

Case Study

AgustaWestland Ltd

The 21st Century Battlefield: Training UK Armed Forces Around the World

The Company

AgustaWestland is a global leader in the delivery of Rotorcraft Capability, innovation and system design. Through success in evolving its service business, AgustaWestland is also an established provider of professional training services to a wide range of military and civil customers around the world.

The Challenge

Develop and deliver a solution for the next generation digital communications training to over 90,000-armed service personnel throughout the UK, across Europe and into North America. BOWMAN, as the digital tactical communications backbone, is providing secure communication for those elements of all three Armed services that take part in, or provide direct support to Land Operations.

AgustaWestland was awarded a six year, multi-million dollar contract from General Dynamics UK to develop and deliver BOWMAN Training. The solution has been developed with a number of key partners with an emphasis on 'best in field' and through-life management vision.

Solution

The training solution was required to be flexible in its configuration to allow the growth from individual training into team and collective training. Infrastructure growth and technology developments are addressed within the design to account for the addition of future Digitization, the MoD's Network Enabled Capability (NEC) training requirements and likely impacts of obsolescence.

The courseware was to be developed using the latest software applications in order to enable the maximum reuse of SCORM-compliant objects. The content management tools were to provide the program with excellent configuration

control of baseline and change, which is essential for the control of updated material and retrofit/refresh training package development. The Learning Management System (LMS) solution provides the management and tracking of student progress throughout conversion and at every return.

Eight vendors entered a competitive tender process and a series of technology demonstrations, after which AgustaWestland chose to partner with OutStart, to provide key elements of its training solution and tool kit.

OutStart Evolution LCMS is a single-source training content creation and management solution that is used to create and manage learning content. This content can be rendered in multiple formats - HTML, print, PDA, SCORM - to support blended delivery and assessment. OutStart Evolution LCMS provides the core foundation for central and distributed learning at AgustaWestland, which is achieving high levels of proficiency for all service instructors and users.

Outstart Evolution LMS is a complete learning management system designed to control all aspects of learner administration, competency, and course management. When used in conjunction with an LCMS it is able to provide exact "just for me" delivery of content to individual users or groups of users by associating user profile information to content metadata.

OutStart SoftSim gives AgustaWestland a simulation tool to develop real time, easy-to-use simulations of 'hands-on' experiences they will need in the field.

Results

Since July 2003, over 68,000 military personnel have participated in over 900 courses to learn how to use one of the most sophisticated tactical battlefield communications systems in the world.





New Technology and a New Challenge for the Armed Forces

AgustaWestland is a name synonymous with the history of helicopter design and manufacture. But it is also an established Capability provider, developing its portfolio to include professional training services to a wide range of military and civil customers around the world. The company was contracted in 2001 by General Dynamics UK, to develop and deliver operator, management and maintainer training for the new generation of tactical battlefield communications equipment - BOWMAN - the replacement for the ageing 1960s Clansman combat net radio system.

Warfare in the 21st Century is dominated by the need to win the information battle. For UK armed forces to succeed on future battlefields, they need access to a digital communications backbone. BOWMAN is designed to allow large quantities of high quality and timely information to be transmitted across several strata of command. It provides secure tactical communications to all Service personnel - providing voice and data connectivity between land, sea and air forces. Both vehicle and dismounted systems have a Global Positioning System (GPS) enabling it to determine the exact location of a user, in all weather conditions.

On completion, BOWMAN will be fitted to over 20,000 battle tanks and vehicles, 156 ships and over 60 aircraft, as well as personnel on the ground. All armed services personnel will need to be trained to use the new system - a huge challenge. To date, over 68,000 personnel have already been trained and over 90,000 will be trained by mid-2008.

The Challenges

The complexity of developing and delivering distributed training in a variety of new job roles to that number of service personnel (soldiers, officers, commanders and engineers) located around the world was only too clear. The ability to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program and identify learner's strengths and weaknesses was vital. Additionally, AgustaWestland needed to plan for future training requirements. Current personnel require conversion training to BOWMAN but future recruits would need a complete beginner package. Eight vendors entered a competitive tender process and a series of technology demonstrations, after which AgustaWestland chose to partner with OutStart, to provide key elements of its on line training solution and tool kit. Simon Dawes, AgustaWestland BOWMAN and Land Digitization Programme Manager says: "OutStart's competitive offering had

the technical edge over other solutions. We knew we could use OutStart's Evolution LCMS to store learning material in a single repository, where rapid changes could be made to support BOWMAN updates. We could author and deliver courses tailored to specific learners and instructors, without creating separate courses for each individual. Training could then be rolled out to service personnel across the globe, no easy feat!

"We wanted to select and develop a solutions team, with the capability, drive and vision to both deliver the complex requirement for BOWMAN and provide a single solutions structure for the implementation of future integrated programs. It was important to AgustaWestland to build a core solutions team with a comprehensive capability portfolio together with the commitment, drive and vision for the entire duration of the project. Our focus was on a long-term relationship, rather than a patchwork solution. This makes selection and the basis of the relationship much more important.

"During their assessment OutStart demonstrated an extremely comprehensive range of learning tools and services. Other vendors we evaluated were unable to provide the level of overall program commitment in terms of the selection. For example, we knew we would have future use for products like SoftSim, OutStart's simulation learning tool. Simulation and emulation is an important part of the BOWMAN solution and alongside the core BOWMAN Communication System Simulation (BCSS), OutStart SoftSim adds a powerful tool to the developers toolkit. By learning in a simulated learning environment, service personnel are taught how to use the software without the risk of making errors in the live system. With the inclusion of OutStart's learning platform as a key part of our training solution, we knew we could meet the current demands of the UK armed forces' training and with them, develop the future training requirements."

Anytime, Anyone, Anywhere - Blended Learning In Action

OutStart's products will provide AgustaWestland with a flexible, tailored training to service personnel. OutStart Evolution LCMS allows the Armed Forces to develop learning content collaboratively. This content is then stored in a single repository that can be delivered to a soldier in Theatre or remotely to a naval officer at sea via the Web, CD-ROMs, classroom material or documentation. The training can also be delivered via mobile servers to personnel in the field or in theatre. A true blended learning program!



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Specifically:

Role Based Authoring and Delivery - with OutStart Evolution LCMS, writers and instructional designers can designate certain content as appropriate for learners, instructors or other audiences, and agree which delivery channels are appropriate. For example, a single course can be automatically formatted for delivery as HTML, as a presentation for the classroom or print documents, depending on how a learner or instructor requests to access it.

It also means that an army officer logged on as an instructor can view additional information within a course, versus someone logged on as a learner. This functionality is critical for classroom or other instructor-assisted training in which the instructor needs additional background or explanatory content. Finally, the theme (basically the look and feel of the course) also changes based on the role of the learner, so that every audience receives courses tailored to his or her requirements.

Remedial Lessons and Measurement - to ensure a baseline level of knowledge, learners take online assessment tests during the instructor's presentation (in the classroom or during an online course). Remedial tuition can be given if the learner fails to meet this baseline level.

Simulating the learning environment - As part of the Communications Software Simulation solution, OutStart SoftSim as a tool kit provides an environment to develop bespoke real life simulations of software environments that are used to support BOWMAN. As part of the solution environment, service personnel access real-time, easy-to-use simulations of scenarios that give effective 'hands-on' experience needed for the battlefield. Personnel at all levels are able to interact with, receive tutorials on, and test themselves within simulated environments, to become highly proficient without risking the integrity of the actual system.

The Results So Far

With OutStart Evolution LCMS as the training management backbone, AgustaWestland is powering one of the world's most globally dispersed, efficient, and effective learning initiatives. Since July 2003,

over 68,000 military personnel have participated in over 900 courses to learn how to operate, manage and maintain one of the most sophisticated battlefield tactical communications systems in the world.

Simon Dawes says: "We have successfully achieved all our training targets for BOWMAN so far, and provided a reliable, cost effective and flexible synthetic training solution which could not be replicated by real equipment. It meets the needs for increased tempo and training efficiency, particularly in highly complex technical training scenarios. The services will benefit by using OutStart's Evolution LCMS software as the core development and delivery platform to support BOWMAN and Digitization training. As the training develops, we intend to reuse the shared training content to upgrade technical publication manuals. The knowledge of the potential benefits of the system are becoming more widespread, with the solution being used for other Digitization and UK Ministry of Defence (MoD) training projects. Following on from the success of BOWMAN Training we are looking to collaborate with OutStart on an integrated development program and pursue future training programs with both the UK MoD and export customers."

About OutStart

OutStart provides learning and knowledge-sharing software applications to mid-market, government and Global 2000 organizations. OutStart customers build competitive advantage by making their customers, employees and partners more knowledgeable and better trained through superior content development, management and delivery. The company's approach is learner-focused and content-centric.

OutStart's award-winning product family enables people to know exactly what they need to be better at their jobs and to learn when, where and how they want. Customers like Autodesk, CVS Caremark, ING, DirecTV, Kronos, Motorola, Sara Lee, the U.S. Navy and Verizon Wireless rely on OutStart to increase individual and organizational performance improve knowledge transfer, and lower operating costs. Headquartered in Boston, MA, OutStart has offices throughout the US and Europe and can be found on the Web at www.outstart.com.

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