



The Computerworld Honors Program

Honoring those who use Information Technology to benefit society

Final Copy of Case Study

YEAR:
2012

STATUS:
Laureate

Organization:
DEXTRO, LLC

Organization URL:
www.dextro.com

Project Name:
Dextro's Online Education Learning Platform

What social/humanitarian issue was the project designed to address? What specific metrics did you use to measure the project's success?

A large portion of the Mexican population is lagging in education, business skills, technology awareness, and Internet access. Typically, small businesses -- which comprise the majority of Mexico's economy -- have a 95% failure rate during their first two years in operation. The México Emprende Initiative, a Mexican governmental program instituted in 2008, seeks to improve the economy by improving the skills of these small business owners and employees. Dextro developed DELP (Dextro's online Education Learning Platform) which is currently utilized by hundreds of thousands of Mexican small to medium business owners and employees through the Centros Mexico Emprende. DELP offers ease of use and a specifically tailored content mix. Dextro has combined educational content from a variety of vendors, including Harvard Mentor Management Program and Tell Me More (TMM) Languages, to teach successful business and entrepreneurial skills and best practices. Every day, thousands of participants log on to DELP from home or one of the 800 Centros México Emprende (community centers). DELP has very much influenced the Mexican businesses through our learning portals, which is reflected by our data: Total visits: 629,620; Page Views: 2,677,493; Register Users: 314,000; Business courses: 45. The top five courses are Budgeting - 7,653 enrolled users; Change Management - 3,054 enrolled users; Introduction to Financial Statement Analysis - 2,255 enrolled users; Prepare a Business Case - 1,770 enrolled users; Fundamentals of Finance - 1,125 enrolled users. Learners in TMM Training Hours: Average per Learner: 3h 30m; Average per week: 36m. DELP has

become an important pillar for Mexican businesses to remain viable and productive. Once small and medium-sized businesses undergo Dextro's training, they remain viable during the first two years (the period of greatest vulnerability) and increase productivity by an average of 25%.

Please describe the technologies used and how those technologies were deployed in an innovative way. Also, please include any technical or other challenges that were overcome for the successful implementation of the project.

DELP is currently serving around 300,000 registered users within all 32 Mexican States. To meet DELP's performance and functionality requirements, it's being hosted in a cloud environment under a load-balanced service using 3 virtual servers. This technology allowed us to upgrade and add more resources in a short period of time without compromising the service for the end user. The online courses, which were developed through open source technologies (php, mysql, apache, ajax, and query), have a simple, easy-to-use interface that is compatible with most browsers. DELP brings together a variety of course content in one online location that is easy to use and navigate. The user-friendly navigation and tool integration are especially important in Mexico, where a large part of the population is unfamiliar with computer and Internet usage.

Please list the specific humanitarian benefits the project has yielded so far.

There are over 400,000 microbusinesses, representing over 40% of the Mexican formal economy. A significant portion of the adult population lacks the education necessary to build and maintain a successful business. To overcome this challenge, the Microempresa project fills the education gap by providing the necessary education and business skills. Before DELP was implemented, online learners had to "hunt" for training content on various sites. DELP consolidates high-quality, Spanish content from Harvard ManageMentor Plus, TMM, and Dextro's own finance courses in one online location. Users have access to courses in management, finance, professional certifications, IT, and English, etc. Dextro's educational solution is provided at very little cost to the end user. Dextro is able to pass along volume discount savings as well as partner sponsorships. For example, in one of the México Emprende programs, the cost per license for an online management program from an Ivy League school was reduced from \$580/license to \$6/license. Through subsidies from the Mexican government, these licenses were then awarded, free of charge, to all applicants.

Please provide the best example of how the project has benefited a specific individual, enterprise or organization. Feel free to include personal quotes from individuals who have directly benefited from the work.

DELP has made a significant impact on the Mexican economy by teaching thousands of small business owners and employees how to start up and run their businesses successfully. DELP has increased the life span of these businesses from the statistical average of 18 months to well past two years, and increased their profitability by 25%, allowing them to hire employees. Small to medium businesses around the country have taken advantage of the courses by learning and understanding new business process, organization methods, budget preparation, employee and customer relations, and other very important factors for any business to become more competitive. Paola Villegas is a Mexican architect and home appraiser that started her own office in 2007, with many management hurdles to overcome to be competitive. Paola Villegas writes, "I want to take the opportunity to thank you infinitely for the opportunity of taking these classes, in which I have learned so many things that are useful. Really, I am very very grateful." "aprovecho para agradecer infinitamente la oportunidad de tomar este curso, en donde he aprendido tantas cosas, y tan útiles; de verdad que estoy muy muy agradecida."