

# A training voyage

**Peter Nicol** reviews the e-learning challenges faced by the Training Unit of the Type 45 Destroyer on the first Learning Content Management System implementation under the MOD Defence Learning Portal...

**T**he need to ensure that personnel have the training and skills required to do their jobs with the maximum proficiency is never greater than in the defence sector. There is a perpetually high level of training for defence personnel at every level, as the pressure to embrace the latest technological and tactical advancements remains constant.

In addition to the sheer number of courses that have to be delivered, updated, amended and repeated, the way in which training has to be delivered can be extremely complex for a wide variety of reasons:

- There are very clear differences in the learning content needs for different defence personnel and each need has to be addressed individually. From those that steer the ship and man military equipment to those who keep the engines in working order and cook the meals – training courses for each have to be personalised in order to be effective, which can be very time consuming;
- The number of people that are required to input into any one training exercise can be vast, including contractors, top personnel, subject matter experts, security advisors, technology specialists and many more – often situated thousands of miles apart;
- Delivery of learning content must be adaptable to very different environments and different delivery technologies – be that on-demand, print, duty aids (PDAs), classroom-based, location-based, etc.;
- Any changes to learning content, which can occur for any number of reasons, have to be replicated for different audiences – which makes it both complicated and extremely costly.

In May 2004, BT Global Services won an extended contract to work with the MOD to develop the Defence Learning Portal (DLP) – to help meet the training and learning challenges faced by the defence sector as a whole. The DLP is an application suite, which resides on the Restricted LAN Interface and has a Learning Content Management System (LCMS) for creating training course content, and a Learning Management System for students and instructors to access the courses

virtually. The system will eventually accommodate up to 300,000 users, consolidate huge amounts of training resources, and will deliver significant efficiencies and cost savings for the MOD. However, up until now, the LCMS functionality had not been utilised.

*‘Every party involved in the training programme had to have the ability to access, contribute to, manage and approve course content – irrespective of where in the world they were deployed.’*

## **An elite unit**

Let me introduce you to the T45 Training Unit (T45TU) and the specific challenge they faced. A team of 23 personnel, consisting of an almost equal mix of Royal Navy (RN) and Flagship staff, were cherry picked for the significant task



