courses (September 2002)

<i>China Studies</i>	Basic Law Web Courses
	Political & Administrative Systems of the PRC
<i>Chinese Language</i>	Putonghua Learning on Demand
	Putonghua Web Course for Frontliners
	Semantic Logic in Chinese Official Writing
	Proper Use of Words and Phrases
	Detecting & Correcting Grammatical Errors in Chinese Official Writing
	Understanding Common Mistakes in Writing Chinese Characters
	The Influences of English on Modern Chinese Writing
<i>English and Communication</i>	Plain English Course
	The Art of Word Choice
	Speak with Impact
	What's Right to Write
	Effective Writing for Committee Secretaries
	Effective Report Writing
<i>Government Practices</i>	Civil Service Shared Values
	Introduction to the Hong Kong SAR Government
	Administrative Practices of the Hong Kong SAR Government
	Ah Kung Stories (Series I - III)
<i>Information Technology</i>	E-Government Corner
	IT Web Courses Series (more than 60 web courses)
	Using My First Digital Certificate
	Search Engines and Web Directories
<i>Management</i>	The Gateway to Quality Excellence
	Work Smart with EQ
	Assertiveness from the Inside Out
	Major Time Management Challenges
	Proactive Approaches to Stop Negativity
	Financial Management: The Know-How
	Good Practices of Managers
	Putting Stress into Perspective
	Approaches to Risk Management
	Building a High-Performance Team
	Competencies for Tomorrow's Managers
	The Leader as a Model
	Leading through Change
	Managing Process Improvement
	Organizational Culture and Leadership
	Presentation as a Management Tool
	The Creative Process at Work
	The Art of Knowledge Management
	The Manager as Coach and Counselor
	The Manager as Project Champion

September 2002