

***The Role of Quality in e-Learning: From
“Page-Turners” to Motivating and Engaging
Online Courses***

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Theme

- Online learning fails when we use new technology to do old things – page turning, for example, works wonderfully in books, miserably online
- In a similar manner, we will find that e-government fails when we use new technology to do old things – online voting and online town halls, for example, are good ideas that may turn out very badly



Theme (2)

- The key to success in both e-learning and e-government hinges on the idea of *participation*
- This involves changing learners from passive *consumers* of learning to active *producers* of learning
- And in e-government, this involves changing citizens from passive *consumers* of governance to active *producers* of governance



SECTION TITLE

Government, E-Learning and Quality

My thesis: that governments can play a major role toward increasing the quality of online courses through the provision of syndicated content services



Three Trends

- This is an idea that brings together three separate trends:
 - 1.The use of web services to distribute information
 - 2.The creation of learning object repository networks
 - 3.The shift from ‘page-turning’ content-based courses to knowledge driven learning communities



Beyond the Portal (Web Services)

- General idea: to provide access to data and functionality to remote applications
- Examples: currency conversion, language translation, shipping, and claims processing
- In Education: the idea is that government services can be delivered directly to online courses
- Examples: civic information, demographics and statistics, laws and legislation, budgets, research reports...



Issues

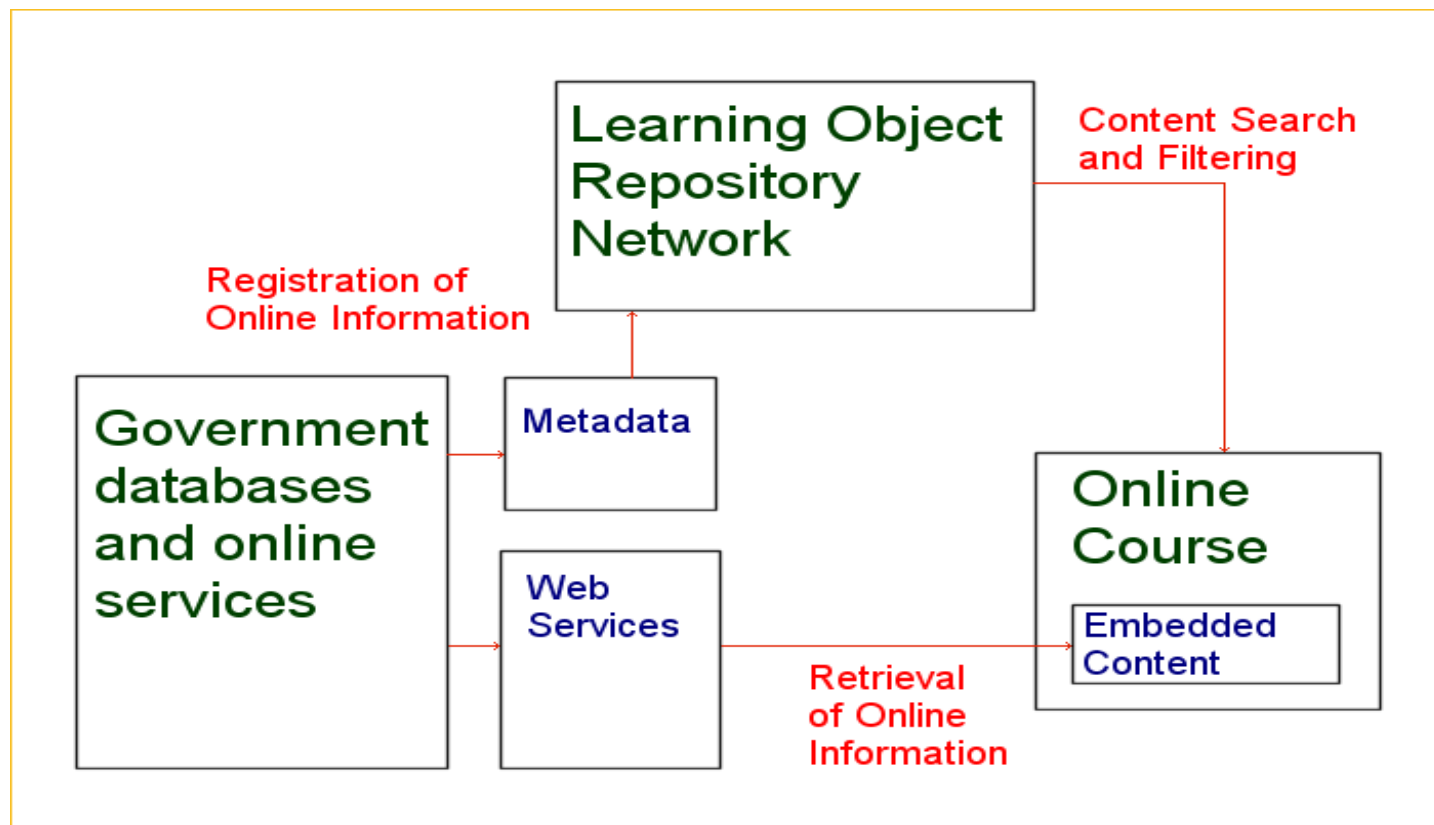
- Data integrity – trust in the authority of government information is paramount
- Copyright and royalties – issues regarding the ownership of and payment for different types of government information (especially that collected from private sources)
- Protection of Privacy – we need to ensure that someone's continuing case history won't be the topic of Social Welfare 101
- And more (the line-up starts at the right)



Learning Object Repository Network

- Learning Objects: digital resources used to support learning online
- Repository: collection of learning objects from which, using search and filtering processes, instructors and students can locate learning objects
- Repository Network: system that allows instructors and students to use multiple learning object repositories through a single interface
 - Example: EduSource, a pan-Canadian learning Object Repository Network

Architecture





(It Works the Other Way Too)

- Since learning objects from *other* sources are available as web services...
- Learning opportunities can be incorporated into online government services and programs
- Example: Statistical Methods courses available through Statistics Canada services, Macroeconomics courses available through online budget reports, Nigerian Culture course available through online press release about trade negotiations...



Knowledge Driven Learning Communities

- This idea brings together two separate trends:
 1. The use of knowledge management in learning, and
 2. Informal learning and learning communities
- The idea here is to create online environments that draw on government information, online learning materials, and more to create an interactive, multi-user simulation



Example: The Budget Simulator

- An online resource that allows you to create your own version of the Federal budget
- Enables access to real-time financial and economic information
- Fosters learning by providing access to course materials in accounting, macroeconomics, and more
- Allows individuals or teams to compare budgets (and argue for their preferences)



From Simulation to Reality

- There is no reason, over time, why we could not convert the Budget Simulator from an instrument that teaches about the Federal budget to an instrument that allows citizens to directly *create* the Federal budget
- Such a process would necessarily be gradual and generational as the budget simulator passes over time from an interesting exercise to an influential ‘polling’ device to an active instrument in setting government policy



Resources

- A Web Services Primer -
<http://www.xml.com/pub/a/2001/04/04/webservices/>
- The Learning Object Economy –
http://www.downes.ca/files/Learning_Object_Economy.htm
- EduSource – <http://www.edusource.ca/>
- Stephen Downes – <http://www.downes.ca>

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