



Instructional Management Systems: Learning, Course, Content, and Otherwise

"Whether one selects to use a commercial product or a self-designed web site, the ideal IDS [instruction delivery system] should enable interaction and be easy to use."
("Learning from Reflections...." Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, Fall 2003)

What they're called and how they're defined vary widely from source to source, but for the purposes of this issue, learning management systems (LMS), course management systems (CMS) and even learning content management systems (LCMS) all refer to software tools that exist to maximize the e-learning experience with the e-course as their focal point. Both the theoretical issues related to these systems and the practical process of selection are included here.

Background and Theory

- **["Balancing Technology and Tradition: The Example of Course Management Systems."](#)** Article by Richard N. Katz in *Educause Review Articles*, 7-8/03. Both historical and futuristic, it tells how CMS are "an essential step in the evolution of the academy..."
- **[Blogs As Course Management Systems: Is Their Biggest Advantage Also Their Achilles' Heel?](#)** Ongoing postings on the *Electric Lyceum* about efforts to use blogs as alternatives to conventional CMS.
- **["Course Management Systems."](#)** Website maintained by Vanderbilt University (TN) that offers the basics of what CMS are, as well as resources and tips on their use.
- **[Course Management Systems and Copyright.](#)** Website maintained by Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis that offers detailed advice on the issue of fair use in CMS.
- **["Course Management Systems in Perspective: A Conversation with Carl Berger."](#)** Interview between *Syllabus* advisory board member Judith Boettcher and University of Michigan professor Carl Berger that appears in *Syllabus*, 7/1/03. A complementary article by Judith Boettcher, **["Course Management Systems and Learning Principles: Getting to Know Each Other...."](#)** also appears in the same issue.
- **[CMS Review.](#)** Begun in October 2003 by *Syllabus* magazine, this semi-monthly newsletter contains CMS news, case studies, technical/product information, and commentary by developers.
- **[EduTools.](#)** Superlative Website that provides, among other things, CMS information, reviews, and comparisons, as well as advice on how to make a selection and more.
- **[Faculty Use of Course Management Systems.](#)** Key findings of a major research study done by the Educause Center for Applied Research, 5/21/03.
- **["Learning from Reflections – Issues in Building Quality Online Courses."](#)** Article by Patricia Deubel, Nova Southeastern University, in the *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration* (6:3), Fall 2003. Broad look at the design of online courses, based on both student experiences and a review of the literature.
- **["LMS and LCMS: What's the Difference?"](#)** Article by Leonard Greenberg in ASTD's magazine *All About E-Learning*, December 2002. May confuse more than enlighten, by introducing another term "learning content management systems," to the array dealing with the subject of this *BEEP*.
- **["Next Generation Course Management Systems."](#)** Article by Colleen Carmean and Jeremy Haefner in *Educause Quarterly*, November 1, 2003, that lists needed improvements, like increased ability to share/ export materials, better assessment tools, and simplified navigation.
- **[Open Source Course Management.](#)** List of links to many open course software products, maintained by Scott Leslie, creator of a very useful blog on the subject at **[EdTechPost](#)**.

Case Studies and More: The Selection Process

- [Enterprise Level Course Management System Evaluation](#). Ohio State University Website on four enterprise level CMS under consideration at that institution.
- [Evaluation of Corporate Applications for Online Teaching and Learning](#). Deakin University (Australia) Website that aims to communicate the process that resulted in the selection of WebCT Vista as the new LMS for the university.
- [Learn@UW: The University of Wisconsin's New E-Learning System](#). Website explaining and promoting recently selected software that supersedes earlier CMS like WebCT and Blackboard.
- [Learning Management System Evaluation Committee](#). St. Petersburg College (FL). Recent example of one school's intensive and extensive selection process. For a streaming video of vendor presentations held at its LMS Olympics on 10/30/03, see SPC's [archived events](#).
- [MiCTA](#). A national association with members from higher education, healthcare, libraries, K-12, government and other non-profit organizations who provide technical assistance, as well as work to get better pricing and other benefits on products like CMS.
- [MITC Pilot of CHEF, an Open Source Collaborative Environment](#). An initiative of Midwestern colleges to develop and pilot a newly created CMS, [CHEF](#), a.k.a the CompreHensive collaborativE Framework project.
- [Thinking About Buy vs. Build](#). An online repository at the University of Texas to frame current best practices in the selection of software delivery methods, with tools for analysis and more.
- [University of Florida Course Management System Advisory Group](#). Website of and for those instrumental in the selection of new CMS, plus a link to a UF site monitoring its implementation.

BEEP's Best Bets

E-Learning Administration

- ["Academics Make Case to End Credit Hour."](#) Associated Press article by Steve Giegerich, October 31, 2003. Spurred by the growth in online education, educators Jane Wellman and Thomas Ehrlich have released a series of essays suggesting eliminating the credit hour concept.

Innovative Technologies

- [Impact Pointless](#). \$49.95 software add-in for Microsoft PowerPoint that allows shrinkage of files to speed emails and file transfers, as well as extending disk/inbox storage capacity.
- ["Music-Sharing Network Is Shut Down Across MIT."](#) A reprinted update by A. J. Frank in the University of Virginia *Cavalier Daily* on a promising new service, highlighted in [BEEP, 10/1/03](#).

Laws and Legislation

- [The TEACH Toolkit](#). A North Carolina State University resource for understanding copyright and distance education as defined by the federal TEACH Act of 2002. Includes background, implementation and best practices.
- [Spam Laws: United States](#). Website maintained by David E. Sorkin, professor at John Marshall Law School (IL), that includes federal laws, state laws and selected cases.

Student Services

- ["As Students Power Up, Colleges Rewire."](#) Associated Press article by James Hannah, 11/20/03, about the need to upgrade the electrical capacities in dorms throughout the country.
- ["The Role of Student Affairs in Distance Education: Cyber-Services or Virtual Communities."](#) Article by Mark Kretovics, Kent State University (OH), in *Online Journal of Distance Learning Education* (6:3). Fall 2003, on the need for student affairs to offer opportunities for online students to be connected. Areas to address include provision of services, creation of community, oversight of distance education, and graduate preparation program involvement.
- ["Wake Forest \(NC\) to Offer IP Phoning."](#) Article by Ben Charney, CNET News.com, 11/4/03, on school plans to replace landline phones inside 1900 dorm rooms with an Internet-based service.
- [Rate Your Campus.com](#). Website created by FinancialAid.com to allow high school students to see what college life is really like at schools whose students have completed an opinion survey.

www.spcollege.edu/eagle/research/BEEP/BEEP36.htm

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