



INFORMATION SOCIETY TECHNOLOGIES  
(IST)  
PROGRAMME

---



## ***InTraServ***

*Intelligent Training Service for Management Training in SMEs*

---

Deliverable DL 10

### ***Dissemination Report***

*Prepared for the European Commission  
under Contract No. IST-2000-29377 as a deliverable from*

WP 5: Exploitation and Results Dissemination

**Date of issue:** 30 May 2003

**Version:** 1.1

**Distribution:** Public

---

## Revision History

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Circulation</b>	<b>Reviewed paragraphs</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Reviewed by</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
15/05/2003	1.0		Initial Version	Laura Pappacena	Nicola Capuano	
30/05/2003	1.1		Final Version	Laura Pappacena		Nicola Capuano

## Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	3
DISSEMINATION REPORT .....	4
1. INTRODUCTION.....	4
2. CLUSTERING ACTIVITIES .....	5
3. PAPER SUBMISSION.....	6
4. PARTICIPATION IN FAIRS AND EXHIBITIONS.....	7
5. WEB SITE .....	8
5.1 INTRODUCTION SECTION.....	8
5.2 OBJECTIVES SECTION.....	9
5.3 PARTICIPANTS SECTION.....	10
5.4 MEMBER SECTION.....	10
5.5 WORKPLAN SECTION.....	11
5.6 ORGANISATION SECTION .....	12
5.7 ARCHIVE SECTION.....	13
6. DISSEMINATION MATERIAL .....	14
6.1 INTRASERV LEAFLET.....	14
6.2 INTRASERV POSTER .....	15
7. INTRASERV ON NEWSPAPERS .....	16
7.1 PAGE 1 .....	16
7.2 PAGE 7 .....	17
ANNEX I. INTRASERV RELATED PAPERS.....	18

# Dissemination Report

## 1. Introduction

One of the objectives of InTraServ was to widely disseminate results obtained inside the European Community. Dissemination activities were planned in DL 9 “Dissemination Plan”. The purpose of this deliverable (DL 10), instead, is to report on the performing of such activities.

InTraServ dissemination channels, foreseen in the Dissemination Plan, were:

- participation in clusters of EC projects addressing training for SMEs in order to share with other projects public InTraServ deliverables;
- production of scientific papers to be submitted to journals and conferences concerning e-learning;
- participation to events and fairs related to learning and training topics in order to present InTraServ demos and start to create a preliminary market awareness;
- Realisation of a project Web site under the [www.intraserv.org](http://www.intraserv.org) domain in order to provide information related to InTraServ progresses and intermediate results.

Next chapters will deepen the work done by project participants exploiting each of these dissemination channels. The document will include, moreover, an article about InTraServ published on an Italian newspaper, the snapshot of used dissemination material and the full text of published scientific papers.

## 2. Clustering Activities

With clustering activities we intend the dissemination of project experience and results to other IST funded projects through EC channels. This happened in two ways:

- participating in EC organized Concertation Meetings;
- participating in Knowledge Square (K2) Events.

The aim of *Concertation Meetings* is to enable projects to share experiences with their peers and to learn collectively. At the same time they help projects bridge gaps and reach the wider community. Usually, many parallel tracks are organized to encourage projects to invest time to save time later in the project's lifetime. InTraServ participated in Education and Training Concertation Meetings giving project presentations and sharing available public deliverables with other projects.

*K2* (Knowledge Square), instead, is an accompanying measure whose purpose is to share knowledge between Education & Training EC founded projects. K2 supports existing clusters and facilitates the emergence of new cluster activities around common themes such as evaluation, exploitation, dissemination and IPR. InTraServ participated in K2 sharing days and had focused discussions with other project participants on specific sharing themes.

The following table lists Concertation Meetings and K2 Events where InTraServ representatives were sent.

Title	Data and Place	Main conclusions
Education and Training Concertation Meeting	11-12 March 2002, Luxembourg	Both meetings resulted as a good mean to share experiences with other active EC projects in the e-learning field.
Education and Training Concertation Meeting	29-30 January 2003, Luxembourg	
Participation to the K2 Event	17-18 July 2002, Madrid	Some positive contacts with other project were taken. Some idea of collaboration were drafted.

### 3. Paper Submission

In order to disseminate scientific, methodological and technological results obtained during InTraServ, we produced, till now, two InTraServ related scientific papers and will continue our production in next months to disseminate last results about system experimentation and evaluation.

The following list includes titles, authors, target journals/conferences and abstracts of InTraServ related papers published during project lifetime. Full texts of such two papers are included as Annex I.

InTraServ Related Papers
<p>N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, L. Pappacena.</p> <p><b>An e-Learning Platform for SME Manager Upgrade and its Evolution Toward a Distributed Training Environment.</b></p> <p>2nd International LeGE-WG Workshop “e-Learning and Grid Technologies: a fundamental challenge for Europe”, Paris, France, 2003.</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b></p> <p>The purpose of this paper is to describe the work in progress related to the customisation, the trial and the evaluation of an innovative e-learning platform for manager upgrade in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in the framework of an EC funded project named InTraServ and its forthcoming re-engineering process aimed to the adoption of distributed services in the framework of another EC funded project named Diogene. The present e-learning solution includes several state-of-the-art technologies and methodologies such as: metadata and ontologies for knowledge manipulation, fuzzy learner modelling, intelligent course tailoring, case based reasoning, business games and simulation tools. The proposed solution is based on the distribution of working tasks among content provider services, content discovery services, content brokering services, training services, curriculum vitae searching services and collaboration services.</p>
<p>N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, A. Micarelli.</p> <p><b>IWT: Una Piattaforma Innovativa per la Didattica Intelligente su Web.</b></p> <p>AI*IA Notizie, year XVI, no. 1, p. 57-61, March 2003.</p> <p><b>Abstract:</b></p> <p>L'e-learning sta acquisendo importanza sempre maggiore negli ambienti didattico/formativi moderni grazie ai suoi innegabili vantaggi rispetto alla tradizionale formazione in aula. Purtroppo le piattaforme di e-learning attualmente esistenti sulla scena tendono a sfruttare la tecnologia solo come veicolo dell'esperienza formativa piuttosto che come regista della stessa. Il presente articolo descrive IWT, una piattaforma di e-learning che si propone di superare questo limite mirando a personalizzare l'apprendimento sulle reali esigenze e preferenze dell'utente ed a garantire estensibilità e flessibilità non solo al livello dei contenuti ma anche nelle funzionalità e soprattutto, a livello più alto, nelle strategie e nei modelli.</p>

A further paper including the results of the experimentation and evaluation process is currently under preparation. Once ready it will be submitted to one of the possible target Journals specified in DL 10 (see paragraph 3.2).

#### 4. Participation in Fairs and Exhibitions

InTraServ representatives participated in three exhibitions about learning and training to demonstrate project demos and to start first contacts with people and companies interested to use InTraServ. The following list includes events where InTraServ participated. They are perfectly in line with activities forecasted in DL 10 (see chapter 4).



**Frankfurt Book Fair** is the largest trading place for rights and licences with 6,700 exhibitors from more than a 100 countries, and 150,000 trade visitors from 100 countries, 390 agencies and rights' dealers. For six days 400,000 titles, including 100,000 recent publications are on show to (potential) business partners and to the general public at the weekend. 10,000 journalists from 80 countries report on the Fair and on the latest publishing developments. InTraServ was presented in the 2002 edition of the fair in the EU stand.



**On-Line Educa Berlin** is a key networking event for strategists and practitioners from all over the world attracting more than 1200 top-level decision makers from government, industry, business, commerce and the higher education sector from over 60 countries. It is the largest international gathering of e-learning professionals in Europe and enables participants to develop multinational and cross-industry partnerships as well as increase their knowledge and expertise in the field. The conference is accompanied by an exhibition and demonstration area for manufacturers, suppliers and service providers of communications technology, software and electronic services. InTraServ was presented in the exhibition of the 2002 edition in the Proacte stand.



**World Education Market** provides an active marketplace with a focus on business and relationship-building, both internationally and across the many market segments present. In the last edition it attracted 347 exhibiting organisations from 34 countries (a 4% increase and an additional 7 countries represented on the trade floor) and a total of 1,947 participants from 71 countries (a 13% increase and an additional 9 countries represented at the event). InTraServ was presented in the 2003 edition in the 9ICTA stand.

Name	Date and Place	Comments
Frankfurt Book Fair 2002	9-14 October 2002, Frankfurt, Germany.	InTraServ was presented in the EU stand.
On-Line Educa Berlin 2002	27-29 November 2002, Berlin, Germany.	InTraServ was presented in the Proacte stand.
World Education Market 2003	20-23 May 2003, Lisbon, Portugal.	InTraServ was presented in the 9ICTA stand.

Form the participation to these events we observed a great interest in the InTraServ product and several contacts have been gathered.

## 5. Web Site

The InTraServ Web site was designed and published at: [www.intraserv.org](http://www.intraserv.org). It includes an overview of the project, of its organisation, objectives, participants and workpackages. It has, also, an *Archive* section including public deliverables and a private *Members* section linking to:

- a Web collaboration tool used by project members to share intermediate documents, to exchange comments, to have online and offline discussions, etc.
- the InTraServ training platform.

With respect to the first version presented in the Dissemination Plan (see chapter 5 of DL9), a new section on organisation was added while the archive section was filled with a lot of InTraServ related material. Minor revisions concerning content format and images have been done.

The following snapshots show main site sections.

### 5.1 Introduction Section



**InTraServ**  
Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs

**Introduction**  **InTraServ** is an EC funded project under the 5th Framework Programme - Information Society Technologies (contract IST-2000-29377). The main project objective is to try and evaluate an innovative Web-based intelligent training solution for manager upgrading in real SME environments operating in different fields.

**Objectives** 

**Participants**  The proposed solution is based on a training platform obtained as integration of the results of several previous research projects carried out by CRMPA. It includes several state-of-the-art technologies such as: metadata and ontologies for knowledge manipulation, fuzzy learner modelling and case based reasoning. Within such environment, a learner can choose between three different training approaches.

**Workplan** 

**Organisation** 

-  The learner can select a particular set of topics from an ontology of covered arguments and let the system arrange a personalised self-adaptive course about such topics (the personalisation is based on user profiling).
-  The learner can use the system to solve daily working problems. Problems are faced by the system using a case based reasoning (CBR) methodology i.e. comparing the current problem (case) with similar solved problems in a case base and ranking all found solutions.
-  The learner can exercise about learnt topic using a set of embedded working scenario simulations (business games) that allow concrete experiences through experimentation (learning by discovery).

Basing on such characteristics, the *InTraServ* project will introduce in small and medium European enterprises a complete on-the-job intelligent training system geared toward managers upgrading and able to tailor courses upon user needs and inferred user profiles (just-in-time on-the-job personalised training).

Four **courses** covering several aspects of the managerial training will be made available in three languages (Italian, English, Spanish): Business Decision, Marketing, Marketing Management, Marketing Research and Management Control. The first one will be made available during the project duration while the others will be completed after its end during the exploitation of the product.

Within the *InTraServ* platform, moreover, a set of **business games** addressing the business decision process through a "what...if" approach will be integrated. In particular, two business games will be made available: a Business Game for Strategic Decisions and a Business Game on Management Control. Also in this case, the first one will be made available during the project duration while the second one will be completed after its end.

Using the *InTraServ* solution, it will be possible for a manager to take personalized training between working tasks, to evaluate the formal knowledge acquired and to transform it in practical knowledge by experimenting what learnt in simulated situations exploiting InTraServ business games. When, finally, the manager will master such knowledge, he can apply it inside the organization. Moreover, using *InTraServ*, a manager can be supported during his decision making process by exploiting the CBR real case solver component.



The platform will be made available exploiting an Application Service Provision methodology (ASP) i.e. the platform will be reachable from clients remotely, over the Internet. This will offer customer access to *InTraServ* without making up-front investments in buying the application and the required servers or in hiring new specialized staff. In this way, moreover, the service can be managed, supported and extended by the technology provider from a central location rather than by each customer at his own site.

Project duration is 18 months. It started the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2001.

 **Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata**  
Questions about *InTraServ* can be sent to: [info@intraserv.org](mailto:info@intraserv.org)  
Last Update: 04-02-03.




## 5.2 Objectives Section



**Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Introduction</li><li>Objectives</li><li>Participants</li><li>Workplan</li><li>Organisation</li><li>Archive</li><li>Members</li></ul>	<p>The main objective of the <b>InTraServ</b> project is to try and evaluate an innovative Web-based intelligent training solution in different real SME environments operating in different fields.</p> <p>The project plans to face several issues stated by the <b>eEurope</b> initiative in the context of the "working in the knowledge-based economy" action. This lead to the definition of the subsequent set of main goals to be reached by the project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ To offer a training opportunity tailored to a target groups of workers who are at risk of seeing their skills overtaken by rapid change (in particular to SME managers).</li><li>▶ To allow the application of life-long learning considered as a basic component of the European social model.</li><li>▶ To fulfil enterprise needs to develop human resources.</li><li>▶ To allow adaptability of the training experience through flexible management of working and training time (training may take place anytime and anywhere, in brief or long sessions).</li></ul> <p>In order to fulfil the quoted main goals, we identify a set of operational goals to be reached and the means to achieve them.</p> <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"><b>Objective 1</b></div> <p><b>To build up a Web-based training brokerage service</b> around the proposed platform and to let real SMEs subscribe to such service. For this purpose, the InTraServ consortium includes (in addition to the technology and content provider i.e. CRMPA) 5 member SMEs (ASIMAG and 9ICTA from Spain; MA, CAVAMARKET and PASI from Italy) coming from different business areas (retail trade, informatics, consultancy).</p> <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"><b>Objective 2</b></div> <p><b>To create a metadata indexed learning object base</b> covering a set of common training needs for member SMEs about the management training. The learning task for managers, in fact, is becoming a critical element for the survival and the success of enterprises in the global competitive scenery. Given its generality (it is applicable for quite all kind of SMEs) we chose to adopt such main topic during this trial.</p> <p>In order to be used inside the system, such set of learning objects will be indexed through metadata schemes reflecting the IEEE LOM standard. This standardisation effort will ensure the re-usability of created objects by computer supported training systems adopting the same standard. For this reason, indirectly, this trial will contribute to the diffusion of the new-born LOM standard in real world applications.</p> <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"><b>Objective 3</b></div> <p><b>To customise the actual training platform prototype</b> by integrating a set of simulations covering many aspects of the manager decision making process. In particular we will integrate in the system a set of business games already available as outcomes of other research projects carried out by CRMPA.</p> <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"><b>Objective 4</b></div> <p><b>To evaluate the benefits of the InTraServ approach to training</b> in terms of the degree of satisfaction of SMEs training needs. The key challenges to be addressed to satisfy such needs concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ <b>distance, time and location</b> (training must serve a dispersed group of learners where and when they require it),</li><li>▶ <b>flexibility</b> (training can be undertaken between work tasks),</li><li>▶ <b>availability</b> (training material can be easily located),</li><li>▶ <b>immediacy</b> (user can obtain quickly solutions to daily working problems).</li></ul> <p>Experts will be exploited to collect empirical data through measurements in order to evaluate at what extent the InTraServ platform and the underlying training model is able to satisfy such set of needs and challenges and, in general, to cover all aspects of usability, efficiency and effectiveness of the learning support.</p> <p>Other challenges, related to pedagogical aspects, will be evaluated during the trial:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ the ability of the knowledge representation paradigm to master multidisciplinary interrelated data (the proposed platform exploits the IEEE LOM standard so the trial will indirectly investigate on the consistence and the completeness of such standard);</li><li>▶ the ability of the user model to capture learner acquired knowledge and learning preferences;</li><li>▶ the ability to optimise the learning process by tailoring the course upon inferred user profiles.</li></ul> <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"><b>Objective 5</b></div> <p><b>To sketch and evaluate a sustainable business model</b> around the proposed solution. In particular, the ASP chosen approach will offer to customer access to <i>InTraServ</i> without making up-front investments in buying the application, servers and other resources and in hiring new staff. The platform will be reachable from clients remotely, over the Internet. In this way the service can be managed, supported and extended by the technology provider from a central location rather than by each customer at his own site.</p> <p>A business model exploiting this idea will be defined during the "exploitation" workpackage. An estimation of economic benefits for SMEs deriving from the adoption of such approach will be then carried out.</p> <div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 2px; margin-top: 5px;"><b>Objective 6</b></div> <p><b>To disseminate the know-how resulting from the trial</b> through the European Community. <i>InTraServ</i> will collaborate strictly with GAMBIT, an other EC founded trial addressing management training in SMEs. Moreover, in order to widen the ranges of its dissemination, <i>InTraServ</i> will participate in other clusters of EC projects addressing training for SMEs. To extend the obtained results to the scientific and enterprise community, the submission of papers to conferences and workshops on the theme is forecasted.</p>
--	--

Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata  
Questions about *InTraServ* can be sent to: [info@intrasserv.org](mailto:info@intrasserv.org)  
Last Update: 04-02-03.

### 5.3 Participants Section



The screenshot shows the 'Participants' section of the InTraServ website. At the top left is the InTraServ logo, and at the top right is the Information Society Technologies logo. Below the logos is a green header bar with the text 'Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs'. On the left side, there is a vertical navigation menu with links for Introduction, Objectives, Participants, Workplan, Organisation, Archive, and Members. The 'Participants' link is highlighted. The main content area contains the following text:

The **InTraServ** consortium is composed by a technology supplier (CRMPA) and by five member SMEs coming from different economic sector and different European countries.

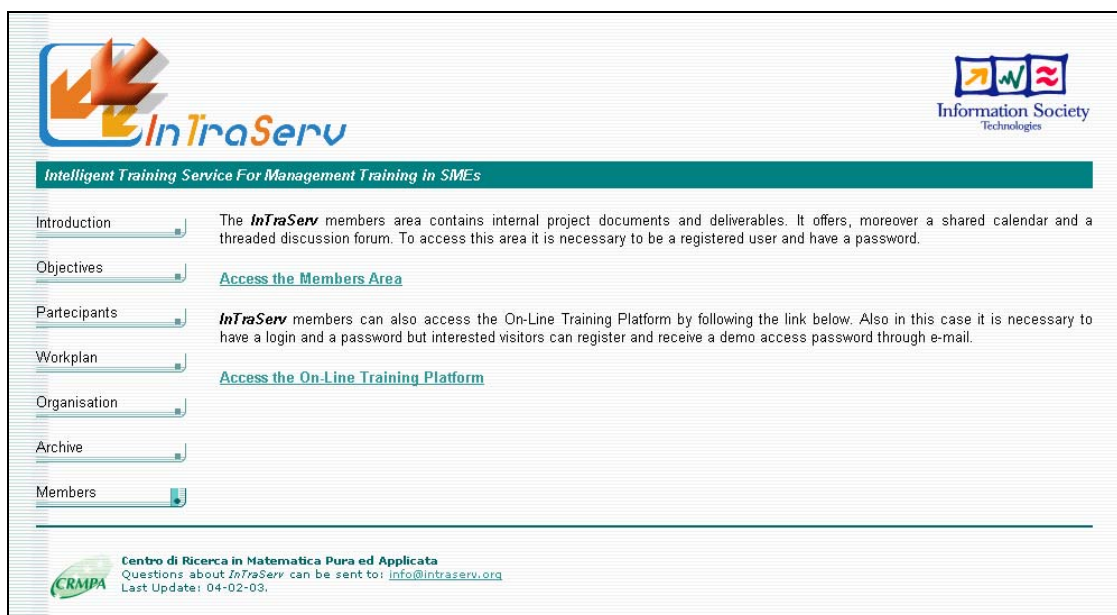
The provenance from different sectors will provide a rich environment for demonstration and test and will show the potential for wider exploitation. Moreover, the provenance from two different European countries (Italy and Spain) will demonstrate the European dimension of the project without affecting the efficient realisation of project objectives.

The consortium includes the following companies:

- ▶ **CRMPA** (Centre for Research in Pure and Applied Mathematics) from Salerno, Italy, will co-ordinate the whole project. It is moreover the technology and content provider. Its contribution will interest mainly the system customisation, the learning material creation, the management, the dissemination and the exploitation. The work to be done in relation to user needs gathering, experimentation and evaluation activities will be carried out in strict collaboration with ASIMAG.
- ▶ **ASIMAG** (Alonso Y Garay S.L.) from Bilbao, Spain, is a SME dealing with training consultancy addressing both classical and new technologies based training. It is able to grant the appropriate experience to evaluate the project. It will collaborate strictly with CRMPA during the training need gathering activity, it will participate strongly in the definition of the evaluation plan and it will lead Spanish experimentation and evaluation phase. Being a SME, ASIMAG will act as a user too during the experimentation phase.
- ▶ **9ICTA** (Iniciatives de Comunicació i Telemàtica Aplicada S.A.L.) from Barcelona, Spain, is a SME dealing mainly with applied telematic. It will collaborate as an user of the proposed training solution both in the user needs gathering and in the experimentation phase.
- ▶ **MA** (Metafore ed Analogie S.r.l.) from Avellino, Italy, is a consultancy SME. It will collaborate as an user of the proposed training solution both in the user needs gathering and in the experimentation phase.
- ▶ **CAVAMARKET** (CAVAMARKET S.p.A.), from Salerno, Italy, is a commercial SME. It will collaborate as an user of the proposed training solution both in the user needs gathering and in the experimentation phase.
- ▶ **PASI** (PASI S.r.l.) from Naples, Italy, is a commercial SME. It will collaborate as an user of the proposed training solution both in the user needs gathering and in the experimentation phase.

At the bottom left, there is a logo for CRMPA (Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata) and contact information: 'Questions about InTraServ can be sent to: [info@intraserv.org](mailto:info@intraserv.org) Last Update: 04-02-03.'

### 5.4 Member Section



The screenshot shows the 'Members' section of the InTraServ website. At the top left is the InTraServ logo, and at the top right is the Information Society Technologies logo. Below the logos is a green header bar with the text 'Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs'. On the left side, there is a vertical navigation menu with links for Introduction, Objectives, Participants, Workplan, Organisation, Archive, and Members. The 'Members' link is highlighted. The main content area contains the following text:

The **InTraServ** members area contains internal project documents and deliverables. It offers, moreover a shared calendar and a threaded discussion forum. To access this area it is necessary to be a registered user and have a password.



[Access the Members Area](#)

**InTraServ** members can also access the On-Line Training Platform by following the link below. Also in this case it is necessary to have a login and a password but interested visitors can register and receive a demo access password through e-mail.

[Access the On-Line Training Platform](#)

At the bottom left, there is a logo for CRMPA (Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata) and contact information: 'Questions about InTraServ can be sent to: [info@intraserv.org](mailto:info@intraserv.org) Last Update: 04-02-03.'

## 5.5 Workplan Section

Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs

Introduction

Objectives

Participants

Workplan

Organisation

Archive

Members

The work to be done during the **InTraServ** project can be summarised as follows. First of all, all partners will focus on SMEs training needs and on the knowledge domain that will be covered by the training service (the managerial training). Activities of learning material preparation and system customisation will be planned and will start, contemporarily, after this activity.

Courses will be divided in learning objects: small training modules covering a little set of specific arguments. They will be indexed using metadata and ontologies. One course related to Business Decision will be implemented and translated in each partner language.

Contemporarily, the existing training platform will be customised by integrating a business game already available as outcome of an other research project. The platform will be installed on a centralised server and the InTraServ service will start.

A detailed evaluation plan will be defined and made ready at the start up of the service. The experimentation phase will start in SME environments by applying such plan and by letting experts collect empirical data in order to evaluate at what extent InTraServ is able to fulfil training requirements. Basing on experimentation results, a sustainable business model and the related business plan will be defined.

All trial results will be disseminated through the European Community by joining clusters of similar projects. To extend the results to the scientific community, the submission of papers to conferences on the theme is planned.

The following diagram depicts the subdivision of the work in workpackages and the time scheduling of each one of them. The subsequent list will describe objectives of each workpackage.

Task Name	Year 1												Year 2							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
WP1: Final User Needs Gathering	[Bar]																			
WP2: Learning Material Preparation				[Bar]																
WP3: System Customisation					[Bar]															
WP4: Experimentation and Impact Evaluation											[Bar]									
WP5: Exploitation and Results Dissemination													[Bar]							
WP6: Management	[Bar]																			

**WP1**  
Gathering of partner SME needs concerning expectations for the proposed computer-based training environment and planning of activities to be done during WP2 and WP3


**WP2**  
Formalisation of the domain ontology (for the select domain), production of all learning material in form of atomic web-deliverable learning objects and indexation of such objects through metadata.

**WP3**  
Customisation of the actual *InTraServ* prototype by integrating business games individuated during WP1. To start up the *InTraServ* training delivery service.

**WP4**  
Measurement of *InTraServ* performances, evaluation of economic and pedagogical benefits of the innovative *InTraServ* approach to training, assessment of employee and managers satisfaction.


**WP5**  
Dissemination of the know-how resulting from the trial of *InTraServ* through the submission of technological, pedagogical and economic papers to conferences and workshops on the theme. Planning of the exploitation of *InTraServ* results.

**WP6**  
Assuring the quality of *InTraServ* results monitoring activities during the whole project at fixed milestones



**Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata**  
 Questions about *InTraServ* can be sent to: [info@intraser.org](mailto:info@intraser.org)  
 Last Update: 04-02-03.

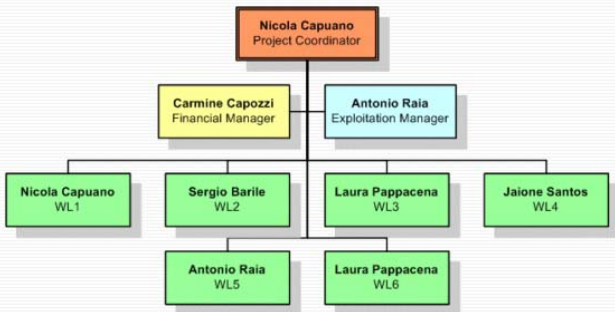
## 5.6 Organisation Section



Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs

- Introduction
- Objectives
- Participants
- Workplan
- Organisation
- Archive
- Members

The project management structure of **InTraServ** is composed by: a Project Co-ordinator (PC), an Exploitation Manager (EM), a Financial Manager (FM), several Workpackage Leader (WLS). Such structure allow the actual control of the project without imposing too many overheads.




```
graph TD; PC[Nicola Capuano  
Project Coordinator] --- FM[Carmine Capozzi  
Financial Manager]; PC --- EM[Antonio Raia  
Exploitation Manager]; PC --- WL1[Nicola Capuano  
WL1]; PC --- WL2[Sergio Barile  
WL2]; PC --- WL3[Laura Pappacena  
WL3]; PC --- WL4[Jaione Santos  
WL4]; PC --- WL5[Antonio Raia  
WL5]; PC --- WL6[Laura Pappacena  
WL6];
```

**Project Co-ordinator**  
He is in contact with partners and members at regular intervals, to check if everything is right, he is the interface with the EC for the project, he holds regular meetings, he accurately records costs, resources and time scale, he ensures integration of periodic progress reports and their delivery to the EC, he co-ordinates the preparation of reviews, he ensures that the project is in line with its objectives, he ensures that the project maintains its relevance to the IST programme.

**Exploitation Manager**  
In a staff position with respect to the Project Co-ordinator, an Exploitation Manager assists in finding optimal market and business opportunities. He is responsible for ensuring a smooth transition to commercial exploitation by monitoring the progress of the trial and the results of evaluation. The Exploitation Manager reports potential problems in exploitation and suggests corrective actions related to business improvements to the Project Co-ordinator.

**Financial Manager**  
In a staff position with respect to the Project Co-ordinator, a Financial Manager handles the project's financial and administrative management activities. He reports on these matters to the Project Co-ordinator.

**Workpackage Leaders**  
Each workpackage has a Workpackage Leader nominated by the workpackage responsible company. They ensure that the timing, costs and resources are kept in line and flag any discrepancy immediately to the Project Co-ordinator; they initiate corrective action for programme deviation; they ensure that the objective and results of activities within the work-packages are achieved; they ensure that the deliverables are available according to the schedule; they attend all relevant meeting and, in exceptional cases, send a substitute; they co-ordinate activities for the nominated work-package.

Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata  
Questions about *InTraServ* can be sent to: [info@intraseriv.org](mailto:info@intraseriv.org)  
Last Update: 04-02-03.

## 5.7 Archive Section



**Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs**

Introduction  The **InTraServ** archive contains public project reports and deliverables, scientific papers and dissemination material. It will be filled during the course of the project.

Objectives 

Participants 

Workplan 

Organisation 

**Archive** 

Members 

**Public Project Deliverables**

-  [InTraServ Project Presentation \(English, Italian\)](#)
-  [Learning Material Creation Report](#)
-  [Evaluation Plan](#)
-  [Dissemination Plan](#)
-  [Impact Evaluation Results and Analysis \(March 2003\)](#)
-  [Dissemination Report \(May 2003\)](#)
-  [Final Report \(May 2003\)](#)

**InTraServ Related Papers**

-  N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, L. Pappacena.  
[An e-Learning Platform for SME Manager Upgrade and its Evolution Toward a Distributed Training Environment.](#)  
2nd International LeGE-WG Workshop "e-Learning and Grid Technologies: a fundamental challenge for Europe", Paris, France, 2003.
-  N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, A. Micarelli.  
[IWT: Una Piattaforma Innovativa per la Didattica Intelligente su Web.](#)  
A\*IA Notizie, year XVI, no. 1, p. 57-61, March 2003.

**Other InTraServ Related Stuff**





-  [InTraServ Leaflet \(Front, Back\)](#)
-  [InTraServ Poster](#)
-  [The Cronache del Mezzogiorno Newspaper on InTraServ \(Page 1, Page 7\)](#)
-  [InTraServ ScreenSaver](#)


 **Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata**  
Questions about *InTraServ* can be sent to: [info@intraserv.org](mailto:info@intraserv.org)  
Last Update: 04-02-03.

## 6. Dissemination Material



The following dissemination material have been produced and was used in events involving InTraServ.

### 6.1 InTraServ Leaflet

<p><b>Main Advantages</b></p> <p>Using InTraServ, it will be possible for a manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to take personalized training between working tasks,</li> <li>• to evaluate the formal knowledge acquired,</li> <li>• to transform it in practical knowledge by experimenting what learnt in simulated environments,</li> <li>• to be supported during his decision making process through a CBR (Case Base Reasoning) Engine.</li> </ul> <p>The platform will be made available exploiting an Application Service Provision methodology (ASP) i.e. the platform will be reachable from clients remotely, on the Internet.</p>	<p><b>Project Data</b></p> <p>Project No: IST-2000-29377 Action Line: Trials and best practice addressing advanced solutions for on-the-job training in SMEs Start Date: 01/12/2001 End Date: 31/05/2003 Duration: 18 Month More Info: www.intraserv.org</p> <p><b>For more details please contact:</b> Nicola Capuano Laura Pappacena CRMPA c/o DIIMA – Università di Salerno Via Ponte don Melillo 84080 Fisciano (SA) Tel. +39 (089) 964189 Fax. +39 (089) 964191 e-mail: info@intraserv.org</p> <p> <b>CRMPA</b> Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata www.crmpa.it</p> <p>www.intraserv.org</p> <p>ASIMAG   Icta   M&amp;A   ISESPAR   For SME</p>	<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs</p>  
		

<p><b>What is InTraServ</b></p> <p>InTraServ is an EC funded project under the 5th Framework Programme - Information Society Technologies. Its main goal is to try and evaluate an innovative Web-based intelligent training solution for manager upgrading in real SME environments operating in different fields. The learning task for managers is, in fact, becoming a critical element for the survival and the success of enterprises in the global competitive scenery.</p> 	<p><b>Project Objectives</b></p> <p><b>Objective 1</b> To realize a training platform including several state-of-the-art technologies such as: metadata and ontologies for knowledge manipulation, fuzzy learner modeling and case based reasoning.</p> <p><b>Objective 2</b> To realize a set of courses covering several aspects of the managerial training in three European languages (Italian, English, Spanish): Business Decision, Marketing, Marketing Management, Marketing Research and Management Control.</p> <p><b>Objective 3</b> To realize a set of business games addressing the business decision process through a "what...if" approach. In particular, two business games will be made available: a Business Game for Strategic Decisions, a Business Game on Management Control.</p> <p><b>Objective 4</b> To evaluate the benefits of the InTraServ approach to training in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• overcome of distance, time and location barriers (training must serve a dispersed group of learners where and when they require it),</li> <li>• flexibility (training can be undertaken between work tasks),</li> <li>• availability (training material can be easily located),</li> <li>• immediacy (user can obtain quickly solutions to daily working problems).</li> </ul> <p><b>Objective 5</b> To sketch and evaluate a sustainable business model based on the ASP methodology around the proposed solution.</p> <p><b>Objective 6</b> To disseminate the know-how resulting from the trial through the European Community by participating in clusters of EC projects addressing training for SMEs. To extend the obtained results to the scientific and enterprise community through the participation in conferences and workshops on the theme.</p>	<p><b>Main Features</b></p> <p><b>Content Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integration with the main software tools for content creation (MS PowerPoint, MS Word, etc)</li> <li>• Possibility to import content from the main Web formats</li> <li>• Availability of integrated tools for test management</li> <li>• Support of the main standards for content description (IMS, IMS-QTI)</li> <li>• Possibility to manage contents at an higher abstraction level through ontologies compliant with the main standards for knowledge representation (DAML+OIL, SHOE)</li> <li>• Possibility to extend the system with a set of drivers to manage new kind and formats of content</li> </ul> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to associate discussion forums to courses or inter-course and intra-course workgroups</li> <li>• Integrated Messaging System and Textual Chat for synchronous and asynchronous message exchange</li> <li>• Management of a remote repository to store and share documents</li> </ul> <p><b>Course Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Possibility to create didactical paths through the aggregation of basic content (Learning Object)</li> <li>• Support of the main standards for course description (SCORM 1.2, IMS-CP)</li> <li>• Possibility of automatic or aided generation of didactical paths starting from learning goals</li> <li>• Possibility of automatic customization of the training experience basing on previous knowledge of single learners and from their learning preferences</li> <li>• Support for the automatic learner monitoring and evaluation in relation to the acquired knowledge and to the shown cognitive abilities and perceptive capabilities.</li> </ul> <p><b>System Administration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Web-based portal completely customizable in relation to layout, content and section access rights</li> <li>• Integrated tools for the management of users, groups, roles and access rights</li> <li>• Possibility to extend the platform through plug-ins that allow to add new services and through drivers that allow to manage new kind of Learning Objects</li> <li>• Possibility to completely administrate the system remotely</li> </ul>
--	---	---

## 6.2 InTraServ Poster

# Intelligent Training Service For Management Training in SMEs

### What is InTraServ

InTraServ is an EC funded project under the 5th Framework Programme - Information Society Technologies.

The main goal is to try and evaluate an innovative Web-based intelligent training solution for manager upgrading in real SME environments operating in different fields.

### Objectives

**Objective 1**  
To realize a training platform including several state-of-the-art technologies such as: metadata and ontologies for knowledge manipulation, fuzzy learner modeling and case based reasoning. Within such platform, a learner can:

- select a particular set of topics from an ontology of covered arguments and let the system arrange a personalised self-adaptive course about such topics.
- use the system to solve daily working problems using a case based reasoning (CBR) methodology i.e. comparing the current problem with similar solved problems saved in the past.
- exercise about learnt topic using a set of business games that allow concrete experiences through experimentation.

**Objective 2**  
To realize a set of courses covering several aspects of the managerial training in three European languages (Italian, English, Spanish): Business Decision, Marketing, Marketing Management, Marketing Research and Management Control.

**Objective 3**  
To realize a set of business games addressing the business decision process through a "what...if" approach. In particular, two business games will be made available: a Business Game for Strategic Decisions, a Business Game on Management Control. Experts will be exploited to collect empirical data through measurements in order to evaluate at what extent the InTraServ platform and the underlying training model is able to satisfy such set of needs and challenges and, in general, to cover all aspects of usability, efficiency and effectiveness of the learning support.

**Objective 4**  
To evaluate the benefits of the InTraServ approach to training in terms of:  
overcome of distance, time and location barriers (training must serve a dispersed group of learners where and when they require it).  
flexibility (training can be undertaken between work tasks).  
availability (training material can be easily located).  
immediacy (user can obtain quickly solutions to daily working problems).  
Experts will be exploited to collect empirical data through measurements in order to evaluate at what extent the InTraServ platform and the underlying training model is able to satisfy such set of needs and challenges and, in general, to cover all aspects of usability, efficiency and effectiveness of the learning support.

**Objective 5**  
To sketch and evaluate a sustainable business model based on the ASP methodology around the proposed solution.

**Objective 6**  
To disseminate the know-how resulting from the trial through the European Community by participating in clusters of EC projects addressing training for SMEs. To extend the obtained results to the scientific and enterprise community through the participation in conferences and workshops on the theme.

### Main Features

#### Content Management

- Integration with the main software tools for content creation (MS PowerPoint, MS Word, etc)
- Possibility to import content from the main Web formats (HTML, PDF, Flash, ShockWave, AuthorWave, etc)
- Availability of integrated tools for test management
- Support of the main standards for content description (IMS, IMS-QTI)
- Possibility to manage contents at an higher abstraction level through ontologies compliant with the main standards for knowledge representation (DAML+OIL, SHOE)
- Possibility to extend the system with a set of drivers to manage new kind and formats of content

#### Collaboration


- Possibility to associate discussion forums to courses or inter-course and intra-course workgroups
- Integrated Messaging System and Textual Chat for synchronous and asynchronous message exchange
- Management of a remote repository to store and share documents
- Possibility to install additional plug-ins to handle advanced collaboration features (videoconference, follow-me browsing, application sharing, virtual classroom, etc.)

#### Course Management

- Possibility to create didactical paths through the aggregation of basic content (Learning Object)
- Support of the main standards for course description (SCORM 1.2, IMS-CP)
- Possibility of automatic or aided generation of didactical paths starting from learning goals
- Possibility of automatic customization of the training experience basing on previous knowledge of single learners and from their learning preference
- Support for the automatic learner monitoring and evaluation in relation to the acquired knowledge and to the shown cognitive abilities and perceptive capabilities

#### System Administration

- Web-based portal completely customizable in relation to layout, content and section access rights
- Integrated tools for the management of users, groups, roles and access rights
- Possibility to extend the platform through plug-in that allow to add new services and through driver that allow to manage new kind of Learning Objects
- Possibility to completely administrate the system remotely



### Main Advantages

The learning task for managers is becoming a critical element for the survival and the success of enterprises in the global competitive scenery. Given its generality (it is applicable for quite all kind of SMEs) we chose to adopt such main topic during this trial.

Using InTraServ, it will be possible for a manager

- to take personalized training between working tasks,
- to evaluate the formal knowledge acquired,
- to transform it in practical knowledge by experimenting what learnt in simulated.
- to be supported during his decision making process.







The platform will be made available exploiting an Application Service Provision methodology (ASP) i.e. the platform will be reachable from clients remotely, over the Internet.

### Project Data

**Project No:** IST-2000-29377  
**Action Line:** Trials and best practice addressing advanced solutions for on-the-job training in SMEs  
**Start Date:** 01/12/2001  
**End Date:** 31/05/2003  
**Duration:** 18 Month  
**More Info:** [www.intraserv.org](http://www.intraserv.org)

**For more details please contact:**  
 Nicola Capuano  
 CRMPA c/o DIMA – Università di Salerno  
 Via Ponte don Melillo  
 84080 Fisciano (SA)  
 Tel. +39 (089) 964189  
 Fax. +39 (089) 964191  
 e-mail: [info@intraserv.org](mailto:info@intraserv.org)

## www.intraserv.org

## 7. InTraServ on Newspapers

The following article was published on the Italian newspaper *Corriere del Mezzogiorno* (annex to *Corriere della Sera* for the South Italy) on Friday 29 November 2002. The article introduced the InTraServ project and its participation to the Online Educa Berlin event.



### 7.1 Page 1

Iniziativa dei matematici dell'università sotto l'egida dell'Unione europea

## Fisciano crea il prof virtuale

*Un progetto dell'ateneo alla fiera «Online Educa» di Berlino*

**SALERNO** — «Online Educa», in programma a Berlino da questo fine settimana, è uno degli appuntamenti internazionali più importanti nel panorama dell'e-learning, l'insegnamento applicato alle nuove tecnologie. Una vetrina alla quale partecipa anche l'Unione europea con la presentazione di cinque progetti innovativi europei. Di cui uno italiano. Anzi dell'università di Salerno, realizzato dal Crmpa (centro ricerche di matematica pura e applicata) dell'ateneo di Fisciano. Il progetto è denominato «Intraserv» e rappresenta la creazione di una classe virtuale, con professori altrettanto virtuali ma "intelligenti", che individuano il metodo formativo ed il tipo di studio da assegnare ai manager di piccole e medie imprese che intendono essere formati.

■ A pagina 7  
**Naddeo**



Progetto e-learning dell'università di Salerno

### DIALOGHI IN RETE



**MACRY-MIELI**

«Bossi sbaglia,  
l'Unità non è stata  
un regalo del Nord»



■ A pagina 11



Alla fiera tedesca, l'Ue partecipa con cinque progetti: uno è stato realizzato dagli informatici dell'università di Salerno

# «Prof» virtuali, da Fisciano progetto europeo

Il centro ricerche matematiche dell'ateneo presenta a Berlino un proposta di «e-learning», lo studio intelligente

**SALERNO** - «Online Educa», in programma a Berlino da questa fine settimana, è uno degli appuntamenti internazionali più importanti nel panorama dell'e-learning, l'insegnamento applicato alle nuove tecnologie, con sessanta nazioni rappresentate e almeno mille docenti «decision makers», i manager che si occupano di fornire pareri a governi e grandi industrie, provenienti da tutto il mondo.

Una vetrina alla quale partecipa anche l'Unione europea con la presentazione di cinque progetti innovativi europei. Di cui uno italiano. Anzi dell'università di Salerno, realizzato dal Cmpa (centro ricerche di matematica pura e applicata) dell'ateneo di Fisciano che, insieme al Politecnico di Milano, rappresenta per l'Unione Europea uno dei poli d'eccellenza nella ricerca scientifica informatica nel Paese. Il progetto è denominato «Intraserv» e rappresenta la creazione di una classe virtuale, con professori altrettanto virtuali ma «intelligenti», che individuano il metodo formativo ed il tipo di studio da assegnare ai manager di piccole e medie imprese che intendono essere formati. Il tutto, naturalmente, a distanza ed in rete. Con approfondimenti continui, contatti diretti con i professori se necessario, e stavolta reali, ed un «business game», una simulazione dei problemi che il manager potrebbe affrontare durante la sua attività lavorativa.

## IL CONSORZIO Industria, nasce Buona Campania

Nasce a Salerno, nella sede di Assindustria, il Consorzio Buona Campania. Composto da otto delle principali aziende alimentari del salernitano, il consorzio vanta già molte richieste di adesione. Lo scopo è quello di facilitare l'accesso ai prodotti regionali tipici, organizzando e coordinando la distribuzione. In Campania il marchio DOP è già stato attribuito a molti prodotti e l'iniziativa del consorzio vuole rispondere alla crescente attenzione verso questo tipo di mercato.

vo. In termini non solo di uso strumentale delle tecnologie, ma anche e soprattutto di modelli e metodologie, di cui le «Information and communication technology» sono fattore abilitante essenziale. Una risposta efficace e al passo coi tempi non può prescindere dalla estrema variabilità dei livelli di conoscenza, delle abilità, delle attitudini e stili di apprendimento, degli obiettivi formativi, dei tempi, modi e luoghi possibili per i diversi discenti. E deve quindi fondarsi sull'innovazione formativa. Anche nel processo, complesso e non privo di criticità, di riforma del sistema dell'alta formazione, e in particolare dell'Università, l'innovazione didattica e formativa è chiamata a svolgere un ruolo cruciale.

Felice Naddeo



A Fisciano è nato il progetto Intraserv che verrà presentato a Berlino sotto l'egida dell'Unione europea

## fondazione Menna Ecco progetto e sponsor

Una collaborazione tra due biblioteche per un servizio unico e informatizzato di consultazione libri. È la proposta che il presidente della fondazione Menna, Giuseppe Conillo, avanzerà al presidente della Camera di Commercio, Augusto Scianese, nei prossimi giorni. L'idea è soltanto una delle tante (c'è anche l'ipotesi di una sponsorizzazione privata dal casertano Vannucci) che fondono per fare uscire la Fondazione dallo stato di difficoltà dovuto alla carenza cronica di fondi. L'impegno non ha impedito però anche quest'anno l'allestimento di un programma di fatto rispetto. Sarà una conferenza di Roberto Esposito su «L'immunità nell'epoca della globalizzazione» ad aprire, martedì 3 dicembre, ore 17, il ciclo di seminari «La Città e le Arti», una riflessione approfondita sui rapporti tra la progettualità dell'urbano e i linguaggi dell'arte. Tre le direttrici sulle quali si articolerà il settimo anno di attività: Filosofia della città, a cura di Clementina Conillo, Estetiche della città, a cura di Pino De Luca, e La città come racconto, a cura di Stefania Ziliani. Pressi, tra l'altro, un incontro con Toni Servillo, una rassegna cinematografica dedicata a «Corpo e metropoli» e la presentazione della nuova edizione del Vangelo secondo Matteo promossa dai padri domenicani di Salerno. (G. B.)

## L'INAUGURAZIONE

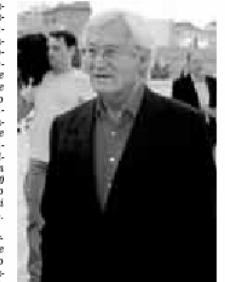
### Un «pensatoio» nel centro di Salerno Domani al via la «piazza della ceramica»

Sarà inaugurata domani mattina dal sindaco Mario De Biase la «piazza della ceramica» creata dall'artista Ugo Marano per regalare al centro della città una «zona franca di meditazione». Si tratta di un vero e proprio pensatoio che va a nobilitare l'attuale via de' Vicaris, una traversa di corso Garibaldi di fronte al tribunale, per metà occupata dall'ingresso di un garage, per l'altra metà dai cassonetti dell'immondizia e motocicli in sosta. L'intervento artistico elaborato da Marano prevede varie panchine di maiolica colorata e al centro un piccolo pianto. Intanto su un'altra opera pubblica del geniale scultore e ceramista si abbate l'ira del capogruppo consiliare di An, Cesare Festa: la «Fontana felice» che Marano realizzò alcuni anni fa per il sindaco De Luca, davanti alla chiesa di San Pietro in Camerelli, a poche centinaia di metri dalla nuova installazione, è diventata uno «scoglio», un puntino riciccolato di detriti e di immondizia. Molto meglio, consiglia Festa in una lettera aperta al primo cittadino, «procedere a rimovere senza ulteriori indugi l'ingombro» che deturpa lo spazio antistante una delle Chiese più belle e frequentate di Salerno. g.b.

## LA PROMESSA

### Prg, De Biase: bozza finale entro il 30 aprile

Nonostante ricerca, in media una volta alla settimana, lettere di minacce e cartoline pornografiche da Salerno, Oriol Bohigas non demorde. L'architetto spagnolo, nei giorni scorsi in città, ha personalmente confermato al sindaco Mario De Biase l'intenzione di voler proseguire nella redazione del Prg. Che dovrà essere consegnato, nella sua bozza finale, entro il 30 aprile prossimo al consiglio comunale per l'adozione. Dopo le dimissioni di Ercole Di Filippo dalla guida dell'Ufficio di Piano, la struttura tecnica di supporto dell'urbanista catalano, è stata confermata l'assegnazione dell'incarico a Bianca De Roberto, responsabile del settore tecnico di Palazzo di Città. «Bohigas ha grande entusiasmo e professionalità dell'Ufficio di Piano sono molto motivati - ha riferito De Biase - ed anche noi non abbiamo perso un minuto rispetto alla scadenza del 30 novembre per consegnare al redattore del Prg lo stato di fatto del programma di lavoro. Anzi siamo arrivati con cinque giorni d'anticipo a questo appuntamento. Unico problema la nuova mappa del rischio. «Che ci ha sorpreso - precisa l'assessore Finato Martino - perché introduce pressioni di rischio esagerate e che ci condizioneranno. Mi sembra che questo piano dell'Autorità di bacino serva solo per l'incolumità patrimoniale e personale di chi lo ha redatto qualora capitasse qualche sciagura».



Oriol Bohigas

## Annex I. InTraServ Related Papers

This annex contains the full text of the following papers:

- N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, L. Pappacena.  
**An e-Learning Platform for SME Manager Upgrade and its Evolution Toward a Distributed Training Environment.**  
2nd International LeGE-WG Workshop “e-Learning and Grid Technologies: a fundamental challenge for Europe”, Paris, France, 2003.
- N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, A. Micarelli.  
**IWT: Una Piattaforma Innovativa per la Didattica Intelligente su Web.**  
AI\*IA Notizie, year XVI, no. 1, p. 57-61, March 2003.

# An e-Learning Platform for SME Manager Upgrade and its Evolution Toward a Distributed Training Environment

Nicola Capuano, Matteo Gaeta, Laura Pappacena

CRMPA Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata  
C/O DIIMA – Università degli Studi di Salerno  
Via Ponte Don Melillo – 84084 Fisciano (SA), Italia

Dipartimento di Ingegneria dell'Informazione e Matematica Applicata  
Università degli Studi di Salerno  
Via Ponte Don Melillo – 84084 Fisciano (SA), Italia

{capuano, gaeta, pappacena}@crmpa.unisa.it

**The purpose of this paper is to describe the work in progress related to the customisation, the trial and the evaluation of an innovative e-learning platform for manager upgrade in Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) in the framework of an EC funded project named InTraServ and its forthcoming re-engineering process aimed to the adoption of distributed services in the framework of another EC funded project named Diogene. The present e-learning solution includes several state-of-the-art technologies and methodologies such as: metadata and ontologies for knowledge manipulation, fuzzy learner modelling, intelligent course tailoring, case based reasoning, business games and simulation tools. The proposed solution is based on the distribution of working tasks among content provider services, content discovery services, content brokering services, training services, curriculum vitae searching services and collaboration services.**

*Keywords: e-Learning, Web Services, Distributed Environments*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The managerial capacity paradigm argues that a firm's growth is limited by the speed at which it can expand its managerial capacity. This is generally true but it is more and more true for Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) that often don't have a well defined managerial structure causing, in many cases, strategic and decisional lacks that obstruct enterprise's growth.

The learning task for managers is then a critical element for the survival and the success of SME in the global competitive scenery. As quoted in [1] the key challenges to be addressed to satisfy SME training needs concern: distance, time and location (training must serve a dispersed group of learners where and when they require it), flexibility (training can be undertaken between work tasks), availability (training material can be easily located), immediacy (user can obtain quickly solutions to daily working problems).

Starting from these considerations, the EC funded project InTraServ [2] arranged a completely innovative e-learning platform purposed to face and solve these and more issues. The InTraServ project is now approaching the experimentation phase in several SMEs from Italy, UK and Spain.

At the same time, a further EC funded project named Diogene [3] is in progress. Its purpose is to completely re-engineering the architecture of the InTraServ e-learning platform by applying a distributed computing paradigm based on Web Services. This will allow the distribution of training content on different servers, the integration with the forthcoming Semantic Web, the cooperation of different installations of the system, the possibility to create a training offer by combining resources offered by different providers, etc. In this sense it will be a step toward a GRID architecture.

The paper is organised as follows: the InTraServ project will be briefly described and its main features introduced (section 2). A sketch of the present system architecture will be then presented (section 3) and the new service oriented architecture we have in mind will be introduced (section 4). Some conclusions (section 5) and references will follow.

## **2. WHAT'S INTRASERV**

InTraServ [2] is an EC "Trial" project funded under the 5th Framework Programme whose purpose is to customise, try and evaluate an innovative Web-based intelligent e-learning solution for manager upgrade in real SME environments operating in different fields.

Using the InTraServ solution, it will be possible for a manager to take personalised training between working tasks (on-the-job), to evaluate the formal knowledge acquired and to transform it in practical knowledge by experimenting what learnt in simulated situations. When, finally, the manager will master such knowledge, he can apply it inside the organisation. Moreover, using InTraServ, a manager can be supported during his decision making process (just-in-time) by exploiting the CBR-based real case solver component.

The InTraServ e-learning platform is now ready and accessible through the InTraServ portal [2]. It includes four courses (Business Decision, Marketing Management, Marketing Research and Management Control) in three languages (Italian, English and Spanish) and several Business Games (BGs). The following paragraphs describes briefly its innovative features with respect to commercial e-learning platforms presently available on the scene.

### **2.1. Metadata and Ontologies for Knowledge Management**

All InTraServ learning material is organised in learning objects (LO) indexed through IMS compliant metadata [4] in order to let the system know what each one of them is about and how it can be used during the learning process.

To provide, also, information about LO relations and interdependency, InTraServ applies ontologies [5] allowing to design abstract, simplified views of training domains. Within InTraServ, ontologies are used to define and relate concepts of a training domain with four kinds of relations: (is\_part\_of, requires, suggested order and explains) and, also, to link concepts to LOs [6], [7].

### **2.2. Fuzzy Learner Modelling**

InTraServ infers and maintains a learner model compliant with the IMS-LIP standard [8] composed by a cognitive state and a set learning preferences. The cognitive state stores, for each concept of a specified training domain, the knowledge degree reached by the learner represented as a set of fuzzy numbers [9] (allowing, in this way, to manage uncertainty in the evaluation process).

Learning preferences, instead, include all information about learner cognitive abilities and perceptive capabilities i.e. to which typology of resources a specified learner is more receptive [6], [7].

### **2.3. Intelligent Course Tailoring**

An InTraServ course is composed by an user selected set of learning goals (key concepts that the learner has to learn) and by a learning path (a sequence of learning objects that has to be used to provide, to a specific learner, all necessary knowledge to fully understand chosen goals).

Different learners can require different paths to learn the same goals depending on their learner models. For this reason, InTraServ provides an automatic curriculum generation procedure: the learner can choose what to learn (goals) and let the system organise a personalised learning path for him. Such path can change dynamically during the learning process adapting to learner needs in relation to learner performed activities [6], [7].

### **2.4. Case Based Reasoning**

InTraServ gives learners the possibility to solve daily working problems by exploiting a CBR methodology [10] i.e. through a sub-system able to solve new cases comparing the current problem with similar solved problems in a case base and ranking found solutions.

Moreover, the system is able to extend its knowledge by interpreting a new solution in light of similar situations and abstracting out generalisations from experiences. The strength of this approach to problem solving is that the knowledge base is maintained as concrete problem descriptions. In this way the system maintenance could be made by a domain expert rather than by a system expert.

### **2.5. Business Games and Simulation Tools**

An important InTraServ feature is the possibility to use a set of advanced simulation tools addressing the business decision process through a "what...if" approach. They refer to a particular learning process phase called "interactive phase": after a learner studied the theory related to a specific topic, he can use such tools to exercise about learned topics.

But a simulation exercise is quite different from a classical exercise: it is based on simulation models that allow concrete experience built up by experimentation and by modification of hypotheses that play a role inside the system under examination [11].

### 3. INTRASERV ARCHITECTURE: THE PRESENT

The main idea behind the InTraServ architecture is that any e-learning application should be supported by a general infrastructure that will put a set of common resources at everyone's disposal and, according to the specific needs of each training domain and application, by a set of further specific resources.

For this reason, the InTraServ architecture, despite that it was customised for the management training domain, is fully adaptable and extensible and can be the basis for the realisation of a virtually infinite set of specific e-learning platforms suitable for any needs, context and domain.

Moreover, the present architecture (see sketch in figure 1), thanks to a strong separation of tasks between different components, will be an optimum starting point to realise a distributed architecture as we will see in the next section.

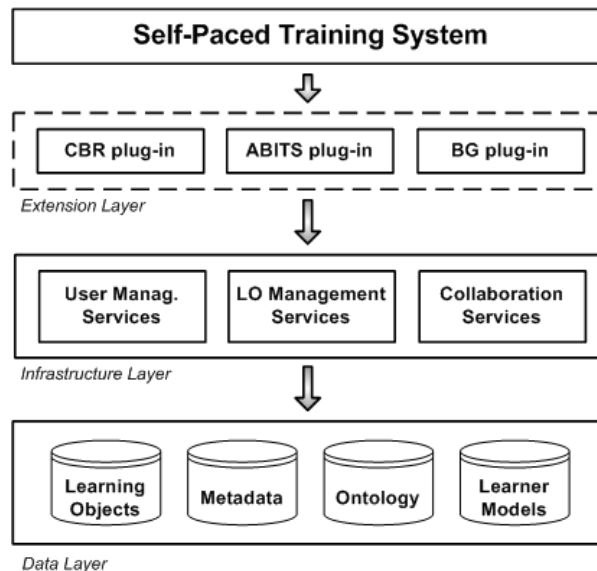


FIGURE 1. The InTraServ Architecture.

As it can be seen, the InTraServ e-learning platform architecture is divided in four layers: Data, Infrastructure, Extension and Self-Paced Training System.

The Data layer stores all persistent information related to used data structures: Learning Objects, Metadata, Ontologies and Learner Models (see section 2).

The Infrastructure layer, instead, contains all general-purpose e-learning services as described below.

- **User Management Services:** allow registration and logging and provide all user and groups management functions including profiles handling;
- **Learning Objects Management Services:** provide all functions to manage LOs, Metadata and related Ontologies (including access rights handling) and to index and retrieve LOs basing on associated Metadata and Ontologies.
- **Collaboration Services:** include synchronous (text and visual chat) and asynchronous (messaging system and threaded discussion forum) tools for collaboration between users.

The Extension layer, moreover, allows to add at any time new specific domain or context dependent services through the implementation of plug-ins compliant to system specifications. Three plug-ins have been included in the InTraServ Extension layer:

- the Case Based Reasoning (**CBR**) **plug-in** that is responsible for case bases reasoning functions (see 2.4);
- the Agent Based Intelligent Tutoring System (**ABITS**) **plug-in** that is responsible for “intelligent” training functions (see 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and [7]);
- the Business Games (**BG**) **plug-in** that allows to exploit business games as a particular type of LO (see 2.5).

Finally, the Self-Paced Training System layer includes the front-end related to an instance of the e-learning system (geared toward manager upgrading in SME in the case of the InTraServ project) and allows a filtered access to resources and services provided by the layers below. This layer is obtained via the customisation of a general Web Portal: a dynamic container of panels that give access to underlying services and resources.

The InTraServ e-learning platform has been entirely realised in the Microsoft .NET environment [12], using the ASP.NET language (for the front-end) and the C# language (for the back-end). Main functions have been wrapped in Web Services in order to allow a standard invocation on the Web from external applications.

#### 4. DIOGENE ARCHITECTURE: THE FUTURE

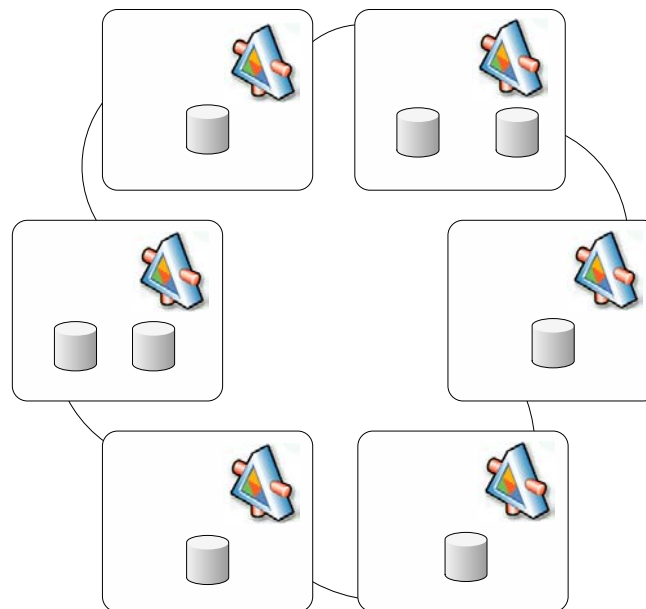
The InTraServ architecture is well structured and suitable for extensions with new services and easily customisable for new training contexts and domains. Nevertheless, it is quite monolithic: it doesn't allow the distribution of training content on different servers, the cooperation of different installations of the system, the possibility to combine training resources offered by different providers, etc.

For this and more reasons, in the framework of further project named Diogene, we completely re-thought the InTraServ architecture in order to allow the distribution of training resources based on Web Services.

Diogene [3] is an EC funded project aimed to design, implement and evaluate with real users an e-learning Web brokering environment for ICT individual training able to support learners during the whole cycle of the training, from the definition of objectives to the assessment of results through the construction of custom courses.

The e-learning system that will be realised under Diogene will use some InTraServ state-of-the-art technologies like metadata and ontologies for knowledge manipulation, fuzzy learner modelling, intelligent course tailoring but, also, will include a set of innovative features like dynamic learning strategies, Semantic Web openness, Web services for Learning Object handling and IPR management, Curriculum Vitae generation, maintenance and searching facilities, free-lance teachers support and assisted Learning Objectives definition.

The architecture we have in mind for Diogene is sketched in figure 2. As it can be seen, it derives, partially from the InTraServ architecture in the distribution of tasks among component/services.



**FIGURE 2.** The Diogene Architecture.

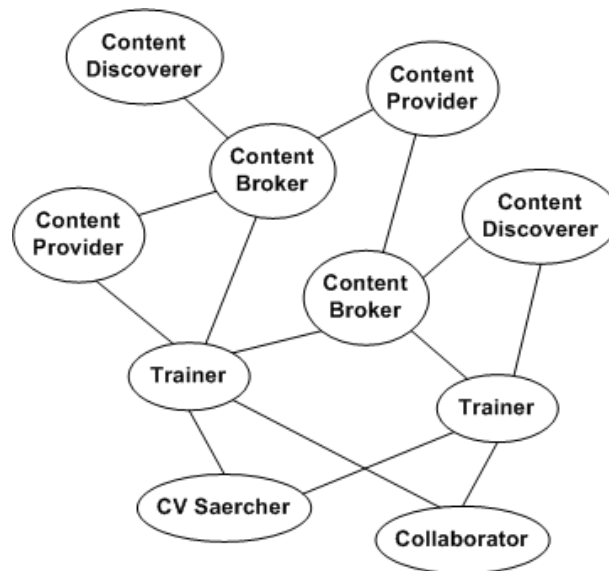
The meaning of shown Diogene training services is described below.

- **Content Provider Services.** They are installed in content provider organisations and are used to host training content and provide a standard SOAP-based interface [12] to allow remote access to it. They provide search and retrieval functions on the local repository via metadata-based queries and are able to perform e-commerce transactions between users requesting content and the provider organisation itself to buy the access to content for limited periods of time. They are an extended version of the InTraServ Learning Objects Management Services.
- **Content Discovery Services.** They are able to extract training content directly from the Web of the present and of the future generation (Semantic Web). Through a keyword-based text categorisation algorithm they are able, where absent, to automatically extract metadata from textual learning objects and to link them to ontology concepts. Through a mixed approach based on keyword and ontologies, moreover, they are able to bypass compatibility problems between different ontological representations of the same domain.
- **Content Brokering Services.** They are broker of training content. They maintain indexes of learning objects of registered Content Provider and Discovery Services and allow users to use metadata- and ontology-based queries to find the right provider with the right content. They include, also, some course tailoring capabilities (see 2.3) to generate ad-hoc courses by assembling content from registered Content Provider and Discovery Services.
- **Training Services.** They are responsible for the delivery of courses and for the provision of course management and execution functions. They deal, moreover, with “intelligent” training functions like learner modelling, course tailoring, assisted objective definition and learning strategies upgrading. They don't maintain any local training content but strictly interact with Content Brokering Services or directly with Content Discovery

and Provider Services to obtain and combine learning objects. They include and extend the InTraServ Self Paced Training System plus the User management Services and the ABITS plug-in.

- **CV Searching Services.** They provide search engine capabilities on Learner Models Databases of registered Training Services in order to let third parties interested to hire certified staff to find qualified professional (with respect to privacy requirements). They will maintain, moreover, statistics of received requests in order to rank required competencies.
- **Collaboration Services.** They will support social interactions, mentoring and information exchange by providing users a set of collaborative synchronous and asynchronous facilities. They will be able to automatically arrange groups among users of registered Training Services by individuating and grouping learners with similar needs and/or profiles. They are an extension of InTraServ Collaboration Services.

The following figure depicts possible interactions between multiple instances of Diogene services hosted by different organisations. They will constitute the Distributed Training Environment (DTE) of Diogene.



**FIGURE 3.** Interactions Among Diogene Services.

It's obvious that the distributed architecture designed for Diogene presents several advantages with respect to the InTraServ centralised one.

- The maintenance of Learning Objects on content provider servers allows content provider organizations to manage and organize content locally and, in the same time, to overcome property right related problems.
- The networking of different content provider servers filtered through content brokers allows to compose training offer aggregating content from different providers in order to best match user needs.
- The Web is full of training content and the forthcoming Semantic Web paradigm will make it semantically understandable by machines. Content Discovery Services exploit such power to find useful and freeware learning material and to make it available to the DTE.
- The collaboration between peers is of a paramount importance to improve the training experience. Collaboration Services are able to find on the whole DTE (rather than on a single installation of the training service) learners with similar interests and to put them in contact within a co-operative environment.
- Learner models contains useful data about the know-how of students and their acquired competencies: CV Searching Services are able to find qualified professionals all over the DTE and to put them in contact with hiring companies.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

In this paper we described the e-learning platform realised under the framework of an EC funded project named InTraServ, its innovative features, its architecture and the evolution of such architecture toward a distributed services paradigm (more suitable for a GRID environment) in the context of another EC funded project named Diogene.

The InTraServ project started in December 2001 and will end in May 2003. The experimentation phase with about 20 managers of Italian, English and Spanish SME is now in course. Apart the InTraServ project, CRMPA decided to experiment the realised e-learning platform also in several Italian academic contexts (like the University of Salerno, of Roma3 and of Molise) in four different courses about computer science and mathematics as a support for teachers in their usual didactic activities. Such kind of experimentation will start in March 2003.

The Diogene project, instead, started in April 2002 and will end in March 2004. The architecture design phase of Diogene is running toward its end and the implementation phase is recently started. A first prototype of the Diogene e-learning platform will be available in September 2003.

After the end of Diogene, the next step will be to make the DTE GRID available.

## REFERENCES

- [1] European Commission. *Trials and Best Practice Addressing Advanced Solutions for On-the-Job Training in SMEs*. FP5 IST Action Line III.2.3 Background Paper.  
<http://www.proacte.com>.
- [2] Web Site "InTraServ: Intelligent Training Service for Management Training in SMEs" FP5 IST Project (IST-2000-29377). <http://www.InTraServ.org>.
- [3] Web Site "Diogene: a Training Web Broker for ICT Professionals" FP5 Project (IST-2001-33358).  
<http://www.diogene.org>.
- [4] *IMS Learning Resource Meta-data Specification Version 1.2.2*. Public Draft Specification. IMS Global Learning Consortium, 2001.  
<http://www.imsproject.org/metadata/index.cfm>.
- [5] D. Fensel. *Ontologies: a Silver Bullet for Knowledge Management and Electronic Commerce*. Springer-Verlag, 2001.
- [6] N. Capuano, M. De Santo, M. Marsella, M. Molinara, S. Salerno. *Personalised Intelligent Training on the Web: A Multi Agent Approach*. Electronic Business and Education, Recent Advances in Internet Infrastructures, Kluwer: Multimedia Systems And Applications Series, vol. 20, chap. 5, 2001.
- [7] N. Capuano, M. Marsella, S. Salerno. *ABITS: An Agent Based Intelligent Tutoring System for Distance Learning*. Proceedings of the International Workshop on Adaptive and Intelligent Web-Based Education Systems. ITS 2000, Montreal, Canada, 2000.
- [8] *IMS Learner Information Package Specification Version 1.0*. Public Draft Specification. IMS Global Learning Consortium, 2001.  
<http://www.imsproject.org/profiles/index.cfm>.
- [9] D. Dubois, H. Prade. *Fuzzy Sets and Systems – Theory and Applications*. Academic Press, 1980.
- [10] J. Kolodner. *Case-Based Reasoning*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, 1993.
- [11] G. Albano, S. Miranda, S. Salerno. *e-Learning e Apprendimento Manageriale*. Volume Didamatica 2002 "e-Learning: metodi, strumenti ed esperienze a confronto" - pp. 253-266, 2002.
- [12] M. Macdonald. *Microsoft .NET Distributed Applications: Integrating Web Services and Remoting*. Microsoft Press, 2003.



# IWT: Una Piattaforma Innovativa per la Didattica Intelligente su Web

Nicola Capuano<sup>1,2</sup>, Matteo Gaeta<sup>1,2</sup>, Alessandro Micarelli<sup>1,3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> CRMPA Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata  
C/O DIIMA – Università degli Studi di Salerno  
Via Ponte Don Melillo – 84084 Fisciano (SA), Italia

<sup>2</sup> Dipartimento di Ingegneria dell'Informazione e Matematica Applicata  
Università degli Studi di Salerno  
Via Ponte Don Melillo – 84084 Fisciano (SA), Italia

<sup>3</sup> Dipartimento di Informatica e Automazione  
Università degli Studi ROMA TRE  
Via della Vasca Navale, 79 – 00146 Roma, Italia

**e-mail:** {capuano, gaeta}@crmpa.unisa.it, micarel@dia.uniroma3.it

**Sommario.** L'e-learning sta acquisendo importanza sempre maggiore negli ambienti didattico/formativi moderni grazie ai suoi innegabili vantaggi rispetto alla tradizionale formazione in aula. Purtroppo le piattaforme di e-learning attualmente esistenti sulla scena tendono a sfruttare la tecnologia solo come veicolo dell'esperienza formativa piuttosto che come regista della stessa. Il presente articolo descrive IWT, una piattaforma di e-learning che si propone di superare questo limite mirando a personalizzare l'apprendimento sulle reali esigenze e preferenze dell'utente ed a garantire estensibilità e flessibilità non solo al livello dei contenuti ma anche nelle funzionalità e soprattutto, a livello più alto, nelle strategie e nei modelli. Dopo un'introduzione sui limiti degli attuali sistemi di e-learning (sezione 1) verrà data una panoramica di IWT (sezione 2) e verranno di seguito descritte le caratteristiche "intelligenti" ed i modelli che hanno permesso la loro implementazione (sezioni 3, 4 e 5). Infine si concluderà facendo il punto sullo stato attuale della ricerca su IWT ed ipotizzando possibili scenari futuri (sezione 6).

## 1. Introduzione

Negli ultimi anni il radicale cambiamento nel modo di intendere il binomio insegnamento/apprendimento ha portato, a livello mondiale, numerose scuole ed università ad integrare nel loro modo di fare didattica le più moderne ed avanzate tecnologie basate principalmente sul Web. La stessa tendenza si è avvertita nell'ambito della formazione professionale dato che i sistemi tradizionali basati su lezioni frontali in aula hanno da sempre rappresentato, per le aziende, costi elevati sia per l'implementazione che in termini di perdita di produzione.

Al contrario, la formazione a distanza attraverso le nuove tecnologie assicura vantaggi notevoli, primo tra tutti un'estrema flessibilità di tempo e di spazio: il discente non è più costretto ad essere presente nel medesimo luogo dell'insegnante e può studiare anche da casa quando e quanto vuole. Se a questo aggiungiamo il miglioramento dell'accesso all'istruzione, l'aumento della qualità del contenuto formativo, una sua gestione più flessibile, la possibilità di misurare facilmente i risultati e la diminuzione dei costi, capiamo perché la formazione a distanza è al giorno d'oggi molto appetita in tutti gli ambienti didattico/formativi.

Purtroppo gli attuali sistemi di didattica a distanza non sono privi di difetti. La principale pecca dei sistemi attualmente in commercio è che essi non sfruttano appieno le potenzialità del mezzo che hanno a disposizione utilizzandolo come mero veicolo di informazione e non come strumento capace di elaborare tale informazione in maniera intelligente e personalizzata. Più in dettaglio essi:

- non permettono la personalizzazione dell'insegnamento sulle reali esigenze e capacità dei singoli ma offrono corsi standard per tutti gli utenti;

- non permettono l'adozione di modelli didattici innovativi e rimangono spesso legati al modello tradizionale di didattica frontale o si riducono ad un semplice studio individuale su libri di testo elettronici;
- sfruttano i risultati delle esercitazioni solo per la reportistica sui progressi degli studenti e non per influire sull'esperienza di apprendimento successiva tramite, ad esempio, variazioni nella sequenza di lezioni o la fruizione di eventuale materiale di recupero;
- non riescono a valutare autonomamente parametri pedagogici relativi ai singoli studenti essenziali per l'ottimizzazione del processo di apprendimento come, ad esempio, le abilità cognitive e le capacità percettive in relazione a diversi tipi di media;
- non offrono alcun supporto intelligente ai docenti nella creazione dei corsi se non la possibilità di aggregare materiale e stabilire un percorso di apprendimento attraverso esso;
- non offrono alcun supporto intelligente ai discenti nella scelta dei loro obiettivi formativi in base ai prerequisiti già posseduti.

Scopo di questo articolo sarà di mostrare come è possibile superare questi limiti attraverso l'utilizzo di tecniche e metodologie dell'Intelligenza Artificiale e come ciò sia stato fatto nella realizzazione di un prototipo di ricerca (prima) e di un prodotto commerciale (poi) denominato IWT.

## 2. IWT: Intelligent Web Teacher

IWT è una piattaforma per l'apprendimento a distanza realizzata con il preciso intento di gettare le basi per l'e-learning di futura generazione. IWT mira, infatti, a personalizzare l'apprendimento sulle reali esigenze e preferenze dell'utente ed a garantire estensibilità e flessibilità non solo al livello dei contenuti ma anche nelle funzionalità e soprattutto, a livello più alto, nelle strategie e nei modelli.

IWT è scaturito dalla collaborazione tra una serie di soggetti di ricerca tra cui il Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata [1], il Dipartimento di Ingegneria dell'Informazione e Matematica Applicata dell'Università di Salerno [2], il Centro di Eccellenza in Metodi e Sistemi per l'Apprendimento e la Conoscenza [3] ed il Dipartimento di Informatica ed Automazione dell'Università degli Studi "Roma Tre" [4].

Il know-how che ne ha consentito la realizzazione nasce da una lunga esperienza dei soggetti interessati nel campo del distance learning intelligente acquisita nell'ambito di vari progetti di ricerca nazionali ed europei tra cui Diogene [5], InTraServ [6] e m-Learning [7].

Completamente basato su Web, le caratteristiche innovative di IWT rispetto alle altre soluzioni di e-learning attualmente in commercio sono:

- possibilità di generazione automatica o assistita dei percorsi didattici a partire dagli obiettivi di apprendimento;
- possibilità di personalizzazione automatica dei corsi sulla base delle conoscenze pregresse dei singoli discenti e delle loro preferenze di apprendimento;
- supporto al monitoraggio ed alla valutazione automatica dei discenti sia in relazione alle conoscenze acquisite che alle abilità cognitive e capacità percettive mostrate;
- possibilità di gestione dei contenuti ad un alto livello di astrazione tramite ontologie mantenute in conformità con i maggiori standard per la rappresentazione della conoscenza;
- possibilità di estendere la piattaforma tramite Plug-In che consentono l'aggiunta di nuovi servizi e tramite Driver che consentono la gestione di nuove tipologie e formati di contenuto.

IWT è stato realizzato completamente in ambiente Microsoft .NET e fa ampio uso dei maggiori standard in circolazione per la rappresentazione delle strutture dati relative ai Metadata (standard IMS-LOM), ai Test (standard IMS-QTI), alle Ontologie (standard SHOE e DAML+OIL), ai Corsi (standard SCORM e IMS-CP) ed alle Informazioni sugli Studenti (standard IMS-LIP).

Maggiori informazioni sugli aspetti funzionali ed architetturali di IWT possono essere reperite in [8]. In questo articolo ci soffermeremo, in particolare, sulla descrizione della terna di modelli (e delle relative regole di evoluzione) che costituiscono la base delle caratteristiche "intelligenti" di IWT: il modello della conoscenza, il modello studente ed il modello didattico che saranno oggetto delle prossime sezioni.

### 3. Il Modello della Conoscenza

Il Modello della Conoscenza di IWT consta di tre livelli di astrazione [9]. Il livello più basso è costituito dai *Learning Object* ovvero dai moduli didattici elementari che possono essere usati nel corso della formazione. Il secondo livello è costituito dai *Metadata* il cui compito è di descrivere in maniera formale i Learning Object attraverso un insieme standard di attributi. IWT offre, inoltre, il supporto opzionale alla gestione della conoscenza ad un livello più alto di astrazione (terzo livello) orientato ai *Concetti* piuttosto che ai Learning Object attraverso le *Ontologie* [10].

La figura 1 (a sinistra) schematizza i tre livelli del *Modello della Conoscenza* di IWT. In particolare, per la rappresentazione del secondo livello (*Metadata*), IWT adotta lo standard IMS-LOM che prevede la descrizione del Learning Object attraverso 47 elementi raggruppati in 9 categorie [11].

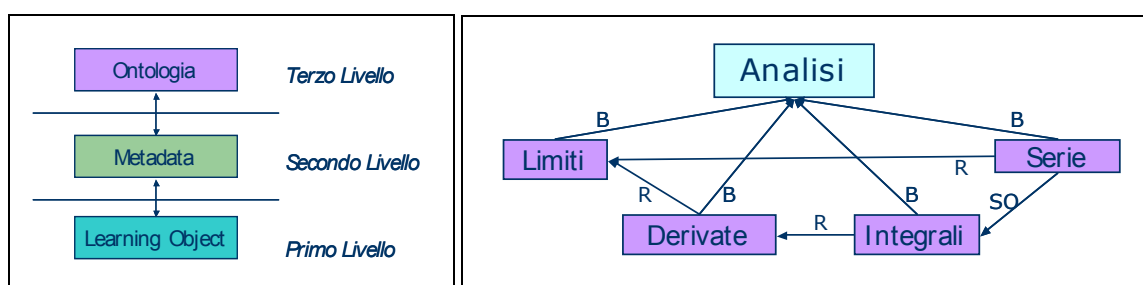
Purtroppo i *Metadata* si limitano a fornire informazioni circa le singole risorse ma nulla dicono circa le relazioni che intercorrono tra di esse o, meglio, tra i concetti coinvolti in tali risorse. Tali informazioni sono, del resto, necessarie per offrire le funzionalità “intelligenti” di valutazione automatica dello studente e di generazione automatica dei percorsi didattici. Per superare questo limite IWT consente di legare ad ogni Learning Object uno o più concetti appartenenti ad un dominio didattico e di organizzare separatamente i domini didattici attraverso le Ontologie.

Le *Ontologie*, in IWT, sono strutture a grafo che consentono di descrivere formalmente un dominio didattico attraverso la specificazione di un vocabolario di concetti e l'identificazione delle relazioni intercorrenti tra essi. Le ontologie di IWT rispettano gli standard SHOE [12] e DAML+OIL [13] e supportano le seguenti relazioni.

- Relazione B (Belongs to) per implementare una gerarchia di concetti.  $c B d$  significa che il concetto  $c$  è parte del concetto  $d$ . Sia  $C = \{c \mid c B d\}$  è possibile dire che, per apprendere  $d$ , è necessario e sufficiente apprendere tutti i concetti appartenenti a  $C$ .
- Relazione R (Requires) per implementare la propedeuticità.  $c R d$  significa che  $d$  è pre-requisito per  $c$ . Sia  $D = \{d \mid c R d\}$  è possibile dire che, per apprendere  $c$ , è necessario aver appreso preliminarmente tutti i concetti appartenenti a  $D$ .
- Relazione SO (Suggested Order) per implementare una propedeuticità più lasca.  $c SO d$  significa che, se occorre apprendere  $c$  e  $d$ , è conveniente apprendere  $c$  dopo  $d$ .

Attraverso la relazione implicita E (Explained by) mantenuta nei Metadata è possibile, infine, collegare ciascun Concetto ai Learning Object che spiegano tale concetto.  $c E l$  significa che il concetto  $c$  è spiegato nel Learning Object  $l$  e  $L = \{l \mid c E l\}$  è l'insieme di tutti i Learning Object che spiegano il concetto  $c$  mentre  $C = \{c \mid c E l\}$  è l'insieme di tutti i concetti spiegati dal Learning Object  $l$ .

La figura 1 (a destra) mostra la rappresentazione grafica di un'Ontologia di alto livello per l'analisi matematica dove i concetti sono rappresentati come nodi di un grafo e le relazioni come archi tra i nodi.



**Figura 1.** I tre livelli del Modello della Conoscenza di IWT (sinistra). Un esempio di Ontologia di alto livello per il Dominio dell'Analisi Matematica (destra).

### 4. Il Modello Studente

Il Modello Studente di IWT è in grado di catturare (in maniera automatica) le conoscenze acquisite dai discenti durante l'esperienza formativa e le preferenze di apprendimento mostrate rispetto a importanti parametri pedagogici quali: media, approccio didattico, livello di interazione, densità semantica, ecc. Il modello è composto da tre elementi: uno *Stato Cognitivo*, un insieme di *Preferenze di Apprendimento* ed un insieme di *Regole di Evoluzione* ed è mantenuto in conformità con lo standard IMS-LIP [14].

Lo *Stato Cognitivo* si interessa di rappresentare, per ciascuno studente, le conoscenze possedute in un determinato istante sotto forma di insieme di coppie concetto-valutazione. Più formalmente, lo *Stato Cognitivo* dello studente  $s$  al tempo  $t$  può essere espresso come  $CS_s^t = \{B_1, B_2, \dots, B_n\}$  dove ogni  $B_i$  (belief) rappresenta la coppia  $B_i = \langle O_i(c_i), e_i \rangle$  dove  $O_i(c_i)$  è il  $c_i$ -esimo concetto dell'ontologia  $O_i$  mentre  $e_i$  è un valore fuzzy [15] che rappresenta il grado di conoscenza del concetto da parte dello studente.

Si sceglie un valore fuzzy per  $e_i$  per tener conto anche dell'affidabilità della stima [16][17]. Tale valore è, a sua volta, rappresentato dalla coppia  $e_i = \langle d_i, r_i \rangle$  dove  $0 \leq d_i \leq 1$  (degree) è il grado di conoscenza stimato dal sistema del concetto  $O_i(c_i)$  mentre  $0 \leq r_i \leq 1$  (reliability) è il grado di affidabilità di tale valutazione. Tale grado tende ad 1 con l'aumentare dei momenti di verifica superati dallo studente nel caso di risposte non contraddittorie. Ad esempio, il belief:

$$\langle \text{limiti}, \langle 0.2, 0.9 \rangle \rangle \in CS_s^t$$

significa che la conoscenza dello studente  $s$  al tempo  $t$  relativa al concetto *limiti* è solo del 20% ed il sistema è sicuro al 90% di questa valutazione.

Le *Preferenze di Apprendimento* si riferiscono ai campi della categoria *Educational* del metadata secondo lo standard IMS-LOM [11] ovvero: *Interactivity Type, Learning Resource Type, Interactivity Level, Semantic Density, Intended End User Role, Context, Typical Age Range, Difficulty, Typical Learning Time, Language*. Le *Preferenze di Apprendimento* dello studente  $s$  al tempo  $t$  possono essere espresse come  $LP_s^t = \{P_1, P_2, \dots, P_m\}$  dove  $P_i = \langle s_i, e_i \rangle$  è la singola preferenza composta da una affermazione  $s_i$  (statement) circa uno dei campi sopra elencati ed una valutazione fuzzy  $e_i$  (evaluation) della veridicità di tale affermazione.

La sintassi di  $s_i$  è la seguente: " $f_i = v_i$ " dove  $f_i$  (field) appartiene all'insieme di campi succitati mentre  $v_i$  è uno dei valori ammissibili per  $f_i$  secondo lo standard IMS-LOM (ad esempio i valori ammissibili per il campo "learning\_resource\_type" sono "text", "slide", "exercise", "simulation", ecc; i valori ammissibili per "semantic\_density" sono, invece, "low", "medium" e "high"). Ad esempio, la preferenza:

$$\langle \text{"learning_resource_type = text"}, \langle 0.7, 0.2 \rangle \rangle \in LP_s^t$$

significa che lo studente  $s$  al tempo  $t$  ha una preferenza del 70% relativa alla tipologia di risorsa "text" ma l'affermazione ha solo il 20% di affidabilità.

Il *Modello Studente* viene dedotto e continuamente aggiornato da IWT attraverso le *Regole di Evoluzione*. In particolare, l'aggiornamento dello *Stato Cognitivo* avviene al termine di ogni attività di verifica dello studente considerando i risultati ottenuti ai test (che, essendo Learning Object, sono essi stessi legati ai concetti del dominio) e mediandoli con i risultati dei test precedenti relativi agli stessi concetti. Per l'aggiornamento delle *Preferenze di Apprendimento*, invece, si ricorre all'osservazione congiunta del materiale didattico utilizzato e delle conoscenze acquisite al fine di determinare il grado di ricettività dello studente ai vari tipi di stimoli derivanti dalle varie tipologie di materiale.

## 5. Il Modello Didattico

Il *Modello Didattico* di IWT definisce le modalità ottimali di trasferimento della conoscenza del dominio agli studenti in base alla disciplina (formalizzata nel *Modello della Conoscenza*) ed alle caratteristiche dello studente coinvolto (formalizzate nel *Modello Studente*). Tramite questo modello IWT è in grado di personalizzare l'esperienza didattica sulla base delle conoscenze pregresse dei singoli discenti e delle loro preferenze di apprendimento.

La struttura di base del *Modello Didattico* è il *Corso* rappresentato in conformità con gli standard IMS-CP [18] e SCORM [19] e composto dalle seguenti strutture:

- l'insieme di *Concetti Obiettivo* del corso (tra quelli che lo studente conoscerà alla fine del corso, quelli che si trovano al punto più alto nella gerarchia *Belongs To* dell'ontologia di riferimento);
- il *Learning Path* ovvero la sequenza di concetti che si dovrà trasferire allo studente affinché egli apprenda, al termine del corso, i *Concetti Obiettivo* (in tale sequenza di concetti, i punti di verifica saranno identificati attraverso delle *Milestone*);
- la *Presentazione* ovvero la sequenza di Learning Object corrispondente al *Learning Path* concettuale che permetterà l'effettivo trasferimento di conoscenza allo studente dei *Concetti Obiettivo* del corso;
- un *Metadata* conforme ai già citati standard IMS-CP e SCORM.

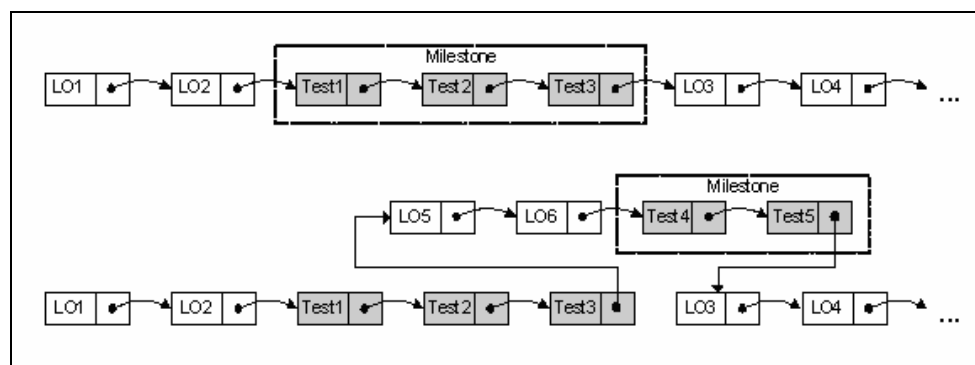
Dato un insieme di *Concetti Obiettivo* definiti dal docente o dallo stesso studente, IWT sarà in grado di generare, in primo luogo, il migliore *Learning Path* per un dato studente a partire dal suo *Stato Cognitivo* (eliminando cose già conosciute ed aggiungendo eventuali pre-requisiti mancanti) e, a partire dal *Learning Path* così generato, sarà in grado di generare la migliore *Presentazione* per un dato studente a partire dalle sue *Preferenze di Apprendimento* (scegliendo, dunque, i Learning Object più congeniali).

Le *Regole di Generazione del Learning Path* e della *Presentazione* a partire dai *Concetti Obiettivo* sono ampiamente decritti in [9].

Una volta generata, la *Presentazione* potrà essere fruita dallo studente. In generale, la fruizione inizia con il primo Learning Object (o l'ultimo Learning Object attivato nel caso in cui lo studente abbia sospeso la fruizione del corso) e prosegue fino a che non viene raggiunta la fine di un momento di verifica composto da uno o più test (*Milestone*). In questo ultimo caso avviene l'*Adattamento del Corso* e l'*Evoluzione del Modello Studente*.

L'*Adattamento del Corso* prevede la modifica della parte di *Presentazione* non ancora visionata dallo studente (e del relativo *Learning Path*) per rispondere ad eventuali lacune riscontrate attraverso la somministrazione di materiale di recupero. Una descrizione dettagliata delle *Regole di Adattamento del Corso* di IWT va oltre gli scopi del presente lavoro e sarà oggetto di una futura pubblicazione.

La figura 2 mostra un esempio di adattamento della *Presentazione* a seguito del superamento di una *Milestone*. Nel caso specifico, la prima sequenza viene trasformata nella seconda aggiungendo dopo la *Milestone* (e prima di passare al prosieguo del corso) alcuni Learning Object di recupero terminanti con un'ulteriore *Milestone* che sarà utilizzata per assicurarsi che le lacune riscontrate siano effettivamente superate prima di proseguire.



**Figura 2.** Un esempio di applicazione delle *Regole di Adattamento del Corso* di IWT.

## 6. Conclusioni e Sviluppi Futuri

In questo lavoro abbiamo presentato una piattaforma di e-learning “intelligente” capace di personalizzare l'apprendimento sulle reali esigenze e preferenze dei singoli, compatibile con i maggiori standard presenti sulla scena dell'e-learning e con precise caratteristiche di estensibilità e flessibilità.

IWT è disponibile come prodotto nella versione 1.0. Al momento esiste una versione personalizzata di IWT per la formazione dei manager d'impresa che include quattro corsi (Business Decision, Marketing, Ricerche di Mercato e Controllo di Gestione) in tre lingue (italiano, inglese, spagnolo) e due business games che trattano il processo decisionale di business attraverso un approccio di tipo “what...if” (Decisioni Strategiche e Controllo di Gestione). Tale versione è in corso di sperimentazione con un consorzio di imprese italiane, inglesi e spagnole nell'ambito del progetto InTraServ [6] finanziato dalla EC.

Un'ulteriore versione di IWT per la didattica in ambito universitario è già pronta e tra breve comincerà la sperimentazione all'Università di Salerno, di Roma3 e del Molise. Una versione di IWT personalizzata per l'ECM (Educazione Continua in Medicina), inoltre, è in corso di realizzazione e verrà sperimentata nel progetto GeCoSan [20].

Parallelamente a questi sforzi di verticalizzazione e sperimentazione, il lavoro di ricerca scientifica su IWT continua. Il progetto Diogene [5] attualmente in corso ha come fine la realizzazione di caratteristiche aggiuntive per IWT. Tra queste citiamo: strategie di apprendimento dinamiche, apertura al Semantic Web, servizi Web per la gestione dei Learning Object, servizi per la ricerca e la creazione di curriculum vitae, supporto agli insegnanti free-lance e definizione assistita di Obiettivi Didattici.

## 7. Bibliografia

- [13] Sito Web del CRMPA – Centro di Ricerca in Matematica Pura ed Applicata: <http://www.crimpa.it>.
- [14] Sito Web del Dipartimento di Ingegneria dell'Informazione e Matematica Applicata (DIIMA) della Università degli Studi di Salerno: <http://www.diima.unisa.it>.
- [15] Sito Web del Centro di Eccellenza in Metodi e Sistemi per l'Apprendimento e la Conoscenza: <http://www.crimpa.it/centroeccellenza>.
- [16] Sito Web del Dipartimento di Informatica ed Automazione (DIA) dell'Università degli Studi Roma Tre: <http://www.dia.uniroma3.it>.
- [17] Sito Web del progetto FP5 “Diogene: a Training Web Broker for ICT Professionals” (IST-2001-33358): <http://www.diogene.org>.
- [18] Sito Web progetto FP5 “InTraServ: Intelligent Training Service for Management Training in SMEs” (IST-2000-29377): <http://www.intraserv.org>.
- [19] Sito Web progetto FP5 “m-Learning: Mobile Communication Technologies for Young Adults Learning and Skills Development” (IST-2000-25270): <http://www.m-learning.org>.
- [20] *IWT: Intelligent Web Teacher*. White Paper. CRMPA. 2002.
- [21] N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, A. Micarelli, E. Sangineto. *An Integrated Architecture for Automatic Course Generation*. Proceedings of the IEEE International Conference on Advanced Learning Technologies. ICALT 2002, Kazan, Russia, 2002.
- [22] D. Fensel. *Ontologies: a Silver Bullet for Knowledge Management and Electronic Commerce*. Springer, 2001.
- [23] *IMS Learning Resource Meta-data Specification Version 1.2.2*. Public Draft Specification. IMS Global Learning Consortium, 2001. <http://www.imsproject.org/metadata/index.cfm>.
- [24] J. Heflin and J. Hendler. *Searching the Web with SHOE*. Workshop on AI for Web Search. AAAI 2000, <http://www.cs.umd.edu/projects/plus/SHOE/pubs/aiweb2000.pdf>.
- [25] D. Fensel, I. Horrocks, F. Van Harmelen, S. Decker, M. Erdmann, M. Klein. *OIL in a nutshell*. Knowledge Acquisition, Modeling, and Management, Proceedings of the European Knowledge Acquisition Conference (EKAW-2000), Lecture Notes in Artificial Intelligence, LNAI, Springer-Verlag, 2000. <http://www.cs.vu.nl/~ontoknow/oil/download/oilnutshell.pdf>.
- [26] *IMS Learner Information Package Specification Version 1.0*. Public Draft Specification. IMS Global Learning Consortium, 2001. <http://www.imsproject.org/profiles/index.cfm>.
- [27] D. Dubois, H. Prade, "Fuzzy Sets and Systems – Theory and Applications", Academic Press, 1980.
- [28] N. Capuano, M. De Santo, M. Marsella, M. Molinara, S. Salerno. *Personalised Intelligent Training on the Web: A Multi Agent Approach*. Electronic Business and Education, Recent Advances in Internet Infrastructures, Kluwer: Multimedia Systems And Applications Series, vol. 20, chap. 5, 2001.
- [29] N. Capuano, M. Marsella, S. Salerno. *ABITS: An Agent Based Intelligent Tutoring System for Distance Learning*. Proceedings of the International Workshop on Adaptive and Intelligent Web-Based Education Systems. ITS 2000, Montreal, Canada, 2000.
- [30] *IMS Content Packaging Specification Version 1.1.3*. Public Draft Specification. IMS Global Learning Consortium, 2001. <http://www.imsproject.org/content/packaging/index.cfm>.
- [31] *Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) Version 1.2 – The SCORM Overview*. ADL. 2001. [http://www.adlnet.org/ADLDOCS/Documents/SCORM\\_1.2\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.adlnet.org/ADLDOCS/Documents/SCORM_1.2_Overview.pdf).
- [32] R. Tononi, D. Zaccagnini, N. Capuano, M. Gaeta, F. Orciuoli. *GECOSAN: a Platform of Tools and Services for Health Knowledge Management*. Submitted to Medical Informatics Europe. MIE 2003, St. Malo, France, 2003.