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AgLearn Strategic Workshop

Team AgLearn hosted its semi-annual strategic workshop in the ERS Waugh Auditorium July 13th through 15th. Over 40 participants attended the live sessions and an additional 15 persons participated online via Live Meeting. Jerome Davin, USDA Distance Learning Director and Program Manager of AgLearn, kicked off the workshop with his "Vision for the Future" presentation. AgLearn will focus on a number of learning and talent management trends in the upcoming year including leadership development, career and succession planning, personnel retention, and competency management. Jerome also identified a focus on exploring additional modalities of delivery including on-the-job-training, webinars, podcasts, mobile learning, video teleconferencing and virtual worlds. He also provided updates on current Team AgLearn projects including custom content re-engineering, service improvements, Live Meeting Webinars, ICAMS/EEMS integration, FMMI integration and a system upgrade to a new version of AgLearn.

For many, the highlight of the first day was a look into the future of learning. Chris North (OCIO) presented on the capabilities of learning in a virtual world and Andrew Boswell (FS) presented the plans for the USDA Virtual University. Anita Heller introduced inGenius, SkillSoft's online networking environment supporting Books24x7.

Wednesday's topics included presentations by Sequana Anderson (ASCR), Kathy Fallow (Team AgLearn), and Stephen Sorensen (Team AgLearn) on Best Practices for designing and delivering cross-agency training (webinars and classroom). Michele Borg (Team AgLearn) presented on the variety of outreach and communication resources available to those who want to increase the use of AgLearn in their agency. Savita Taylor, Senior Instructional Designer from Adayana Inc., presented on the 'A and D' (Analysis and Design) of the instructional design ADDIE model.

As several agencies grow closer to implementing competency models in AgLearn, Dr. Zina Sutch (OCIO) and Sandra Detter (NRCS) delivered presentations on the design and implementation of competency models within their organizations.

Day 3 was devoted to the more technical aspects of the AgLearn application. Paul Lloyd, Isabel Morrow (Team AgLearn) and Ali Kafshi (Team AgLearn) delivered presentations on the integration of agency courseware in AgLearn and on best practices for making AgLearn courseware compliant with section 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Ali Kafshi walked participants through the changes in the upcoming AgLearn 6.1 upgrade and Dwayne Cotti (Team AgLearn) delivered a training session on the creation of curricula in AgLearn. The group ended the workshop with an opportunity for "hands on" in the AgLearn 6.1 practice environment, known as the "sand box".

Copies of all the slide presentations are available in AgLearn Central (Shared Documents\AgLearn Strategic Workshop Files\2010 July Workshop\ for download. Several of the presentations on Day 2 and 3 were recorded and recordings can also be found in the AgLearn Central folders. Please be sure to download the large media files to your PC before launching.

Thanks to all who helped to make the July 2010 a success! Despite the air-conditioning challenges in the room, evaluations were very positive. The next workshop will be held in November of 2010 and will be devoted to the AgLearn upgrade. Exact dates will be announced by the end of August.

AgLearn Awards

While every agency continues to provide valuable support to the success of AgLearn for the benefit of every USDA employee, AgLearn recognized a few standouts by presenting AgLearn Helping Hand and

AgLearn Achievement Awards at the Fall 2010 AgLearn Strategic Workshop.

Jerome Davin (Director, Distance Learning Program) presented AgLearn Helping Hand awards to AgLearn administrators from the following agencies: APHIS, NIFA, OCIO, and RD.

AgLearn Achievement Awards covered four categories: Mission Training, Discretion Training, Return on Investment, and Productivity. Below are the top three agencies for each category:

Mission Training: Highest level of participation per capita of AgLearn mission training through 3Q FY2010:

1st-FSIS

2nd-NRCS

3rd-APHIS

Discretionary Training: Highest level of participation per capita of discretionary training through 3Q FY2010:

1st-NAD

2nd-NIFA

3rd-APHIS

Return On Investment (ROI): Highest return on investment through 3Q FY2010:

1st-RMA

2nd-NIFA

3rd-GIPSA

Productivity: Best use of online resources (highest percentage difference between the percentage of population and the percentage of economic value obtained) through 3Q FY2010:

1st-FSIS

2nd-APHIS

3rd-RD

Mega Pop-up = Mega Results

This one-click resource provides instant access to the top topics and resources for USDA employees. To determine the topics, we analyzed the assignment and completion data to find out which topics were most popular.

Not surprisingly, the USDA's Most Popular category had the greatest results. With over 8,400 assignments and completions, the most popular resource in this category was [10 Steps to Getting Organized](#). This 2 minute video provides great information on improving your organizational skills.

The second most popular category was Microsoft Office with the 2007 resources being at the top of the list. The most accessed course in this category was [Editing and Proofreading Documents in Microsoft Office Word 2007](#).

Coming in a close third place with over 4,400 assignments and completions was the federal retirement planning category, which includes personal financial plan courses designed for each stage of a federal employee's career. [Click here](#) to select the right one for you.

The welcome pop-up was recently updated with over 100 new resources. Please log in and check out the new categories including the Business Exploration Series, Personal Development, and IT Professional Skills.

Congratulations NIFA!

With the end of the third quarter of FY2010, we have a new leader in assignments and completions. Congratulations to NIFA who had the highest percentage of assignments and completions based on the

number of employees. NIFA's percentage increased from 2,633% in 2QFY10 to over 10,000% in the last three months! Did your agency's usage increase? The table to the right provides the list of agencies ranked by the combined number of assignments and completions. As a reminder, assignments are defined as items that have been accessed by a learner but not completed whereas completions are items that have been marked completed in their learning history. These numbers are combined to show the whole picture for discretionary training.

In addition, the percentages in the table were calculated by adding the total number of assignments and completions; then dividing by the total number of active users per agency. The bottom line is as usage increases, the cost for discretionary training goes down; saving your agency training dollars. If you would like to increase your agencies numbers and cost savings, Team AgLearn can help. Send an email to Michele Borg at Michele.Borg@ocio.usda.gov to find out more about the services that Team AgLearn can provide.

New SkillSoft Resources – Available Now

It's hard to believe that we are quickly approaching the end of FY2010. Over the last few months, we've added a wide variety of new resources to AgLearn's already expansive collection including some new series such as Problem Solving and Decision Making Strategies, Fundamentals of Working with Difficult People, and Negotiation Essentials. Below is a sample of the new courses that are available now:

[Decision Making: Making Tough Decisions](#)

[Working with Difficult People: How to Work with Manipulative People](#)

[Negotiation Essentials: What Is Negotiation?](#)

[Working with Difficult People: How to Work with Self-serving People](#)

There are also courses to help you manage relationships such as [Getting Results without Authority: Building Relationships and Credibility](#), and [Getting Results without Direct Authority: Influencing Your Boss](#) and [Managing Your Relationship with Your Boss Simulation](#). Need help dealing with change? Check out the latest releases including [Preparing for Organizational Change](#) and [Understanding Organizational Change](#).

For the IT focused learners, the latest releases include [ITIL® V3 OSA: Introduction to Operational Support and Analysis](#), [Deploying Windows 7 Using Lite-Touch Installation](#) and [CompTIA Server+ 2009: Disaster Recovery](#). These courses, plus many others, can be found by clicking on the [SkillSoft – Latest Additions](#) link on the splash page.

Also, don't forget to check out the folders in Books24x7. New releases are added each month.

AgLearn Central

If you are looking for a job aid, AgLearn Agency Leads meeting notes, or LunchBytes notes, then hop aboard the knowledge train and utilize AgLearn's MS SharePoint Site. The information hub known as AgLearn Central has grown rapidly since its inception and can be a useful tool for any AgLearn administrator or Agency Lead. From an archive of all the AgLearn newsletters to the latest list of FDCC/AgLearn trusted sites, AgLearn Central is your "one-stop-shop" for in-depth AgLearn knowledge to help you support your users. If you're an AgLearn administrator and would like access to AgLearn Central, simply send a request of access by going to <https://portal.usda.gov/sites/aglearn> (only accessible behind the USDA firewall).

Here are just a few things available under Shared Documents:

AgLearn Job Aids

There are folders for Admins, Learners, and Microsoft Office 2007

eAuthentication Process Job Aids

Contains an eAuthentication/AgLearn data flow diagram accompanied with eAuth/AgLearn creation process details for both EmpowHR and non-EmpowHR agencies

LunchBytes

Archive that includes the actual LunchBytes slides and supporting documents, guides, or job aids

Ask Team AgLearn**Q: Where can I direct employees that want to know how many PDU's they earned for completing certain SkillSoft courses?**

A: Direct them to the Continuing Education links on the AgLearn homepage. Clicking on the [Project Management Institute](#) link will direct employees to a very informative FAQ page, which includes:

What SkillSoft courses are eligible for PDUs and/or Contact Hour credit?

The list of SkillSoft courses that are approved for PDU and/or Contact Hour credits can be found [here](#).

Q: What are some Best Practices for taking AgLearn training from outside of the office?

A: Bessy Plaza, a veteran AgLearn Lead Administrator, has provided some best practice tips if you are considering launching AgLearn online courses at home or anywhere outside of the office

1. Make sure your home computer settings meet AgLearn's standards for use. [Click here to check your computer's settings](#) on the AgLearn splash page. Restrictions at home are different from within the USDA firewall, so you can act as your own administrator and download any software that you need. However, if you are using a government computer, be sure to complete this step before you take the computer home and have your local IT support upgrade your PC or make the necessary corrections.

2. Keep the AgLearn helpdesk number handy (1-866-633-9394) the first time you do training at home so you can contact them for any problems you have with the course. Their hours of operation are 8 am to 8 pm EST.

3. If you click on the Launch Content button and nothing comes up, it could be that you have pop-up blockers turned on. To turn off your pop blockers click the Tools menu of your browser, then select Pop-up Blocker, Turn off Pop-up Blocker.

4. It's also a good idea to clear your Internet temporary files before you attempt to launch your course. Here's how:

a. From the Tools menu of your browser, select Internet Options.

b. Click the General tab.

c. In the Temporary Internet Files section, click the Delete Files button.

d. Click OK, then click OK again.

e. Close your browser window, and then launch Internet Explorer again to login to AgLearn and launch your course.

Enjoy Your Learning!!

Q: Have there been any recent updates to the list of FDCC/AgLearn trusted sites that my LAN technical support should be apply to the computers in my office?

A: Yes, two new sites (https://*.skillwsa.com and https://*.skillport.com) were added within the past two

months. Here is a complete list with the recent changes:

<http://usda.na4.acrobat.com>

<http://128.121.42.23>

<https://library.skillport.com>

<http://www.aglearn.usda.gov>

<http://ninthhouse.net>

<https://aglearn.onlinelanguagelearning.com>

<http://www.staging.aglearn.usda.gov>

<http://app.ninthhouse.net>

<http://launch.rosettastone.com>

<http://content.aglearn.usda.gov>

<http://bitgravity.com>

<http://resources.rosettastone.com>

www.targetlearn.com

<https://aglearn.skillwsa.com>

https://*.skillwsa.com

www.books24x7.com

<https://kcportal.skillport.com>

https://*.skillport.com