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evolving education



Presenting:  
Cost Effective LMS & SN Systems

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Cost Effective LMS & SN Systems

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## Introduction

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Thank you for joining Edvance360 LMS (formerly Scholar360) during our session **Cost Effective Learning Management and Social Networking Systems** at the CCCU 2010 International Forum on Christian Higher Education. This session will help campuses navigate these tough economic times by evaluating their learning management systems and helping them pinpoint the best solutions for their institution.

### **Cost Effective Learning Management and Social Networking Systems**

*Cathy Garland, Vice President of Marketing & Sales*

*Scholar360*

With the current change in the economy, many institutions are now faced with the daunting task of having to review their current networking systems to squeeze the most out of their budgets. In this session conference participants are able to explore how to save money on networking systems and hosting costs. Key issues such as feature comparisons, support, hosting, cloud usage, and other online course challenges will be demonstrated. Expert evaluations on ROI (Return on Investment) analysis will be provided to help schools understand the ways they can save money.



# How to Save Money on LMS/CMS

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## What is an LMS/CMS?

Originally, **Course Management Systems** (CMS) were developed to enable schools to post course material online, host fully online and hybrid courses, and to manage students as they progressed through the online course offerings.

Later, educational institutions and CMS developers realized that simply posting a course online did not ensure the students actually learned the material taught. Tools to facilitate *relational learning* and to better manage the learning process were added, creating a **Learning Management System** (LMS).

Additionally, LMS vendors have realized the social networking tools available would facilitate a networked, collaborative environment, so LMS are currently evolving into **Networked Learning Environments** (NLE).

## Compare Features

- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge for each tool set or “module.” Look for vendors who consider their software to be more of a “single package.”
- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge for each upgrade. Look for vendors who include upgrades in the annual fee for the license (thus ensuring the school will never fall behind).
- Some LMS/CMS vendors provide training for new upgrades at an additional cost. Look for vendors who include training on new tools and feature sets.
- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge the same price for all accounts, even if certain users require less space or support (e.g. alumni accounts). Look for vendors who charge differently for users with less access or requirements.
- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge for hosting/bandwidth. Look for vendors who include hosting or provide options. (We’ll talk more about this later.)
- Most LMS/CMS vendors charge for technical support. Look for vendors who do not or those who provide reasonable technical support options. (Know those options.)
- Some LMS/CMS vendors are slow to incorporate customizations or changes to software requested by clients. Ask references for an indication of how a vendor responds to a client’s needs.
- Some LMS/CMS vendors are slow to incorporate new technology. Look for vendors with a demonstrated commitment to providing the latest technology and those that provide experts to train your faculty to use the new technology within their courses.
- Some LMS/CMS vendors include language that enables them to raise their prices any time and at any rate. (Or, you may find vendors that get around this by simply charging for each upgrade.) Look for vendors who include wording that states clearly what increases might be expected in the long-term.
- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge for initial training and implementation, making the client choose how much training it can/should afford. Look for vendors who are committed to a guarantee of usage and include the training and analytics to get it done.

## How to Save Money on LMS/CMS

### Compare Features (Continued)

- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge for integration with third-party vendors. Look for vendors who include this in the price.
- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge for additional language packs. Look for vendors who include this in the price, if you have foreign extension campuses (or will have in the future).
- Some LMS/CMS vendors charge for Learning Outcomes/Standards and reporting capabilities. Look for vendors who include these in the price.

Single Package	Modular in Nature
Upgrades Included	Upgrades Not Included
Upgrade Training Provided at No Cost	Upgrade Training at Additional Cost
Less Expensive Pricing for Low-Usage Users	Same Pricing for All Types of Users
Normal Hosting & Bandwidth Included	Hosting & Bandwidth at Additional Cost
Options for Hosting & Bandwidth Usage	No Options for Hosting & Bandwidth Usage
Normal Technical Support Included	Normal Technical Support at Additional Cost
Reasonable Technical Support Options/ Costs	Unreasonable Technical Support Options/ Costs
Responsive to Customizations and Requests; Included	Slow to Respond to Customizations and Requests; Additional Cost
Demonstrated Commitment to Integration of New Technology	Slow to Integrate New Technology
Provision of Experts to Train Faculty on New Technology Included	No or Little Provision of Training on New Technology
Rate Increases Clearly Outlined in Contract	Rate Increases Not Outlined in Contract
Initial Training & Implementation Included with Guarantee	Initial Training & Implementation at Additional Cost and No Guarantee
Integration with Third-Party Vendors Included	Integration with Third-Party Vendors at Additional Cost
Language Packs Included	Language Packs Not Available or Available at Additional Cost
Learning Outcomes/Standards & Reporting Included	Learning Outcomes/Standards & Reporting Not Available or Available at Additional Cost

# How to Save Money on LMS/CMS

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## Curriculum Design Tools

- Most LMS/CMS vendors provide the ability for clients to upload curriculum designed by publishers or designers (using Curriculum Design Software).
- Most LMS/CMS vendors do not provide easy-to-use tools to enable faculty and curriculum designers to create curriculum, forcing clients to purchase expensive Curriculum Design Software.
- Look for vendors who provide training and tools for basic curriculum design to remove the necessity to purchase additional software.


## Compare Support

- Most LMS/CMS vendors provide Technical Support tiers or options.
- First, know what tech support level is actually needed for your school, including analytics on numbers of contacts supported, cases resolved, etc.
- Select tier to match needs.
- Look for vendors who include technical support to system administrators at no additional cost.
- Continue to track cases to understand if support level chosen continues to be the support level needed.

## Compare Training

- Most LMS/CMS vendors provide training options.
- First, know what training is actually needed for your school.
- Select option to match needs.
- Look for vendors who include online (less expensive) training options and take advantage of them.
- Look for vendors who make a usage guarantee and have demonstrated the capability to follow-up with additional training for specific users, when needed.

## Compare Implementation Phases

- Most LMS/CMS vendors provide an Implementation Phase.
  - Understand what implementation includes and what is needed for your school.
  - Look for vendors who detail Implementation Phase processes and key players.
  - Look for vendors who make a usage guarantee and have demonstrated the capability to ensure guarantees are met.
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# How to Save Money on LMS/CMS

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## Compare Hosting Options/Cloud Usage

- Most LMS/CMS vendors provide two hosting options: they host it for you or you host it for yourself.
- First, understand the costs involved with hosting the system on campus (including salaries, servers, software, back-ups, off-site back-ups, disaster plans, etc.)
- Second, understand the costs involved with vendor hosted option (SaaS).
- Look for vendors who include hosting costs or provide less expensive Cloud Usage Options for High CPU-Usage clients.



# How to Save Money on SN Systems

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## What is a Social Network System?

A **Social Network System** is a term given to a set of social networking tools loosely or tightly integrated together. These can vary from custom social networks (using Ning or other such sources), public social networks (such as Facebook and MySpace), professional social networks (such as LinkedIn), micro-blogging tools (such as Twitter), mobility, collaborative tools (such as Wikis and blogs), and community-generating tools (such as online communities or fan sites).

To accommodate student needs for personal privacy while still providing valuable networking experience and relational-learning opportunities, LMS/CMS vendors are beginning to incorporate social networking tools into existing offerings.

## Explore Integration Options

- Some academic institutions have explored integrating current, public social networking sites with their courses or websites.
- Due to the backlash against above, some academic institutions have created custom social networking sites using Ning or other resources.
- Due to the low adoption rate of the above options, a very few vendors have begun to integrate a secure, private social network in their LMS/CMS offerings. (Look for more to do so in the future.)
- Some academic institutions have explored integrating social networking tools (such as blogs and wikis) with their courses or websites, using public and custom options.
- Due to a lower adoption rate than expected, a few vendors have begun to integrate these tools in their LMS/CMS offerings. (Look for more to do so in the future.)
- This integration enables students to use valuable tools exactly when and where they need them—in the courses.





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