


	<h2 style="text-align: center;">Next Generation Learning @ Work in</h2> <p style="text-align: right; font-size: 2em;">BT</p>
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<p>BT have always been at the forefront of innovation when it comes to learning technologies.</p> <p>Online learning has been part of its DNA for many years and new technologies and approaches such as mobile learning and rapid development tools are part of the toolkit for delivering timely learning solutions for a changing business.</p> <p>This case study, winner of the 2008 e-learning solution of the year award at WOLCE, highlights the next step in BT's journey to high performance through the development of an award-winning collaborative social learning solution with partner Accenture.</p>	<div style="text-align: center;">    </div>
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The journey so far

BT is one of the world's leading providers of communications solutions and services operating in 170 countries. Its principal activities include networked IT services; local, national and international telecommunications services; and broadband and Internet products and services. In the United Kingdom, BT serves more than 20 million business and residential customers as well as provides network services to other telecommunications operators. BT employs approximately 100,000 people and is a *Fortune* 500 company.

Over the years, BT has always looked for new ways to equip their people with the information needed to excel in a fast changing and competitive marketplace. Training requirements are

diverse across the organisation of approximately 100,000 people and online technologies offered a range of benefits including speed of delivery, effectiveness, accessibility, flexibility and track ability and cost. The BT Academy, established in 2001 and updated and replaced in 2007 with a single global, enterprise wide solution known as Route2Learn is one of the largest corporate learning management systems in Europe. It is a virtual learning resource, offering access to over 3000 e-learning titles and 1000 classroom courses, on subjects ranging from Health & Safety to business leadership skills.

And the academy is widely used - the portal receives around 4000 hits every day, and is estimated to have cut BT's training costs by 40%.

Innovation is in its blood. BT was amongst the first to embrace [mobile technologies](#) (to address the needs of 30,000 field staff) and pioneered an award winning [collaborative system](#) for authoring, managing and deploying learning content quickly in response to changing needs.

The existing systems were good at delivering consistent content to diverse and dispersed audiences; they also helped to introduce efficiencies in management and administration of learning and tracking compliance within the business. However to date, very little money or attention had been focused on affecting and improving the learning and development that naturally takes place in the workplace.

The next challenge

BT is a company in transformation—moving from a traditional telecommunications company to one that is focused on software and services, with customer services as the prime marketplace differentiator. Central to its strategic transformation agenda is the development and roll out of a 21st century network, which is the world's most advanced next generation network. The 21st century network will provide a broad range benefits to BT's customers, including new voice, data, broadband and multimedia services. To compete and win in the marketplace, BT needs a workforce with dramatically new skills and capabilities, thus requiring significant and targeted investments in learning programs to enable appropriate re-skilling and up-skilling.

As part of its broader initiatives to support this workforce transformation, BT was determined to unlock the potential of the learning and development that takes place in the everyday work environment.

BT recognized that the knowledge its people need to do their jobs reside in multiple "locations," and needs to be accessible through structured learning events as well as informal collaborative interactions. By creating an environment for continuous, networked learning, BT would achieve its workforce transformation goals.

BT was looking for a solution that would help achieve the following outcomes:

- Compress time to competency
- Capture and reuse tacit knowledge
- Provide quick and consistent responses to constant changes
- Eliminate organizational silos
- Attract new entrants (such as the Millennials)
- Reduce training costs

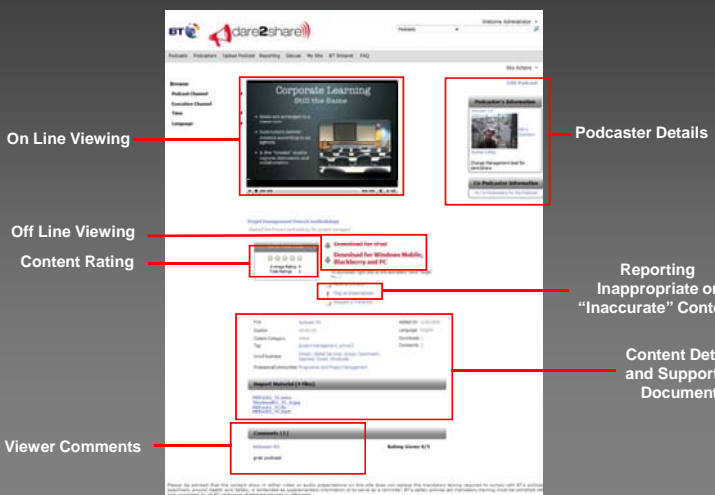

The solution

In February 2008, BT asked Accenture to showcase some Web 2.0 approaches and technologies that could address the learning and development challenge with a desire to take one forward. BT was most intrigued by the Podcasting Kit for SharePoint solution that runs on Microsoft SharePoint as it would leverage existing technologies and investments, align with BT's knowledge management and collaboration strategies, and address the key challenges and goals expressed by the BT Learning Council.

BT selected Accenture to complete a Podcasting Kit for SharePoint proof-of-concept project to confirm its applicability as well as the business case. The Podcasting Kit was renamed for use in BT as Dare2Share. Dare2Share is an internal You Tube style podcasting platform where employees can create and upload short learning nuggets to their colleagues in either video or audio format.

Dare2Share allows BT employees to learn from each other by rapidly capturing and spreading learning throughout the organization in the form of podcasts, discussion threads, blogs, RSS feeds and other traditional knowledge assets (documents, courses and portals).

Dare2Share makes learning content easy to find,

<h3 style="text-align: center;">Viewing Learning Content</h3>  <p>On Line Viewing</p> <p>Off Line Viewing</p> <p>Content Rating</p> <p>Viewer Comments</p> <p>Podcaster Details</p> <p>Reporting Inappropriate or "Inaccurate" Content</p> <p>Content Details and Supporting Documents</p>	<p>Staff can view content on or off line and can comment on and rate each piece as well as report inaccurate content.</p>
<h3 style="text-align: center;">Discussion Learning Content</h3>  <p>Discussion Forum</p> <p>Blog</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Instant Message ▪ Email ▪ Voice Call ▪ Schedule Meeting 	<p>Staff can also comment on content and contact the author directly.</p>

Learning is immediate, relevant and presented in the context of the work. Learning segments are short and available on a variety of devices. High quality content is quickly identified and utilized, experts are easily discovered and contacted, and the learning experience is personalized and social.

Eric Davidove (Accenture Senior Executive working with BT on Dare2Share) commented that 'Dare2Share is an extraordinary solution for an extraordinary business need – it offers BT a coherent way to support information creation and sharing, team communication and coordination, professional communities and informal "social" interactions.'

The Business application

BT did not just want a piecemeal deployment of specific web 2.0 capabilities, the aim was to have an integrated, seamless, free form, and easy to use social learning environment to augment traditional learning methods. Their key three strategic aims are to deliver business value, overcome cultural barriers, and appropriately govern participation and behaviour.

To address this, Accenture worked with BT in a proof-of-concept project that had two primary work streams. One work stream focused on understanding how the BT culture, organisational structure, work practices and policies might help or hinder the success of this new technology. The second work stream focused on the technical aspects of the solution that included building and testing activities, ensuring that the technology would work in the BT environment and specifying the technical requirements to the infrastructure and network.

During the proof of concept project, the team found that there were limitless subject categories and styles that could be covered in the podcasting method. Subject categories were diverse ranging from product overviews, leadership thoughts and strategies, hints and tips, lessons learned and project overviews. Participants created practical demonstrations, slideshows with voice overs, system simulations, interviews and stories and lectures.

The reaction

Participants in the Dare2Share proof-of-concept project were very supportive of the solution. On a scale of 10, they rated its relevance as a technology and approach at 8.8.

- *'We all use our networks on a day to day basis to get things done, the power of Dare2Share is that it helps you broaden that network and gives you a structure that you can tap into easily'* – programme director
- *'There are lots of technical procedures which are dead simple to do but which people do once in a blue moon so they've normally lost their book or can't remember how to do it. A podcast of these processes would save so much time and reduce mistakes'* – field engineer
- *'Podcasting was fun! It's not difficult to talk about a subject if you are an expert in it, As long as you have the information at your fingertips its fine. Forget the camera, imagine you are talking to a colleague –it's better than talking to an audience of 300 AND you can retake and edit if you need to'* – Sales

The team also spent a great deal of time talking with business people who were uncertain about the business benefits of social learning and who have fears over the negative implications of losing control over people and content. It was clear that this project was not about the technology – it's more to do with culture and leadership. To address these concerns, the team discussed how information was currently being shared within the business – via conversations e-mail etc in a way that was not transparent or manageable. They were able to start to overcome some of these concerns by highlighting that Dare2Share captures what is already happening in the business but in a way that ensures that information sharing is both transparent and also subject to suitable guidelines.

BT is looking to build on this success with a larger pilot program for five thousand people at the beginning of 2009 followed by full deployment to all BT employees in middle of 2009. A conservative estimate is total efficiency savings of more than £8 million each year in employee time as well as travel costs.

Examples from the proof of concept that help to build this business case include:

Need	Benefit	Example stories from the business (based on estimates)
Systems training	Extra capacity of 960 days per annum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 wholesale systems require 4 internal updates and 4 customer updates a year • Podcast delivery will reduce 2 days of delivery effort and 4 days travel for each trainer (and no travel costs)
Hints and tips	Extra capacity of 10,000 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6000 employers are regularly providing hints and tips to others – each expert providing the same advice 25 times in a year • 12.5 hours saved by not having to repeat same advice over and over again
Operational Overview	Extra capacity 8000 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10,000 frontline managers each providing a team briefing via email 3 times a year. • Podcast delivery will reduce briefing development by 2 hours

“The business case shows an exceptional financial benefit to BT Group and Dare2Share will help us address our unmet learning and development needs. I strongly believe Dare2Share will contribute to the company’s workforce transformation agenda and becoming the industry leader in customer service, which are the ultimate goals.”

Peter Butler, head of learning, BT Group plc.

Moving forward

BT are not looking to replace traditional learning methods, but to augment them with support for informal learning and collaborative interactions. An environment for social learning will not only help to deliver mandatory and skills-based training more efficiently but will also build on those interventions by creating opportunities to foster learner interaction via a social network. Dare2Share differs from other e-learning approaches because it brings a comprehensive intuitive, simple and participatory experience around the need to learn and develop on the job.

Learning typically takes place in either a formal environment (targeted e-learning or face to face course) or informally across the organisation which is difficult to monitor. This approach has the potential to bridge the gap between formal and informal learning, Dare2Share allows staff to pool resources that are linked to learning, knowledge management and collaboration but also allows the organisation to monitor what people are talking and learning about and feedback useful intelligence to those planning formal learning within the organisation.

It is the next logical step in the journey.

Hints and tips to encourage social learning

- You cannot simply throw “these things” over the wall and expect people to adopt and use them.
 - Take a business driven approach to learning and development rather than a technology driven approach.
 - Encourage debate around new approaches – not everyone will be comfortable with a more transparent approach to sharing knowledge
- Use a proof of concept to address both cultural and technical issues to encourage participation
- Create guidelines to help staff create and publish content:
 - Keep the guides practical
 - Encourage staff to check and apply policies that currently exist around communication such as e-mail, blogs or Wiki etiquette, and presentation or meeting practices.
 - Encourage staff to get their peers to review before publishing
- Encourage participants to provide feedback in a constructive way
- In a regulated industry build in processes to endorse specific content (eg content health and safety implications).
- Expect only 5-10% of audience to be contributors, most will be consumers
- As more and more people participate in social learning and grow their network, the value to the individual and the business increases.
 - Individual networks can grow by both consuming and creating content