

dL

STAR



March 2009 | Issue 7 | Vol. 3

SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP

DLS Welcomes New Product Manager	2
dL Summit	2

SECTION 2: TRAINING DEVELOPMENT

Asynchronous Distributed Learning Instructor Course Launched	3
Are you missing a critical aspect of test analysis?	4
Rosetta Stone® Version 3 Gets Soldiers Speaking Faster	5
ALMS Myth Busters	5
ebook Readers Proven Successful	6

SECTION 3: SOLDIER'S CORNER

dL Resources	7
--------------	---

A TRADOC, PM DLS, ATSC, ARNG, and USARC publication

Welcome to the seventh edition of the dL STAR!

As the TRADOC Capabilities Manager (TCM) for The Army Distributed Learning Program (TADLP), I am once again proud to introduce this issue of the dL Star. I am particularly excited about the dL Summit, which was held 8-12 December at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. Our goal was to determine the operational and institutional dL requirements and the way ahead for future dL products to satisfy all dL requirements across the Army Training and Education Enterprise with particular emphasis on support to ARFORGEN. From the participant feedback we received the Summit was a great success. Our article on the Summit describes and discusses the goals, execution and outcomes of the Summit and the way forward in greater detail. Additionally, this issue contains a number of articles about a variety of topics of interest to the dL community: the ALMS, e-learning, the newly introduced iLiad ebook readers, an upcoming asynchronous dL Instructor course, and a first-hand account of the challenges posed in test analysis.

Our office continues to receive immense feedback on the dL Star from the field and dL training community. Our subscriber list grows with each publication. If you know of anyone who would benefit from receiving the dL Star, encourage them to subscribe. For questions on dL or to share a good news dL story, contact our team at: distributed.learning@us.army.mil. We are here to serve you!

COL Robert C. Morris, Jr.
TCM TADLP/ATIS

Subscribe to the dL STAR



SECTION 1: LEADERSHIP

DLS Welcomes New Product Manager



The Army Distributed Learning System (DLS) recently hosted a Change of Charter ceremony for incoming Product Manager, Lieutenant Colonel Antonio Boston. Mr. Gary Winkler, the Program Executive Officer for Enterprise Information Systems presided over the ceremony. In this new role, Lt. Col. Boston will oversee the day-to-day operation of the Army's solutions for acquiring, deploying and maintaining a worldwide dL system to ensure our nation's Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians receive critical training for mission success.

Lt. Col. Boston most recently served as the Assistant Product Director for Tactical Logistic System (PD TLS) at Fort Lee, Va. under Project Manager, Logistic Information Systems (PM LIS). He has been in various leadership positions since joining the U.S. Army in 1989. He was the Company Commander for Company A, 787th Military Police Battalion Training Brigade in Fort McClellan, Ala. He was a Company Executive Officer and a Platoon Leader for Company C 3/66 Armor Battalion for the 2nd Armor Division (Forward) in Garlstedt, Germany and Saudi Arabia.

Lt. Col. Boston is a graduate of the Program Management Executive Course, Command and General Staff College, Army Systems Automation Course, Material Acquisition Management Course, Military Police Advance and Armor Officer Basic Course. He received his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice from Elizabeth City State University in Elizabeth City, N.C., and holds a master's degree in Computer Resources and Information Management from Webster University in St. Louis, Mo.

"I am confident that Lt. Col. Boston's leadership and background in dL, information technology and program management provides him with necessary experience to move the Army's and DLS' future forward," said Lieutenant Colonel Robert A. Bean, outgoing Product Manager, DLS. "Lt. Col. Boston recognizes that dL in the information age has unleashed the potential to transform Army training and provide the Army with a capability for obtaining the state of readiness necessary to accomplish its mission."

dL Summit

The Army dL community faces multiple, complex and ongoing challenges in their efforts to fully leverage dL technologies in their respective training strategies. To ensure compliance with DOD and DA guidance across the Distributed Learning Directorate (dLD) portfolios (dL and Army Training Infrastructure Architecture (ATIA)) the Director of dLD requested a Summit with representation from each dL stakeholder concerning the direction and future of the dL program. The intent was for every Requirements Generator and Customer of dL across the Army to have a voice and full opportunity to input their requirements and participate in improving the processes and procedures that impact the efficiency and effectiveness of the dL program.

The dL summit met 8 – 12 Dec 2008 at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, VA to gather, organize, and finalize requirements across the dL and ATIA portfolios, allowing TRADOC to baseline a strategy for The Army Distributed Learning Program (TADLP) and Army Training Information Systems (ATIS) by integrating solutions derived from the Army dL Training Community's key stakeholders. The focus was on all applicable policies, regulations, processes, and modalities. The purpose was twofold: to determine operational and institutional dL requirements and to determine the way ahead for future dL products to satisfy all dL training requirements.

There were 189 key members of the Army's dL community who gathered for this four-day event. Participants were divided into the following panels and groups according to their expertise.

Panel	Participants
Army Learning Management System (ALMS)	26
Army Training Information System (ATIS)	17
Blended Learning	21
Classrooms	24
Courseware	21
Gaming	22
Life-Long Learning Center (LLC)	27
Other Groups	
Support	18
Leadership	13

Each panel was lead by a professional Lean Six Sigma expert and co-facilitated by a domain subject matter expert (SME). The TRADOC G-3/5/7 dLD Team Lead supported management of



each panel. Panels consisted of SMEs from across the enterprise, selected by the TRADOC leads and empowered to provide consolidated requirements in each domain for their areas of responsibility.

The panels succeeded in emphasizing the importance of each domain to the whole of the dL program and in determining a way ahead to integrate processes and procedures associated with those areas. The panels also achieved the objective to execute a detailed enterprise level look at Army dL that will set the course for the future and contribute to a detailed, long-range dL Strategic Plan as well as near-term improvements and actions with immediate or near-term return.

The TCM TADLP/ATIS is required to brief Army G-3/5/7 the Summit outcomes and FY 10-15 Program Objective Memorandum (POM) requirements in preparation for the upcoming Management Decision Package (MDEP) review. Following the Summit DA G-3/5/7 conducted an initial review on 22 Jan 2009 of all information finalized with MDEP requirements for the FY10-15 POM. This was the final opportunity to input any requirements that may necessitate adjustments to the FY09 budget.

As a result of the Summit, the following tasks were included in an official HQ TRADOC Tasking Order dated 22 Dec 2008:

- All organizations will review/validate organization dL Summit requirements.
- TRADOC and NON-TRADOC Schools and Centers along with ATSC will provide or confirm (if already provided) the cost and other resource information for operation of their ILMS/LMS or, as in the case of the Reimer Digital Library (RDL), the operating resources required for non-LMS capabilities that offer dL courses.
- Complete dL Summit classroom assessment.
- All organizations will review their courses maintained in the ILMS (before it was shut down 17 December 2008) and provide the PM DLS and Courseware Panel leads a list of those courses and a determination if they need to migrate to the ALMS or be terminated. For those migrating, indicate if they are current or require update prior to migration.

- All schools and centers along with ATSC will provide information related to courseware management and development for dL Courses. This will include budget, labor (by labor category), and, for ATSC, this will include all functions relating to Courseware development on behalf of dLD, to include contract administration and courseware testing. Indicate any funds that are already allocated or programmed and any anticipated shortfall.
- All Schools and Centers will provide input by panel topic to the Panel lead on how dL supports specific Army Solider Training priorities and the Army's stated priorities for dL.

Bringing the SMEs together in one location gave them the ability to physically meet and network with those who they generally only work with through a variety of dL media. The face-to-face interaction not only stimulated rapid productivity, it also set the stage for the next dL Summit, tentatively scheduled for second quarter 2009.

SECTION 2: TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

Asynchronous Distributed Learning Instructor Course Launched

The Staff and Faculty Development Division at the Army Training Support Center (Ft. Eustis) is now teaching a new online course, the Asynchronous Distributed Learning Instructor Course (AdLIC), using the Army's Enterprise Blackboard platform. The instructor, Dr. Scott Langhorst, began a 20+ student cohort in AdLIC in mid-October; this cohort will complete its instructional activities for the course during the first week of November.

AdLIC serves as an introduction to asynchronous learning and provides the experienced instructor with skills and competencies necessary to successfully facilitate an asynchronous course. The AdLIC course introduces methodologies, theories, and instructional strategies for teaching in the asynchronous environment. AdLIC is designed using five course modules. Each module contains interactive multimedia instruction (IMI) that enables students to view lessons online from any location. In addition to IMI, each module contains at least one practical exercise (PE) to provide



students with the opportunity to test their newly attained knowledge and skills relevant to asynchronous instruction. To be eligible for enrollment, an individual must have 12 months of instructional platform experience and be a graduate of the Army Basic Instructor Course or an approved TRADOC equivalent. This course is 40 hours in length, conducted on a part-time basis (approximately 10 hours per week), and is taught asynchronously (online) in Blackboard over a four-week period.

If you are interested in enrolling in the AdLIC course, or obtaining additional information about other ATSC SFDD courses, please contact Mr. Ron Brady at the Staff and Faculty Development Division of the Education and Training Support Directorate, U.S. Army Training Support Center at Ft. Eustis (757-878-4535 or ron.brady@us.army.mil).

Are you missing a critical aspect of test analysis?

The dawn of test analysis in the age of dL is fraught with danger. We must keep in mind that technology is a means to an end. We can find ourselves over- infatuated with the interactive wizardry and paying insufficient attention to critical aspects of the training product. Take a moment to ask yourself what those critical aspects might be.

One critical aspect of the IMI product that often gets shortchanged is the fidelity and accuracy of the scoring mechanism used to assess checks on learning and examinations. Ignoring this area during individual and group validation is nothing short of risky business. I've learned this first-hand, the hard way. My journey down this road started when I was assigned the task of managing the group validation. As I was laying out the criteria, the issue of test analysis presented itself. Based on what I knew about the product from individual trials, the procurement of detailed information to support test analysis needed a boost so I approached the contractor for assistance. The need existed at the basic level for a tool to identify the question, the Enabling Learning Objective (ELO), and whether it was scored a go or no-go by the student. After holding my breath for a week or so, the contractor presented me with a means to address these needs.

The date for the group validation phase arrived, and we got off to a fairly smooth start. We were looking at some test results, and I noticed a trend that showed everyone failing a particular set of questions. Further inquiry revealed that the scoring script was showing all answers to the questions as being incorrect. My faith in the seemingly infallible wizardry of the scoring mechanism of the IMI product had been shaken and I found myself in a bind. Considering I was about 12 months into an 18-month contract, the obvious question at the time was, "What could I have done to catch this earlier?" The 5 golden rules I offer you are:

1. Develop a plan to start the evaluation of the accuracy and fidelity of the scoring mechanism as early as possible. Initiate this examination at the earliest delivery.
2. Develop an assessment tool that gives the learner meaningful feedback on examinations. The assessment tool can perform dual duty by giving learners feedback and checks on learning, in addition to providing information to be used for test analysis. This feedback should, at a minimum, provide information that identifies the test question, the topic or ELO covered, and whether it was answered correctly or not. A luxury assessment tool can go into more detail.
3. Ensure that you have made it possible in your test design for learners to see if they have answered all test questions prior to submitting their tests for grading. This feature helped me to gather qualitative feedback from the students during the group validation.
4. Ensure that more feedback is provided to the learner than just a go or no-go. We have to move forward in putting more efficiency in the learning process. The learning battle is not between us and the learner. The battle is between the learner and the material. We have to enable the learner.
5. Last but not least, don't assume that the builder of the IMI product has got it all under control. It is a team effort.

The lack of accuracy and fidelity in the scoring mechanism instills a lack of confidence in the training product. It also short circuits your assessment process and provides faulty feedback to the learner. In short: everyone benefits when we learn to be "learner-centric."

Andrew J. Mason is an Instructional Systems Specialist assigned to the Distance Education Branch in the University of Information Technology, DOT, at the Signal Center. He can be contacted at aj.mason@us.army.mil.



Rosetta Stone® Version 3 Gets Soldiers Speaking Faster

Army Soldiers and civilian personnel now have access to language training designed to get them speaking another language even faster. Rosetta Stone version 3 foreign language software uses technology to create an environment of complete immersion in the studied language. The Army e-Learning initiative has delivered language training to over 180,000 uniformed and civilian Army personnel.

Units preparing to deploy across the globe are using Army e-Learning for pre-deployment training, including foreign-language instruction. Courses in Arabic, Farsi and Pashto are not only making measurable differences in basic communication skills, but may also aid in intelligence gathering capabilities related to the Global War on Terror. More than 1/3 of the personnel are studying Arabic, which is one of the numerous mission-critical languages offered through Army e-Learning, a component of the U.S. Army Distributed Learning System (DLS).

Now available in twenty one languages, version 3 of the language training software features state-of-the-art speech recognition technology and guided pronunciation exercises and simulated dialogues that build confidence and perfect pronunciation. It is designed to provide Soldier's the fundamental language skills needed to communicate upon deployment.

"Foreign language training provides our Soldiers, leaders, and Army civilians online courses geared towards building their proficiency in another language as quickly as possible," says Lt. Col. Antonio Boston, Product Manager for DLS. "Language skills, especially speaking and listening skills, are critical. The new upgrades to the software focus heavily on building those key skills quickly, making it an ideal solution for our needs."

Stan Davis, Deputy Product Manager for DLS and Project Officer for Army e-Learning adds, "We are proud to provide a free, state-of-the-art solution for our troops. With this latest upgrade, Soldiers will get to develop their conversational skills, as they use new technologies and practice producing new phrases that will help them as they carry out their operational duties abroad."

ALMS Myth Busters

Myth 1: The ALMS is for Web-based training only

Reality: The ALMS supports instructor-led, virtual classroom collaboration, and blended training in addition to Web-based training delivery. These capabilities are based on training requirements provided to PM DLS by TRADOC in 2001 for development of the ALMS.

Myth 2: Organizations using the ALMS have to pay for the service.

Reality: PM DLS is chartered by requirements to support individual training execution for the Army. Organizations utilizing the ALMS for this core mission are not charged for this service. It is possible that an organization with unique training requirements may be asked to provide some funding to support the development of the requirement.

Myth 3: The ALMS is the same thing as Saba.

Reality: PM DLS selected Saba Learning 3.4 over other candidate commercial product lines in 2002, based on training and training management requirements provided by TRADOC. In addition to Saba, the ALMS is composed of other software products, such as Centra, Oracle, Weblogic, 3PAR, and Vitria. Some have been configured and customized to better fit the Army training mission. However, the focus of the ALMS has always been on providing capabilities, not products. When capability requirements dictate and funding allows, PM DLS will select whatever commercial product best meets the needs of the training community for electronic support.

Myth 4: ALMS exchanges data with any of the Army's several Blackboard applications.

Reality: The Army Learning Management System has a Web services-based data exchange only with TRADOC's Enterprise Blackboard application, located at Fort Eustis, VA., and no other Army-managed Blackboard applications. There are two principal functions for the data exchange: it provides Enterprise Blackboard users with access to ATRRS for accepting class reservations and posting training results. It also provides the ALMS with the capability of supporting instructor-facilitated training delivery types.

Myth 5: ALMS is the preferred environment for performing training development.

Reality: The ALMS is not a training development system. Its capabilities are based on TRADOC-validated



requirements, which focus mainly on individual training execution. The ALMS does have validated, but deferred, requirements to accept data developed in electronic training development applications, such as TRADOC's Training Development Component of its ATIA-M family of applications, and will execute these requirements as funding allows.

Myth 6: ALMS is a TRADOC system.

Reality: The ALMS is an Army system, funded by DA G-3 and managed as an Army acquisition system by Product Manager Distributed Learning System (PM DLS), through Program Executive Officer, PEO Enterprise Information Systems (PEO EIS). TRADOC serves as the functional representative and Combat Developer for PM DLS and the ALMS, providing validated training and training management requirements.

Myth 7: ALMS is for SCORM courseware only.

Reality: The ALMS does support SCORM courseware developed under SCORM specifications (SCORM 2004, 3rd Edition, and earlier). It also supports courseware developed under such formats as AICC, HTML, and most any non-interactive, file-based content, such as MS Office products, Adobe Acrobat, etc.

Myth 8: DA Civilians aren't authorized to use the ALMS.

Reality: DA Civilians are among the original audience groups supported by the ALMS, (along with Active Army, USAR, and Army National Guard). DLS has implemented validated requirements expanding user population access levels to include most Services' Active, Reserve, and Civilian personnel.

Myth 9: To use Centra collaboration, you must first set the session up in Saba.

Reality: The ALMS has implemented Centra collaboration in two ways: 1) integrated with the Saba based LMS so that collaboration sessions can be part of larger training events, such as a course iteration, with participants drawn from the class roster; 2) as a stand-alone application for scheduling and conducting sessions as single events. The second method requires no set-up in Saba.

Myth 10: The ALMS people talk about having a connection to ATRRS, but it never has worked.

Reality: PM DLS and Army G-1 implemented the existing interface between ATRRS and the ALMS in 2004. There have been a few short (2-5 days) periods when interface operations have been interrupted due to technical or configuration issues.

Myth 11: ALMS owns the courseware hosted on the system.

Reality: When proponent organizations place a course in the ALMS for hosting and management, they retain "ownership" of the training content and materials. PM DLS personnel will assist and advise, but the training strategy and overall responsibility for conducting the training rests with the training proponent. If and when problems arise, PM DLS has responsibility for resolving technical issues (accessibility, record keeping, reporting, etc.) and the proponent is responsible for issues related to content, student eligibility, and the technical performance of courseware residing in the system.

Myth 12: ALMS cannot support courseware developed under TRADOC's Instructional Strategy for courseware of optional Pretest, Content, Posttest A, and Posttest B.

Reality: To date, there are no known commercial learning management systems that can execute this Instructional strategy as an out-of-the-box capability. In early 2008, PM DLS and Saba successfully developed and implemented a customized patch to the ALMS' underlying commercial product that contains the logic and user interface modifications needed to execute courseware developed using this training approach. Courseware, such as that developed in SCORM 1.2 under TRADOC's DL XXI contract, now executes as designed.

ebook Readers Proven Successful

The Distributed Learning Directorate recently acquired ebook Readers from Irex Technologies. These readers, called iLiads, are 8 ½" x 6" and weigh just over 15 oz. They have the largest viewable screen of all ebook readers. The Readers were distributed to Soldiers in the Advanced Stability Operations course at the Army Command and General Staff College, where the required readings and publications were then downloaded onto the device. The response from users was overwhelmingly favorable. Students reported they were able to use the readers



for multiple purposes and recommended preloading the ebook readers with all required FMs and JPs. Schools interested in the ebook readers should contact Amy Loughran at amy.loughran@us.army.mil or 757-788-2155 for more information.

SECTION 3: SOLDIER'S CORNER

The dL STAR wants to hear from you!

Email the dL STAR at distributed.learning@us.army.mil if you would like to be added to our distribution list, if you know someone who would be interested in receiving the dL STAR, or if you have a dL related article or link that you would like to see posted in the next issue.

Do you have a question or issue on dL Training? Lost a password?

Contact the Army Training Help Desk (ATHD) at www.tradoc.army.mil/athd.htm for help!!

dL Resources

Program: The Army Distributed Learning Program (TADLP)

Website: www.tradoc.army.mil/tadlp

Program: Distributed Learning System (DLS)

Website: www.dls.army.mil

Program: Army e-Learning

Website: www.us.army.mil , select "My Education"

Program: Army Training Support Center (ATSC)

Website: www.atsc.army.mil

Program: Soldier Training Homepage

Website: www.train.army.mil