



Learning Management System Comparison

June 23, 2009

Introduction

A standardized approach to a learning management system (LMS) and course delivery system is in the best interests of the State. The top three vendors for such systems are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Learning Management System Comparison

	Blackboard Basic [7.X]	Joomla LMS [1.06]	Moodle [1.95]
Extended group functions	✓	✓	✓
Gradebook	✓	✓	✓
SCORM player	✗	✓	✓
Export / Import courses and quizzes	✓	✓	✓
Learning paths	✓	✓	✓
Install service	✓	✓	✗
Local Hosting Option	✓	✓	✓
SaaS Hosting Services	✓	✓	✓
LDAP Directory Integration	✓	✗	✓
Code Implementation	Java	PHP	PHP
Database Back End	Oracle	MySQL	MySQL
SEO-Search Engine Friendly	✗	✗	✓
Pricing	Starting at \$7500 SaaS Fees	Starting at \$299 SaaS Fees	No Charge Local SaaS Fees
Licensing	User Based SL	GNU GPL User Based SL	GNU GPL
Quizzes	✓	✓	✓
Surveys	✓	✓	✓
E-Portfolio	✓	✓	✓
Quiz Pool	✓	✓	✓
Instructor front end authoring	✓	✓	✓
Instructor front end admin	✓	✓	✓
Backup tool	✓	✓	✓
Flash tutorials	✓	✓	✓
Tracking of students	✓	✓	✓
Support Alternatives	✓	✓	✓
Fee Based Support Availability	Yes	Yes	Yes
Flash Media Server	✓	✓	✓
Installed Base - Registered Sites	N/A	N/A	49,253 Sites
Installed Base - Users	N/A	N/A	28,177,443 Users
Installed Base - Courses	N/A	N/A	2,571,855 Courses
Market Share - Overall	45%	Less than 1%	54%

Comparisons have been based on the most current release of each of the products in Table 1. There are many other LMS products available, but none have the maturity or installed base of these three vendors. Of these vendors Moodle represents the least cost and most feature rich alternative for State use. All of these systems have been the subject of various security exploits, so that is a concern with local hosting of any of these platforms. From a security perspective it would seem to be most beneficial to deploy these systems as SaaS hosted services, where the security vulnerabilities can be better managed. This suggests a cost for using any of the services, but the costs for a hosted version of Moodle is less than our own internal cost to host the application.

Cost Analysis

Existing State needs for a Moodle hosting platform can likely be met for less than \$2,000 per year from a SaaS provider. Internal costs for doing the same hosting will be higher. If the number of users grows substantially then it may become more economical to do local hosting.

Recommendations

- Moodle 1.95 or greater is recommended as a standard platform for a Statewide LMS.
- Establish the scope of the Moodle services to be provided.
- Identify a SaaS provider for Moodle using a competitive bid process.
- Do a security review of the top three SaaS Moodle providers and select the vendor with the best overall price, performance, and secure hosting environment.
- Integrate Moodle access with the States master directory infrastructure.
- Establish a recoverable rate that allows agencies to purchase what they need from a user perspective at the SaaS hosting entities contract rates with the State.
- Provide online access to Moodle developer training for all agencies at the Moodle training site.