

NEWS YOU CAN USE

D Select > Fast Knowledge

By Eva Kaplan-Leiserson

The automatic teller machine revolutionized the way the world banks. The automatic professor machine could revolutionize the way the world learns.

That is, if it were real. Political science professor and long-time technology critic Langdon Winner created the APM as a satiric state-

ment against online education. As his alter ego, LC Winner (the *C* stands for cyberspace), said in a (fictional) radio interview, "The APM is a machine for withdrawals and deposits of knowledge."

Learners would find APMs at colleges, shopping malls, Jiffy Lubes, and other places people gather. After choosing

a course or degree and inserting a few hundred bucks in cash or on a credit card, a user would access just-in-time learning. The APM is based on the idea that the essence of education consists not of classrooms, books, teachers, or other students, but information.

LC Winner and his com-

Illustration by Claudia Newell

In an ideal world, education would consist of connecting a computer directly to a person's brain....The APM is the next best thing.

pany, EDU-SHAM (Educational Smart Hardware Alma Mater Inc.), say that education nowadays is made up of expensive infrastructure, antiquated approaches, and high-cost, low-productivity workers. But, asserts Winner, education is really only the transport of knowledge from point A to point B through the most efficient, low-cost link possible. In an ideal world, education would consist of connecting a computer directly to a person's brain. In the meantime, the APM is the next best thing.

Students would access lectures, discussions, quizzes, and more on demand. Their degrees


would be from Glow-Ball University (*global, get it?*), which has no campus or faculty, just satellites spread around the world. Forget impersonal and cookie-cutter, though. The computers would know each student's name and such information as classes previously taken, term papers written, yearly income, musical taste, and marital status, so it could personalize the information delivery.

The research facility backing all of this? The (also fictional) Center for Distant Educators.

Source/The Chronicle of Higher Education and the Automatic Professor Machine Website, www.rpi.edu/~winner/apm1.html

The New World of Work

Here at the News You Can Use desk, we've received many press releases and articles centering around one common theme: the world of work in these crazy, crazy times. Here's an overview of what you can expect:

Recruitment and retention. According to a CareerBuilder.com survey, nearly four out of 10 U.S. workers are seeking new job opportunities in 2001. Career expert Diane Strahan says there's a new type of worker—the silent job seeker—who is always looking for a better salary, job location, or work-life balance. Strahan says, "Don't confuse [his or her] silence and satisfaction with job complacency." 

HOWTO

Here are 10 email tips from Intel:

1. Don't leave emails sitting in your in-box. Read them and send answers immediately, or delete them or move them to folders organized by project.
2. Set up a temporary folder that deletes its messages every five weeks. Use it for messages you don't want right away, but may need to refer back to in the near future.
3. Help co-workers filter email by agreeing on acronyms for subject lines—for example, <AR> for action required and <MSR> for monthly status report.
4. Send email to multiple recipients only when absolutely necessary. Use the *reply to all* and *cc:* buttons sparingly.
5. Remove yourself from distribution lists you don't need to be on.
6. Avoid pileup: Use the *out of office* feature when away from the office.
7. For brief messages, fill in only the subject line so recipients don't have to open your email. Use <EOM>, the acronym for *end of message*.
8. Avoid graphics and attachments, which slow email downloads.
9. If you need to send an attachment larger than 5 MB, try putting it on the company's intranet or the Website.
10. Help your readers: If you send a 20-page attachment, tell them which pages contain the information they need.
Source/Fast Company

For more email tips and etiquette:

 this month's cc:You column, "Email for Good, Not Evil."

Human resources consulting firm Drake Beam Morin predicted recently that in 2001, workers will renew their appreciation for traditional businesses that offer stability and structure. Other attractors: challenging work, opportunities for learning, and a cultural fit within the organization. DBM predicts that corporate culture will become even more critical for attracting talented workers.

Locus of control. It used to be that you came and left work when your employer told you to; did the tasks your employer assigned; took the compensation, training, and promotions your employer offered (no back talk); and moved up the career ladder by agonizing rung. No more.

The new workplace model recognizes that people have choices. Labor, at

least at press time, is still a seller's market, and workers are becoming free agents sold to the highest—or best—bidder.

Now, workers expect to have a certain degree of control over their job tasks, benefits, and work environment. People are looking for flexibility and work-life balance. If companies can't offer those, expect to see employees walk away.

Hopscotch. To advance on their career paths, people are moving to what the Herman Group calls the "hopscotch model."

Workers jump forward, backward, laterally, or onto a completely different path, as they seek job satisfaction, freedom, and the opportunity to make a difference. Look for people taking lower pay to do the work they prefer or jumping into a completely different career to learn,

experiment, and experience. **What all this means for training.** The new knowledge-based economy and the talent shortage are bringing employee education and training programs to the forefront of companies' strategic plans.

To manage the now mission-critical education programs, companies are hiring chief learning officers to run corporate universities as self-funded businesses inside organizations, says a recent study by Corporate University Xchange.

Business education is being managed like a business, with learning officers sitting at the executive table and tailoring programs to organizational objectives and strategy. Says Jeanne Meister, president of Corporate University Xchange, "The status, power, and influence of CLOs continue to grow

and evolve, much like the position of CIO (chief information officer) over the past 15 to 20 years."

Corporate universities are cropping up all over. Nearly three-quarters of the corporate universities surveyed were started in the last five years; nearly one-fifth opened their doors just in the last year. Almost all of the universities surveyed aim to brand themselves as separate from their companies. Many created a distinctive logo and motto, (similar to those of traditional universities) and put them on posters, t-shirts, and other corporate giveaways.

*Send press releases or short articles on news, trends, and best practices to **News You Can Use**, T+D, 1640 King Street, Box 1443, Alexandria, VA 22313-2043. Email nycu@astd.org.*

E-LEARNING TERMS OF THE MONTH

Confused and bamboozled by the alphabet soup of e-learning? Each month, we'll define a term or two. You'll be an e-expert in no time.

Asynchronous learning. Learning in which interaction between teachers and students occurs intermittently with a time delay. Examples include self-paced courses taken via Internet or CD-ROM, online discussion groups, and email.

Synchronous learning. Real-time, instructor-led online learning events in which all participants are logged on at the same time and communicate directly with each other. Content can also be delivered using audio- or videoconferencing, Internet telephony, and two-way live broadcasts.

More terms like this:

 WWW.LEARNINGCIRCUITS.ORG/GLOSSARY.HTML