

The Learning Center at the University of St. Gallen

The Learning Center (chair of Prof. Dr. Andrea Back, University of St. Gallen) was founded in 1997 and is a research sector dealing with questions in the field of e-learning, particularly corporate e-learning. The Learning Center is one of the leading research and consulting units within e-learning in the German-speaking area.

The activities of the Learning Center can be divided in three areas:

1. Mediation of knowledge
2. Publications
3. Projects

Many of the activities are supported by the website of the Learning Center (<http://www.learningcenter.unisg.ch>).

Mediation of Knowledge

The “Newsletter E-Learning” (ISSN 1660-5039) was initiated in March 2001 and is one of the most extensive information services on e-learning in Europe. The newsletter is published online ten times per year and is free of charge to the approximately 2200 direct subscribers. Subscriptions can be made online at <http://www.learningcenter.unisg.ch>.

A lecture in the serial of “Seminare des Learning Center der Universität St. Gallen” takes place twice a year. Practitioners and scientists present current e-learning and blended learning projects and hence give insight into present and future developments. Participants are from the corporate as well as from the governmental sector. Information on past and future seminars can be obtained directly from <http://www.learningcenter.unisg.ch/seminare.htm>.

Publications

In October 2001 Prof Dr. Andrea Back, Dr. Oliver Bendel and Dr. Daniel Stoller-Schai published the book “E-Learning im Unternehmen: Grundlagen – Strategien – Methoden – Technologien”. The book quickly developed into a best-seller in the field of e-learning. Firstly, an e-learning reference model containing the four layers technologies and systems, processes and methods, strategies as well as change management is designed in the book. It is followed by a description and discussion of the important issues of corporate e-learning, in relation to the reference model. Additional information about the book can be found on <http://www.learningcenter.unisg.ch/buch.htm>.

The Learning Center and Learntec, Europe’s largest e-learning fair and conference, published a handy e-learning dictionary in the summer of 2002. The collection of around 100 entries is a special edition of the glossary mentioned above. The dictionary is illustrated by Perry-Rhodan-illustrator Ulrich Magin and is an orientation guide on e-learning concepts for the visitors of the fair and congress. Reservations can be made on the website of our partner (www.learntec.de).

The ISSN-series of journals “Arbeitsberichte des Learning Center der Universität St. Gallen” (ISSN 1424-8557) was founded in 2001 and publishes work reports on different subjects. The reports emerge mainly from projects with corporations. Reports can be ordered at <http://www.learningcenter.unisg.ch>.

The Learning Center is consistently involved with significant publications. Concepts like “avatar” and “e-learning” were manifested in the book “Lexikon der Wirtschaftsinformatik” published by Prof. Dr. Peter Mertens (Springer). Contributions were also made in the omnibus volume “E-Learning und E-Kooperation” by the group of authors called E-Writing (Luchterhand) and in “Handbuch E-Learning” published by Andreas Hohenstein and Dr. Karl Wilbers (Deutscher Wirtschaftsdienst). Both works appeared at the turn of the year 2001/2002. Furthermore, Prof. Dr. Andrea Back and Dr. Oliver Bendel published a piece on learning and knowledge portals in the book “Corporate University: Wie Unternehmen ihre Mitarbeiter mit E-Learning erfolgreich weiterbilden” by Prof. Dr. Peter Glotz and Dr. Sabine Seufert. Information about this book is also available on the website of the Institute of Media and Communications Management (<http://www.mcm.unisg.ch>).

Projects with Corporations

Projects with the corporate and governmental sector are under the direction of Dr. Oliver Bendel and deal with Corporate E-Learning. In the following, details of selected projects will be given.

A study of the system-oriented, didactical and financial potential of learning platforms was conducted for the Credit Suisse Financial Services in 2001. Reference resolutions shed light on the state of development regarding the use of learning platforms in various international corporations such as DaimlerChrysler AG, Deutsche Lufthansa AG or Allianz AG. The possibility of using learning platforms as a technical and functional base for learning and knowledge portals is discussed in a chapter on trends.

A training management system was developed in collaboration with Viviance AG new education for the then called Swissair Group in 2001. A central component of the system is the competency model, which divides different job profiles at Swissair into competencies that are of importance for the work result. The objective of the system is to make sure that each employee becomes his own training programme, adjusted to his particular competencies and needs. This should ensure a better and more efficient utilisation of the training department.

By order of the Viviance AG new education a study on the subject “Potenziale pädagogischer Agenten” was conducted from the end of 2001 until the beginning of 2002. The study describes traits, functions and objectives of pedagogical agents as well as possible fields of application of agents in corporate e-learning. The study presents an innovative starting point for further scientific and practical occupation with pedagogical agents.

During the time from 1 July until 30 November 2002 a project with the Academy of the Police Baden-Württemberg in Germany was carried through. The objective of the project was to conceive the introduction vocational training in terms of a blended learning scheme. The scientific employees handed over a study containing over a

hundred pages, including a detailed account for the prerequisites and the implementation possibilities of the blended learning scheme.

From 2003 onwards a new form of corporate collaboration will be initiated in addition to the common projects. “Learning Alliances” are acquired and managed in fields such as e-collaboration, blended learning and e-learning performance. During four workshops per year an intensive exchange of knowledge and experience between all parties should lead to the formulation of a common goal which is earlier defined.

Forecast

The Learning Center has a firm standing in Europe’s research and consulting arena. It holds profound knowledge and broad experience in the field of e-learning. In addition, research on knowledge management and e-government will be conducted and published in the future. A consulting function in these areas is also planned.

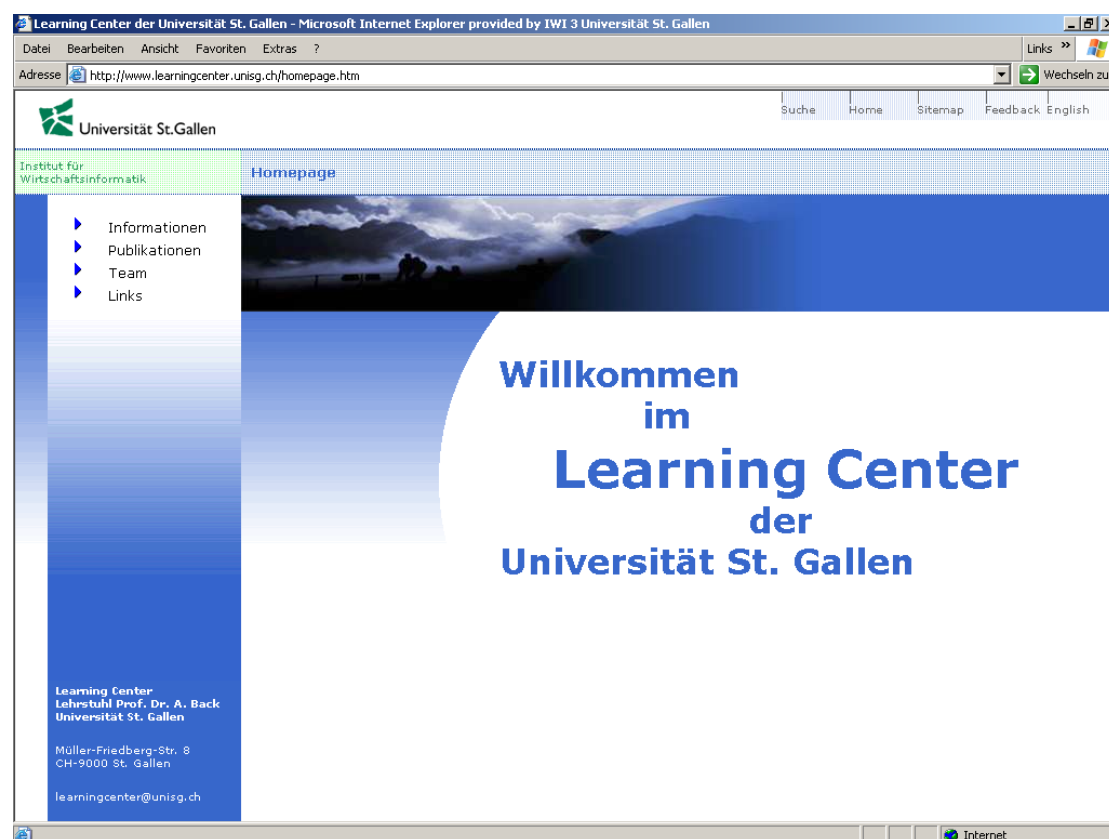


Fig.: Website of the Learning Center

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