



The Webmaster Bridge®

(US Patent Pending 61/009,997 Registered European Community Design: 000720941)

Around the world of education there is a growing trend towards giving learners more control over their own learning environments. This is particularly true in the realm of adult learning where more and more companies and institutions are calling for corporate education which recognises and values what the learners already know, and the experience they bring with them into the learning environment. This trend is called the Generative Learning movement.

Until now there have been considerable difficulties in bringing this powerful way of educating adults into the arena of large-scale ropes/challenge courses. Giving learners any substantial degree of control over these environments has been dismissed as impossible, largely on the basis of health and safety considerations in situations where rigorous checks on equipment and processes are, very rightly, a necessary part of running a safe operation.



RSVP Design Ltd. are recognised around the world as being at the leading edge of the development of experiential learning tools and methodologies. The considerable corporate experience they have of working innovatively in both indoor and outdoor learning environments has recently been applied to developing a learning tool that will allow learners to safely take a far greater control over their own learning in at least one ropes/challenge course environment. This new tool is now available under the name of Webmaster Bridge® (US Patent Pending 61/009,997 Registered European Community Design: 000720941).



29 Webmaster Bridge components, ready for assembly into a recognisable Burma Bridge

Traditionally, and necessarily, working on ropes/challenge course has involved learners being offered a series of pre-constructed challenge elements and being asked to use the physical and co-operative skills they have in their team to overcome the challenge within prescribed boundaries (usually dictated by health and safety considerations). Thus the 'challenge' is largely limited to physical ability and emotional resilience. Webmaster Bridge® extends the range and complexity of this challenge by introducing, in addition to the physical and emotional components, a difficult intellectual problem and a multi-team co-operative working situation to manage. Webmaster Bridge® achieves this through the unique dimension of asking the learners to assemble, construct and install the element before they are able to use it.

Webmaster Bridge® is, once constructed and installed, very recognisable as a traditional 'Burma Bridge', a tried and tested feature of many ropes/challenge courses around the world. However, learners first encounter the element as 29 separate components, each colourful, attractive and tactile, and each one forming a unique piece in a three dimensional puzzle that needs to be solved according to a set of simple rules.

Once the considerable problems of initial assembly have been overcome, learners are challenged to refine their assembly process to the point where they are able to successfully build the Webmaster Bridge® under time-trial conditions. This initial activity extends both the duration and impact of the exercise in that it involves a broader range of learning styles, draws in the 'physically reluctant', shifts the emphasis from individual challenge to collective application, and hands ownership of the learning over to the learners themselves.

After the Webmaster Bridge® is assembled there is a need to get the learners through a personal safety briefing and equipping. This time offers exercise staff an opportunity to also do a safety check on the bridge construction before it is installed. The key to maintaining the learners' sense of independence and ownership at this point is that the site has been carefully selected and prepared so that the learners can substantially achieve this installation themselves. This essential preparation will have been done during the compulsory site survey and installation work that accompanies every purchase of the Webmaster Bridge®. Given the appropriate site preparation, streams, rivers, gorges etc. become obstacles that the Webmaster Bridge® can be made to overcome.



The Webmaster Bridge® Assembly

The Webmaster Bridge®, installed and safety checked, is then tensioned and made ready for use by the learners, with advice and safety supervision from site staff. All of the learners are protected by a conventional safety cable and cows-tail system. Once they step onto the Webmaster Bridge® they are subject to all of the thrills and learning that are derived from a traditional ropes/challenge course element, with the additional knowledge that this is something that they themselves constructed! In itself this creates a powerful metaphor for development and learning - "We worked together to build a bridge that took us across a major obstacle to a celebration and a sense of achievement on the other side".



Installing, safety checking and crossing the The Webmaster Bridge® gives a real sense of team achievement.

The problem that often faces facilitators and trainers trying to isolate the learning after a ropes/challenge course experience is the difficulty they have in assembling sufficient, quality material to structure effective learning. The emotionally charged environment of a high-energy session on a ropes/challenge course is, for many, a very personal experience that is not well supported by a classroom debriefing. The phased timing and changing learning emphasis of Webmaster Bridge® allows for a much more structured review that allows a much greater depth of learning to be achieved. Facilitators can choose where they place the learning emphasis to meet a broad range of learning objectives,

- How well did we co-ordinate the remote working of teams engaged in the location of the Webmaster Bridge® pieces?
- How did we assess the problem and create a strategy for solving it?
- What were the differences in the way the three assembly teams worked?
- What effect did these differences have when the teams came together as a big team?
- How efficient was the overall assembly process we created?
- Who took the lead during the big-team assembly and installation?
- What style of leadership was appropriate?
- How were 'more reluctant' contributors involved in the assembly process?
- What support did individuals get as they went across the bridge?



Webmaster Bridge® offers a challenge to every group that encounters it: it also offers a challenge to every trainer or facilitator who chooses to use it. This moves the learning process away from the convention of "Create an attractive hoop and ask the group to jump through it" and moves towards the introduction of a strong element of shared responsibility and emergent practice into the field.

Part of every Webmaster Bridge® purchase is a training day that covers not only the health and safety considerations of using the exercise, but also an exploration of the facilitative style that best supports the achievement of the vast learning potential contained in this radical new tool.

Further technical details are supplied on the following page. To find out more and to consider a site evaluation for a Webmaster Bridge® installation at your challenge course, please contact:

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Webmaster Site Selection

There are two possible types of site.

1. A natural barrier such as a river, ravine, deep depression, pond or wall, with natural anchor points such as large trees or with artificially constructed anchor platforms.
2. Any flat site selected for convenience, with artificially constructed anchor platforms.

Once fully assembled the Webmaster Bridge will span a gap of c. 13m (50 feet). It is possible to install the Webmaster Bridge as a High or Low element in an existing Ropes/Challenge course.

Standard Installation Specifications (A 'standard' installation is defined as an installation between two pre-constructed and approved platforms with anchor points at platform height and approximately 2 metres above platform height. (Platform construction requirements can be provided on request).

What is included in a 'standard' Webmaster® Bridge installation?

1 x Webmaster® toolbox : The standard RSVP Design product used to practise/rehearse assembly of the Webmaster® Bridge on a smaller scale (indoors or outdoors)

1 x Webmaster® Bridge: The unique 29 x piece / component assembly / design necessary to create the full functional 'Burma-type' bridge

Component Specifications: Hercules/Netform Rope: 16mm diameter rope constructed from six 2.5mm strands coated by a 1mm layer of high strength polypropylene, with a protective layer of high-strength UV resistant polyester fibre. Each rope link is terminated with a 40mm ferrule around a 3"O.D. welded 10mm ring. Rope links are connected by screwgate karabiners.

Installation materials

Three (3) fixed and three (3) adjustable anchor points, between two platforms and installation of two (2) overhead anchor beams. Installation materials supplied:

- 10 Petzl 'OK' screwgate karabiners
- 2 three-one set ups
- 2 Gri-Gris
- A 10,000lb ratcheting strap
- Approximately 100 feet of 11/16" static rope
- 4-6 Mallion Rapide links
- 12 Zinc plated copper swages
- 20' of flexible hose
- 150 feet of cable 7/19 (3/8") Galvanized Aircraft Cable
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Required Installation Time On-site

1 day if ALL client pre- building is done to specifications as listed above.

NOT included: Installation of platforms, support poles, access to platforms, preparation of activity site (trail creation, leveling, landscaping etc). Client will provide anchor beams as per specification.)

NOT Included as standard: operational materials participant helmets, fully body or sit harnesses and participant static tethers (including steel locking carabiners or snap-locks)

Training

1 Day of training on safe use of Webmaster® Bridge activity on-site, plus facilitator training on use/debrief of Webmaster® Bridge activity is included.

Price

Indicative standard installation prices can be supplied on request and site specific installation prices can be supplied following site survey/discussion.