

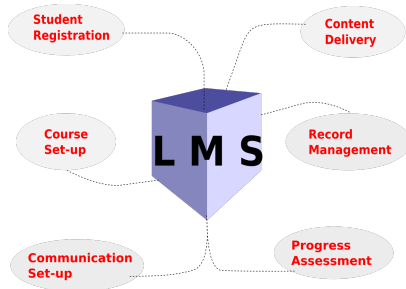
# Newsletter

## Learning Management System (LMS) and Sharda University LMS (SULMS)

by Assistant Prof. Prabhas Kumar Yadav

### The bare basis

A slightly re-organized definition to the one found in the Wikipedia (LMS, 2015), the learning management system (LMS) is a software application for the delivery, tracking, documentation, administration, and reporting, in that order, of electronic education technology (or also called e-learning). The target audience according to this definition is not limited to students but any individual seeking an education or organizations planning a training programme for their members. In the university set-up, the LMS thus can be a course management tool for faculties, and at the same time a training management, including an appraisal tool, for human resources managers. With the inclusion of communication tools, e.g., video conferencing, real-time chat and forum, the modern LMS has become an interface for a collaborative learning. The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), e.g. Edx, Coursera, NPTEL can be considered as one of the best outcomes of the LMS.



### TLMS Development and Implementation

The "Teaching Machine" developed by Prof. Sidney Pressey (Uni-Ohio, USA) in 1924 can be considered as the very beginning of the LMS. Programmed Logic for Automated Teaching Operations (or PLATO) system developed at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in 1960 that included limited interaction between user (student) and content developer (faculty) can be best described as a pre-cursor of the modern LMS. The combined development of computer technology and the web technology has resulted in a very broad (e.g., MOOC) and interactive LMS that we have today. Many of the most used LMS platforms, e.g., BlackboardTM, Moodle, SakaiR, are based on the Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) standards and specifications, which has been in continuous development since year 2000. While there are concerns that the LMS encourages passive pedagogy, nevertheless its implementation has been overwhelming. According to the 2012 Campus Computing Survey (Bergen, 2015), 93% of 500 (USA) campuses surveyed was found to use a single, campus-wide standard LMS (rather than multiple LMS

offerings), and that 58% of their courses use it -an increase of 17% in the last decade. Most of the European universities has found to be using several variants of the LMS, either locally developed suiting their own particular needs or more commonly available commercial and open-source LMS. In India, LMS has been adopted by IITs and other major universities. IIT Kanpur presented a localized LMS the- Brihaspati- Virtual Classroom in 2002, which was also endorsed by the UGC. It is the system that IITs in India has adopted as their LMS platform, and it is also the system that Sharda University (named as SULMS) adopted in the year 2014.

### State of SULMS

Sharda University Learning Management System or SULMS ([www.sulms.sharda.ac.in](http://www.sulms.sharda.ac.in)) was implemented by a LMS service provider-Ballistic Learning. The very first training on the system, given by the service provider, in July 2014 was attended by university academic managers, mostly SET, and few faculties including the author of this piece. As per the last information obtained (August 2015), the SULMS has been implemented and is ready for use by students and faculties. The service provider of the system have extracted records through Peoplesoft (a student record management system used at Sharda Uni.), and have created an individual SULMS account for every registered student of the university. Clearly, the university management has been successful in implementing the system. A critical questions that requires to be addressed are: "Have faculties adopted the system?" and, "Have students been able to use it?".Based on the very limited communications that were made with few faculties, students and the SULMS administrations in the last couple of weeks, it seems that SULMS has been largely neglected. The major complain of the faculties seem to be the "lack of time" for content creation and implementation. From a personal experience, learning SULMS will require a few hours of juggling with the system for a more computer savvy and perhaps a day or two for others. The course content can be developed and improved over the time. Only 2 students out of about 150 students (2<sup>nd</sup> Year Civil) when inquired, were able to recall any information of their SULMS account. While the SULMS implementer maintains that each student has been notified of their account, the students on their part complains that management has not made them fully aware of it. It is likely that an email from the SULMS implementers reached the inbox of the students, and that is where all ended without students what it was all about. Clearly, a gap exists between the implementation of the system and its adoption. A training session for students has been recently suggested to the SULMS team to overcome the gap.

### Concluding Remarks

The large adoption of LMS by academic world is an indication of its benefits. Not only from the student point of view, e.g. a personal and unified learning space, but also from the teachers point of view, e.g. effecting documentation of contents, report management, the LMS can streamline the entire delivery to learning process. Its importance can be felt more when a collaborative works, group projects, coding and debugging or solving mathematical problems, are to be accomplished. With the University adopting to a holistic learning approach, it is important that SULMS be integrated as part of the fundamental university system.

## News

### Faculty Update:

The Department of Civil Engineering welcomes two new faculties, Mr. Jhanendra Mishra & Mr. Faizan-ul-Haque.

### Mid term Update:

The mid-term examinations has been preponed by the University and will start from 22<sup>nd</sup> February, according to the revised schedule.

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## CONSTRUCTO'16

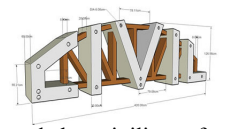
CONSTRUCTO'16 invites all those who want to create their own event. If anyone wants to propose an event then he/she have to bring the format in print with full description to CESSU cabin.

### Indra Paryavaran Bhawan Visit :

32 students visited Indra Paryavaran Bhawan; it is India's first on site net zero building including the features of passive solar building design. Students were given overview of project details, architectural planning and landscaping, sustainable building material & energy efficient system. The visit was lead by Assistant Prof. Sarmistha Rudra Paul.

## Do You Know ?

In the 18th century, when the term "Civil Engineering" came into use it was used to describe engineering work that was



performed by civilians for non-military purposes.

# Meet your Head Of Department

*Dr. Satyaprakash is a Professor and currently the HOD of Civil Engineering department of Sharda University. He has a PhD from Indian School of Mines, Dhanbad and published 37 International, National journal, books, conference proceedings, monographs and magazines.*



**Q: Sir, can you tell us about yourself and your experience as a Civil Engineer? What sort of projects were you involved?**

**A:** I have been involved in undertaking research projects in several institutions after completing my MTech from the Indian School of Mines. Then I got involved in a Surveying and Mapping project in the Himalayas and worked for about six years during which I started working on the modern surveying technology such as GPS (Global Positioning System). During the same time I got myself registered for my PhD and started working towards studying the dynamics of the earthquake in the Himalayan region. The study in the Himalayas, extending from the foothills in the Uttarakhand to the higher regions in Ladakh Himalayas helped me in understanding the complex dynamics of the region vis-a-vis the occurrences of the earthquakes.

**Q: What are the modern issues associated with Civil Engineering when we talk in terms of education? How has this field changed over time?**

**A:** The core civil engineering has not changed much, both in the practice and also in education. However, what has happened is with the advent of new technologies such as GIS, GPS, new materials and development in the field of nano-materials, the applications have changed. Newer construction technologies are being developed, which have found its way in modern construction and has helped in constructing bigger and stronger structures. The use of GIS and BIM have paved new way of planning and managing the large townships, smart cities and large construction sites. Current Civil Engineering is an amalgamation of the core concepts and recent advances in terms of technology and materials.

**Q: Where do you think the Civil Department stands in comparison to other departments in the B.Tech program?**

**A:** The departments cannot be compared. Every department has its own place in the University. All the departments are doing fairly good job towards imparting educating to the students. They also have a responsibility towards the society and I think, the departments are fulfilling those responsibilities.

**Q: Student presentation is an essential part of your teaching methodology. How does it help students in improving their intellectual level and why is it necessary for Civil Engineering students?**

**A:** Presentation is an art and each one of us should learn it. I have learnt it when I moved to the industry where you have to make presentations every other day. It sharpens your skill towards communicating your view -points effectively in a short and limited time. Presentation skills are important for all engineering students, of any branch. I emphasise this in every course, which I teach and also make the students prepare and make presentations to me, in front of the class. This helps the students in developing confidence by removing the stage fear and prepare them for the coming corporate world.

**Q: How do you evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of your students? What are the steps you generally take from your side to increase their strength and to diminish their weaknesses?**

**A:** I interact with the students a lot, not only in the class but also in my cabin and in the corridor. My interaction with the students, how they interact, how do they behave and the way they talk, helps me in understanding them. I try to give them work, as per their capabilities, be it in the class or beyond to develop their strength. When they gain confidence by virtue of successfully completing the work they have been given, it automatically reduces their weakness. I also encourage students to take-up activities which they like to do, in consonance with what the department and University is doing.

**Q: What behaviour should a student learn during their course of 4 years, in order to be competent enough for the competitive outside world afterwards?**

**A:** Communication, presentation and networking skills with sound technical knowledge. The technical knowledge would help develop the content and the communication and presentation skills would help you in putting your thoughts and point across. Networking skills help you in dealing with your peers and seniors. It is also an important skill for business development.

**Q: Please share your views on English language becoming a common means of communication for speakers of different first languages. Do you also think that a student who can communicate English fluently has a better chance of surviving in this era of globalisation?**

**A:** In this time of globalisation and English becoming the most preferred and spoken language, across the world, it has become imperative that the students are well versed in the language. Yes, it is true that students having better communication skills have better chances of survival in the corporate world. However, the bottom line is effective communication, in any language. It is not only English which matters, but also the content or the technical knowledge. To be successful, you need to be fluent in English with sound technical knowledge.

**Q: A trend is noticeable where some Civil Engineering students are offered jobs in IT companies. What should a student do under such circumstances?**

**A:** They should join. The IT companies, if they have made Civil Engineers eligible for the job, must have some plan for them. Moreover, every IT company do need domain experts for different kind of assignments and Civil Engineering is one of them.

**Q: What are the challenges currently facing the department, university as a whole and what are the concrete steps to be taken to solve them?**

**A:** The Civil Engineering Department has been dealing with the challenges of faculty crunch. We have never been comfortable, in terms of faculty, in the last five years. There has been several appointments in the past but most of them have moved to look for better opportunities. Another is the development of research lab, which is taking time. We and the University administration, as a whole, are taking all the steps, but somehow the lab has not yet been established. We look forward to establishment of this research lab soon.

**Q: Sir, do you have any major plans for the department this year? Any bold changes as introduction of something new?**

**A:** This year we would be focusing more on the development of relationships with the industry so that the student get more exposure to the real world experiences. We would also look forward to developing some international collaborations for student exchange, both undergraduate and postgraduate.

**Q: Five years down the line, where would you like to see the department/university?**

**A:** A department with infrastructure to carry out cutting edge research in different field of Civil Engineering, besides teaching graduate and postgraduate courses. The facility should be such that the faculty would be able to undertake consultancies and help the industry.

**Q: Any piece of advice on behalf of your knowledge to the students of your department?**

**A:** Each one of us should dream, strive to achieve the dream with hard work and honesty. Once the dream is achieved, start dreaming again, and the cycle continues till you are alive. Never stop dreaming, because the day you stopped dreaming, you are dead!