



SAP education goes green with expansion of Virtual Live Classrooms in Africa region

Tremendous savings seen in carbon emissions, travel costs and class materials for continent that thirsts for knowledge

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Based on the success of Virtual Live Classrooms delivery introduced late 2009, SAP Africa is expanding its Virtual Live Classrooms delivery to include courses delivered in the European region as well from May 2010. The addition will offer significant benefits to the SAP community.

Aside from lowering travel and related costs, the system boosts training efficiency while making a substantial impact of organisations' carbon footprint.

Launched in 2009, more than 2300 virtual live classroom sessions have already been undertaken by more than 18400 participants around the globe.

“The benefits to our partners and customers is tremendous as the Virtual Live Classrooms offer the same, comprehensive training as has been available in the 'bricks and mortar' environment of the classroom, but with tangible cost and environmental benefits,” says Johann Pretorius, Education Director at SAP Africa. “The introduction of the systems has seen a reduction in carbon emissions in 2009 of as much as 1.9 kilotons due to students not having to travel to physical classrooms, while we have also managed to reduce paper-based training by up to 70%. “The magnitude of savings for African participants has not yet been quantified, but it should be quite significant as they are no longer required to travel to centres in major African cities that host SAP training, never mind the savings from not having to travel to Europe as has been the case in the past.”

Pretorius says that aside from a smaller carbon footprint, while IT professionals can use their time more effectively by scheduling training around operational capacity.

“Companies generally struggle to cope with the varying demand for skilled resources and having to transfer and scale knowledge, which is now achieved far more easily as training can happen when critical resources are not needed for operational issues.

“A study has shown that one hour of professional IT training is worth an average of almost six hours to the enterprise. By removing the need to travel to other cities or even a local training centre, that time can be dedicated to training, thereby making the upskilling process more efficient and cost effective for employers.”

All that is required is an Internet connection and the SAP Connect remote training infrastructure that has integrated audio-conference capabilities.

“Participants book a course as they would for a physical training session, with the Virtual Live Classroom classes comprising exactly the same course material and also presented over the same duration as the real-world classes,” says Pretorius. “The fact that course material doesn't have to be printed and/or shipped to the classroom locations is one of the other ways in which training has become more cost effective and environment friendly.”

Pretorius adds that the introduction of the Virtual Live Classrooms will also have the effect of nullifying delays between training being introduced in Europe and its availability in Africa.

He says the concept will be rolled out in various countries in Africa, with plans in place to include French and Portuguese-speaking countries.

“We have also partnered with service providers in countries where connectivity is a challenge for them to establish a central training facility from where the students can collectively log into training courses,” he says.

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