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The e-learning revolution: from propositions to action

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There would be few experienced trainers and educators who would argue with the proposition that the arrival of online or e-learning has had a profound effect on the way training and education is and can be delivered.

The significant growth in the requirement for e-learning and the significant investment in this technology over the last few years by the global community leads to the conclusion that during the next few years, technology will continue to impact significantly on the development and delivery of training and development programs in organisations.

If you add to this the blurring between the boundaries of work and home for the e-worker and the greater emphasis given by e-workers to life style considerations, this means training and development professionals will increasingly need to become acquainted with e-learning issues and have at least equal IT skills to that of the e-worker. This will allow training programs to be delivered in innovative ways to match the redesign of the future work community and work/life balances.

This book has been written by one of the United Kingdom's leading training managers who is considered to be an authority on e-learning. Martyn Sloman argues that the e-learning agenda has for too long been driven by IT and that it is now time for those concerned with organisational learning to take some leadership in the new training models now under development.

The book provides some practical assistance and is intended to assist those managers who are considering the transition from old training practices to e-learning in their organisations to engage with the underlying issues. It is partly an introduction to these issues and partly directional with suggestions as to how to handle these issues. Practical examples are provided throughout the book and a framework of 21 propositions is developed to guide the actions of those responsible for managing or supporting the training function in organisations.

It is comforting to know that the 21 propositions in the book have been developed as a result of extensive research and analysis. In this respect, 13 case studies are provided from organisations as diverse as the BBC, Motorola and IBM. While the case studies are brief, they do describe the approaches taken by each organisation and the issues faced by them.

Sloman makes the point that trainers should not be seduced by the technology that is seen by some to drive e-learning and to keep focused on the ultimate objective – to enhance and support organisational learning.

He also stresses the new "soft" competencies for trainers and educators and the need for trainers to move out of their traditional teaching/training techniques and develop new skills, knowledge and competencies in the new electronic environment. This is training and development's new paradigm. This chapter will be particularly challenging to current training professionals.

In summary, this book adds to the continuing debates that surround the implementation of e-learning in modern workplaces. While no simple solutions are provided, the book is an important resource to those seeking to increase learning in their organisations.