



The Hub Launch online training course

Analysis of feedback

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11 January 2001

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Document History

Version	Comments	Date
1.0		15/01/01

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Background

The Launch training course was developed to guide first-time users through the various parts of the Hub Intranet. It starts by explaining what each part of the screen does, including the safety bar at the top of the screen, the side menu buttons and the spoke buttons. The user is then given the chance to further explore the parts of the Hub before being transferred to the live Hub homepage. In order to further the company's use of e-technology, the Intranet project team chose to use web technology to fulfil the training requirements which such a launch would merit. The project team believed that there were significant advantages to using this training approach. In time-honoured fashion, a questionnaire was used, in this case an on-line questionnaire, to test the effectiveness of the course. In addition, the questionnaire tests the acceptability and benefits of this method of training.

The Launch training course was publicised as a hyperlink in the all-user email that was used to officially launch the hub on 5th December 2000. It also resides on the site itself as a permanent learning tool under the Help section of the Hub.

A full graphical analysis of the report is attached as an appendix, but this report highlights the main points.

Executive Summary

The overall results of this analysis show that the e-learning experience has been very well received. Over 90% of users agree that the platform of the training course has benefited both them and the organisation. Very few people in the whole group (less than 5% in each case) found the program difficult or unclear and consequently, only 1% of people would not have liked to see more training in this form. People that categorised themselves as below average in terms of computer literacy also found the online training course generally easy to use, with 73% of these users feeling that they benefited from using the technology.

Objective of the Launch Training Course

- To ensure people understand what was available on the Intranet and how to access that information and use the tools therein.
- To test the effectiveness and acceptability of this form of training course in achieving that objective.

In order to test those achievements, users are directed to an on-line questionnaire before going to the live system.

Sample Size

Of the 379 responses to the form to date, a number are blank. This is due to people submitting the form without having answered some or all of the questions. On average, this occurs over 20% of the time. Some of the questions do not include blank responses as they have a default answer (in the case of questions that have Yes/No answers).

The questionnaire also does not identify if the user has submitted the form on a previous occasion, so we cannot be sure that 379 different individuals have posted replies (although it is likely that this is the case).

Response Mechanisms

The main mechanisms used were:

- Selection from a five scale range covering extremes of capability/belief etc, for example "very apprehensive" up to "very confident".
- Selection of Yes or No from a drop-down menu.
- Selection from a series of banded ranges, for example age ranges.

Analysis

Question 1 - Testing effectiveness

This question explored the ability of the users to recall how to find certain resources that were highlighted in the training course. On the whole, users were at least confident that they could locate resources and perform basic tasks on the Hub pages. The notable exception to this is the action of adding a shortcut to the Toolbox, which 33% felt less than confident of being able to do. The Toolbox feature is currently still under test and is therefore not an immediate concern. Other areas which respondents felt less than confident about included providing feedback on the Hub (18%) and sharing ideas and views via the Discussion Forums (24%). (In anticipation of this figure, we have subsequently included a specific training package for the Forums).

Question 2 - Testing familiarity

This question asked if users had used the Hub before. 45% had not previously used the facility. This is not necessarily surprising as parts of the Hub have existed for nearly 6 months in some form and the launches of these parts have been publicised before.

Question 3 - Testing acceptability

Users were asked to comment on the ease of use of the online training package. There were no significant areas where people felt the training course was not easy to understand or useful. The responses also showed that 56% of people took less than 10 minutes to explore the training course (81% within 20 minutes), suggesting that it is an extremely time-efficient delivery method for training. Also encouraging was the number of respondents that would like to see other training presented in this way. 99% of people either positively encouraged this suggestion or didn't mind.

Question 4 - Testing the level of interaction used

An area of concern was that 41% of users didn't explore past the homepage when they were given the opportunity. This indicates that some people may be missing some of the content of the course as there is no control over the exploration of the training package.

Question 5 - Testing perceived benefits to the individual and organisation

User opinions were sought on both the benefits to them of the online training course and the benefits to the organisation. Regarding the perceived benefits to users, over 90% responded favourably to all the suggested benefits. Users were even more enthusiastic with regard to the benefits to the organisation, with over 95% supporting all the suggested benefits (cost-effective, ecologically friendly etc).

Question 6 - Finding out about the contributor

In this question, the profiles of individual users were sought. In terms of age range, the responses probably shadow the age profile of the company, with an even spread of users in all age ranges except under 25 (which represented 4% of users). The sex of users also is likely to reflect the make-up of Service Delivery, with 58% of respondents being male (78% of non-blank responses). 4% of respondents considered themselves to have below average computer literacy. These replies will be analysed in more detail below. 60% of users have a computer at home of which 73% also have the Internet at home. Of respondees, only 1 in 5 are able to use the Internet at work.

Computer Illiterate Users

As discussed above, 4% of users considered themselves to be below average in terms of computer literacy. A number of the questions were therefore reassessed using these people's responses to gauge how successful they had found the course. The results were largely encouraging, but statistically we must reflect that this information comes from a very small sample of people. None reported the program as being difficult or very difficult to use and none opposed the idea of using the same technique again for other initiatives. Only one user found the training course to be unclear. The greatest opposition from this sample of users came from the answers to question 5a. Over 85% of users found it of benefit to be able to work at their own pace, over 90% found it useful to be able to revisit the training program and learn at a time that fitted into their schedule. 80% liked the fact that the training

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course reduced the amount of time spent away from their desk. However, the lowest level of satisfaction was found when users were asked if it was of benefit to learn using technology. Only 73% responded favourably. 4 users disagreed with the statement, representing 27% of the sample. It is perhaps not surprising that these users were more unhappy than the whole group (73% opposed to 93%) to use technology, but it is nonetheless encouraging for the first attempt at this type of training that nearly three-quarters of "computer illiterate" users felt that they benefited from using technology.

First-time Hub users

Of the responses to this question that were not blank, only 41% had used the Hub before. The responses of the people that had not used the Hub before were generally favourable towards being able to use the functionality that was explored in the training package. The main problem area seemed to be creating a shortcut in the Toolbox (14% apprehensive or very apprehensive). This provides the Hub with another opportunity to increase confidence in carrying out this task (perhaps by improving the instructions on the launch guide) as the functionality is not currently available. This sample of users was similar to the group as a whole in how many sections of the tutorial they visited. In both groups, the number of people using none of the sections was below 20%.

Conclusion

The effectiveness of the training course was perceived as being very high with more than 75% confidence in all areas bar one. The results are more significant for those people who consider themselves to be below average in terms of computer literacy. Of those who declared themselves as below average in terms of computer literacy no respondents found the program difficult to use nor were unfavourable to using this form of training again. The fact that close to 75% of these people found it beneficial to learn using technology, must be a good result, despite this being the lowest positive response for the questions concerning "benefits to the individual".

It would therefore appear that there is definite employee approval for this approach to learning and it is suggested that further opportunities should be sought to apply similar methods in the near future.

Appendix 1

Full Report