

October, 2009



*“Education,
Collaboration,
Fellowship, Networking.”*

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First IACME/ISMS Joint Educational Conference a Huge Success!

Nearly 200 attendees participated in the first ever IACME and Illinois State Medical Society jointly educational conference entitled “Collaboration: Building our Community of Learners and Educators” that was held on October 2, 2009, at the Stonegate Conference Center in Hoffman Estates.

Attendees participated in a very engaging plenary session presented by Norman Kahn on “Not Your Father’s CME” as well as a panel discussion on Performance Improvement CME. In addition, numerous breakout sessions were available on a variety of CME topics. Handouts from this event will be available to participants upon request (admin@iacmeonline.org) and be sure to view photos from the event at the IACME website www.iacmeonline.org

A special “thank you” goes out to Jeanette Harmon, IACME Program Committee Chair, and Rita LePard of the ISMS and IACME Board of Directors for planning and executing such a great event.

IACME Annual Alliance Event 2010 Mark your Calendars

Thursday, January 28, 2010

Members in attendance at the Alliance for CME Annual Conference in New Orleans should plan to attend the IACME Reception from 6:00-8:00pm.

Additional details will be available soon at www.iacmeonline.org/events and registration for this networking event will open in December!

Physicians are Tuned-In: Is Your eLearning Platform Ready for Prime Time?

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IACME members involved with Internet-based home study programs likely represent the spectrum of experiences in eLearning platforms: strategic planning, launch, course hosting and data reporting compliance. For everyone engaged in eLearning, one eLearning fact has become clear: the Internet-based education format is here to stay. The growth

curve is highly significant, perhaps unprecedented, among physician participants in ACCME accredited learning activities.

According to a comparison of 2005 and 2008 annual report data (the latest available online from the ACCME), “Physician Participants” in Internet CME (live and enduring material activities; directly sponsored or jointly sponsored) is the fastest growing learning format. In 2005 alone, ACCME annual report data indicated there were 1,368,285 “Physician Participants” in Internet learning (live and enduring materials, directly sponsored or jointly sponsored activities).

By the end of 2008, ACCME annual report data indicated that “Physician Participant” numbers for these Internet-based learning categories had grown to 4,237,443 (nearly 300% growth since the 2005 ACCME annual report data). This number represents 40% of physician participants in all forms of ACCME accredited learning activities in 2008.

Functional definitions for eLearning and elearning platforms: Seeking Common Ground

Google the word “eLearning” and you will see several definitions; however one we find quite meaningful is as follows:

“There is some debate about an exact definition of e-learning or electronic learning, but a useful definition is “the delivery of learning via any form of electronic media.”¹ This simple definition nearly encapsulates the two dimensions of e-learning: technology and education.”

Reference link and for further information below: *eLearning for GP educators, Radcliffe Publishing Ltd. 2006*

<http://books.google.com/books?id=tMO4wgOUcYMC&pg=PA1&dq=definition+of+e+learning#v=onepage&q=&f=true>

Google the phrase “elearning platform” and fewer definitions appear but one that seems quite functional for our discussion follows:

“Learning platforms are software-controlled learning infrastructures that attempt to replicate what teachers do in the face-to-face classroom. These platforms are normally located on a computer on the Internet (or an Intranet) and are typically accessed by means of a Web browser.”

Reference link for this definition and further information below: *Best of Australian Learning Community*

http://community.flexiblelearning.net.au/TechnologiesforLearning/content/article_442.htm

Time for your eLearning platform tune-up?

Given the rapidly expanding physician participation in Internet-based learning programs, it is clear they are watching and learning. For CME

providers across the spectrum of involvement with eLearning, keeping up with this demand based on their learners' needs is an ongoing challenge. It may be helpful for each of us to try to begin to seek answers to the overarching these overarching issue:

- Are we really delivering a high quality learning experience?
- Are we effectively getting our learners' attention among the realities of their daily work routines and fast-advancing Internet-based learning technology?

The aforementioned questions serve as a precursor to the more specific issues that need to be addressed in order to answer the question: Is our eLearning center truly ready for prime time viewing?

Self-study questions for your eLearning team

Some introspection would appear timely for any organization involved in eLearning activities. Whether you are hosting replays of your annual conference, an occasional webinar or print-based course, or managing a full-service eLearning platform, these questions still need to be answered:

- Is our eLearning platform truly needs based? In particular, do we not only develop needs based courses, but do our learning formats hosted align with our learners' preferences?
- Does our platform provide the most optimal eLearning experience possible?
- Have we surveyed our learners about their platform access and navigation experiences to ensure they have the most efficient and effective participation possible?
- Is our data capture giving us the information we need to continue to make our platform as robust possible for our learners?
- Do our learners view our platform as a primary resource for their continuing medical education or an after-thought for supplemental courses?
- Where else do our learners go to access Internet-based and live learning activities?
- Is our hosting plan providing a unique, differentiated educational experience valued by our clinician learners?

Take a few steps back; then forge ahead¹

It takes a highly integrated effort among all disciplines to plan for, launch and maintain an effective eLearning center over the long term. Steps must be carefully taken to ensure consistency in the quality of programs

and to build commitment to course participation by learners.

When developing your Internet technology learning management system, visit several existing websites and evaluate the positive and negative aspects of each site from the learner's perspective.

- Involve your Internet technology team early on to ensure they plan for a user-friendly navigation experience as well as your outcomes management needs.
- Pretest your eLearning center's learning format and website navigation among members of your target audience. Survey members every year on the quality of their learning experience.
- Establish a comprehensive launch communications plan and maintenance communications to keep the eLearning center highly visible to your learner populations.
- Conduct bimonthly or quarterly internal review meetings of your eLearning center to review outcomes and evaluation. The review group should include members of your educational team and Internet technology staff as well as invited frequent clinician learners—to ensure you maintain the learner's perspective.
- Work with your Internet technology team to keep abreast of the latest technologies for web-based learning. The field is evolving quickly and it is easy to get passed by as new learning formats are introduced to your learners.

Summary

It is clear physicians are tuned in to Internet-based CME courses. IACME members are challenged to “raise the bar” among their colleagues to ensure their existing eLearning platforms are ready for prime time participation. The stakes for success are equally high to ensure learners reap the necessary educational benefits from their experiences and view your eLearning website as a trusted, credible and meaningful resource for their professional development.

Share your comments about this article as well as your suggestions for future articles: al@elearnconnection.com

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¹ 2008 Alliance for Continuing Medical Education, *The New Quality Triad for Internet CME*, Blitz and Weidl, Almanac Newsletter, Volume 30, No. 5, May 2008.

Coming Soon

Case Study -- The Evolution of an eLearning Center: Blood Systems Education, Scottsdale, AZ

Call for CME Case Studies

Have you encountered a situation in your practice of CME that was a learning experience that you are willing to share? The IACME is asking members to help contribute to the shared expertise of our group by publishing cases from real life experience. Please write them up in a brief paragraph and send to Nikki Berry at nberry@rsna.org. Please let us know if you would like to be acknowledged or remain anonymous.

Upcoming CME Related Events:

As a reminder it is not too early to make plans for the Alliance for CME's 35th Annual Conference which will be held from Wednesday-Saturday, January 27-30, 2010, Hilton™ New Orleans Riverside New Orleans, LA.

For more information and to register, visit:

<http://www.acme-assn.org/ac/annc.html>