

A horizontal banner with a green background and a leaf pattern. The text 'SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com' is written in white, with the 'e' in 'SUSTAINABLE' and 'LEARNING' in a smaller, green font.

SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com


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The **Sustainable Social Solution!**

Venture Pitch

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ETEC 522 – Ventures in Learning Technologies


A decorative graphic in the bottom-left corner consisting of a light green vine with several leaves and small flowers, extending upwards and to the right.

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Introduction

Given the environmental, social, and economic threats to the future of life on this planet, sustainable development is an important and pressing challenge. What educators and learners today need is engagement in critical reflection and greater awareness of issues related to sustainable development, at all levels, and in all fields. Empowerment through education for sustainable development (ESD) will facilitate the sharing of ideas, visions, and knowledge on methods and tools to create a more sustainable planet.

Education for Sustainable Development entails a reorienting of education to guide and motivate people to become responsible citizens of the planet. 
(ESDWG, 2010).

What is SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com?

SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is a free social networking and learning hub aimed at teachers and learners around the world. It integrates social services where users can create personal profiles, join shared interest groups, and organize their contacts into a variety of categories such as work, school, university, special interests and current issues. Unlike other social networking sites, sustainable learning is a **social purpose enterprise** that aims to bring together like-minded people from around the world to socialize, network, play games, share ideas and share resources for the greater good of society and the planet.

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What are SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com's features?



The Current is the main page where users keep up-to-date with their contacts. This is a live feed, similar to other social networking sites, where users can share their status, videos, photos, ideas, resources and more. The Current can be customized according to language preference and users can specify the updates they want their contacts to see.

The Confluence is where users can communicate through live, synchronous communication via video chat or messenger. What is unique about The Confluence is the servers that house this feature are strictly solar and wind powered.



The Tributaries enables users to identify topics they might be interested in sharing with others. *New Featured Interest Tributaries* are shown in The Current daily and are based on sustainability issues that are trending around the world. The Tributaries is a pull-down feature from search results and is powered through SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com's partnerships with [Google](#) and the [Canadian Social Entrepreneurship Foundation](#).

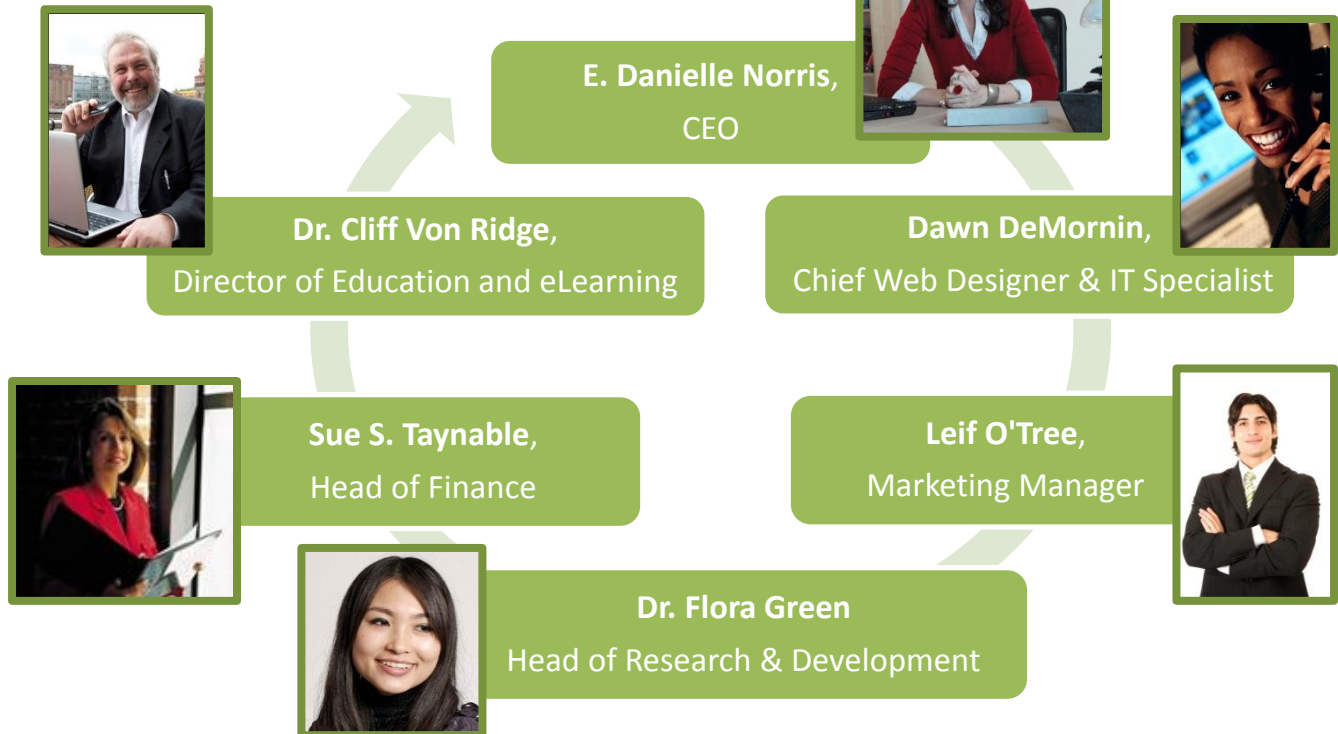


The Rapids is the truly fun side of SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com! Our partnership with the [Games for Change](#) has enabled us to create and distribute social impact games for SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com users aimed at raising awareness of key issues related to sustainability and empowering users to make a difference in the real world. Our partnership with Games for Change has enabled us to handpick social impact games that engage both educators and learners at all levels from elementary to tertiary education.

In **The Rapids Forum**, SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com gamers are able to share their gaming experiences and vote on their favourite games. For those interested in game making and content creation, Games for Change has offered SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com users a unique opportunity to collaborate with game developers at the Games for Change headquarters in New York City. They can apply for this opportunity by following the links on The Rapids page of SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com.



Who is SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com?



The management team at SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is a group of highly educated champions of sustainable development and education. Each has a Master's or PhD in their field and all come from a background in education, e-learning and sustainable development. Each have also obtained one or more of their education credentials from the prestigious [University of British Columbia](#) and while SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is based in Canada, the management team and staff have all lived and/or traveled around the world gaining valuable experience and expertise in understanding approaches to ESD and the key principles that cover the scope, purpose, and practice of ESD.

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Stakeholders

Our current key stakeholders are academic and training institutions, professional organizations and special-interest groups. The end-users we are currently targeting are educators, trainers and learners from elementary to post-graduate levels. As SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com grows as a company, we plan to broaden our market to target companies, organizations and government bodies aiming to network and collaborate on improving their social and ecological impact.

Partners

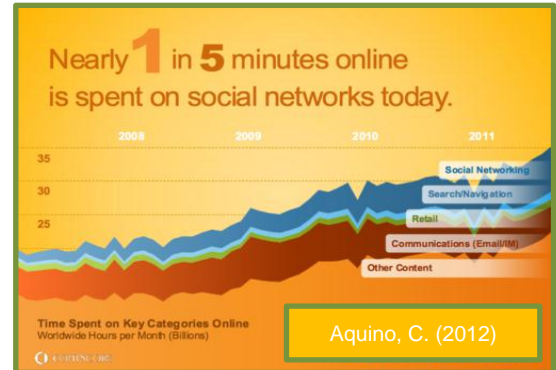
SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com achieves market leadership through its partnerships and alliances with Internet service providers such as Google, communities of practice for social change such as [Games for Change](#), social entrepreneurial organizations, and e-

learning software platforms and course management systems such as [MOODLE](#). Each of our partners share our values and social goals. Our partnerships make SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com a more appealing social networking site over the competition because the services offered to users by our partners is completely free. These tactical alliances help us to co-develop a successful product, SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com, and to share the task of marketing our site, as well as the products and services offered by our partners.

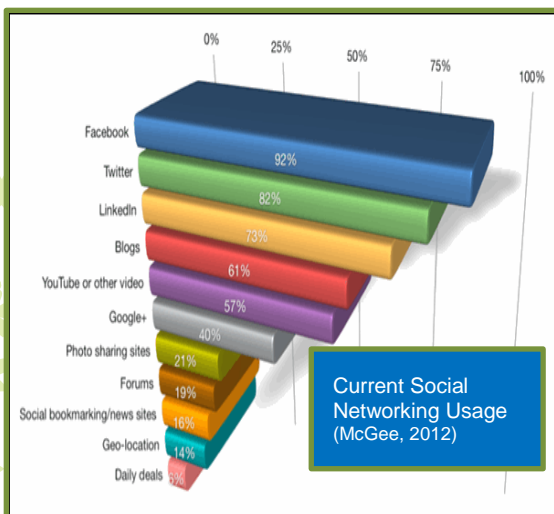


The Wider Market

SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is currently the only social and educational networking site in the world that caters to educators and learners on a global scale who are looking to become informed, skilled, and involved citizens in understanding and



responding effectively and responsibly to complex sustainable development issues. Given the tremendous popularity of social networking in sites such as Facebook, blogs, Twitter, and Google+, social networking provides the ideal platform for people to meet and collaborate on solutions to sustainability issues. In our recent market research survey of more than 1000 educators and learners across Canada, 95% of those polled said they use social networking sites on a daily basis. A further 87% said they would like to meet and collaborate with like-minded people on issues related to sustainability, but



did not know where to find and participate in such an online community. Finally, 92% of those queried said they were very likely to participate in a social networking site that provided them with opportunities to share, learn, socialize and play games for the greater good of the planet.ⁱⁱ

Strategy

SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is a social purpose venture and while it aims to attract users from its social networking competitors, the difference lies in the end goal: education for sustainable development. Over the next three years, and in collaboration with our partners, we plan to target potential users through educational institutions by marketing the following:



- 🌍 a highly innovative social and learning platform
- 🌍 a simple, minimalistic, user-friendly interface inspired by nature
- 🌍 search capabilities that are fast and reliable
- 🌍 on-demand live support for users facing technical difficulties
- 🌍 secure paid premium accounts for academic institutions & school districts
- 🌍 zero pop-ups & banner ads
- 🌍 unlimited storage/upload capabilities
- 🌍 a highly visible and accessible management team who plan to benefit from the educational, networking and gaming opportunities that SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com offers
- 🌍 work experience opportunities for users with our growing list of partners

Premium paid accounts for academic institutions and school districts will enable a private network of users (an important feature for young learners) not visible to public users. Costs can be negotiated based on each institution's/district's budgets. Over the next three years, we will look at research and lessons learned in order to revamp our strategy in order to attract companies, organizations and government bodies aiming to network and collaborate on improving their social and ecological impact. Thirty-five percent of profits earned through current and future paid user accounts will be used to help fund young social entrepreneurs and innovators around the world.

Value Proposition

SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com differentiates itself from other social networking sites in that its main focus is in attracting educators and learners around the world to meet, socialize, play games, share and discuss ideas, share resources, and build knowledge on issues related to sustainability. Through SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com's partnerships with educational institutions, e-learning



platform service providers, social entrepreneurship organizations, social change organizations and Internet related product and service providers, users have free, unprecedented access to ESD information, materials, resources, and expertise from around the world. Through the same partnerships, learners will have access to work experience opportunities with partner organizations and companies. Thus, SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is able to match the social networking attraction of



Facebook and Google+ while at the same time being the only social networking platform in the world that champions social, ecological and economic change in a fun, social and educational way.

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SWOT Analysisⁱⁱⁱ

There are a number of key strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities that our investors need to consider:

Strengths

- 🌍 a highly educated, motivated management team
- 🌍 focused and dedicated staff
- 🌍 ongoing research and development
- 🌍 strong and growing partnerships with key players
- 🌍 an innovative and groundbreaking platform

Weaknesses

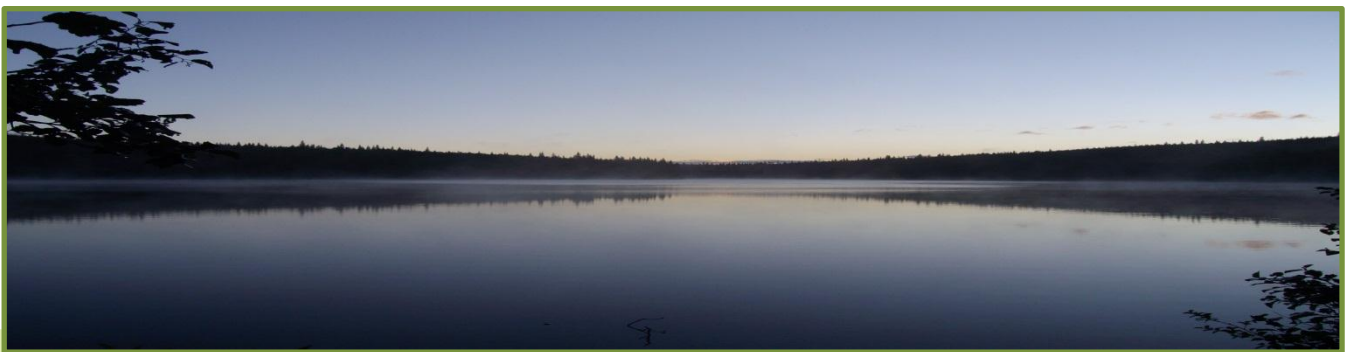
- 🌍 as a nonprofit venture, we are dependent on outside investment and currently have insufficient cash resources
- 🌍 little awareness among prospective users of SUSTAINABLE^eLEARNING.com
- 🌍 a growing number social networking opportunities competing with SUSTAINABLE^eLEARNING.com

Threats

- 🌍 initial buy-in may be difficult as many educators are often overwhelmed with new learning technologies and platforms
- 🌍 small initial revenues
- 🌍 investors will see a slow return on their investment (3 years)
- 🌍 economic slowdown in some countries may reduce demand

Opportunities

- 🌍 higher investment returns will come from future corporate, organizational and governmental user accounts
- 🌍 a social networking segment of the market is poised for rapid growth in developing countries, potential alliances with a growing number of companies, organizations, and special interest groups dedicated to education and ESD



The Investment

SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is looking for a \$1,000,000 investment from Canada's Ministry of Education and UNESCO to cover the following costs over the next 3 years:

- 🌍 \$300,000 personnel
- 🌍 \$300,000 servers and technological infrastructure
- 🌍 \$100,000 marketing and advertising
- 🌍 \$300,000 research and development

For a greater return on investment, SUSTAINABLEeLEARNING.com is looking for a further \$4,000,000 investment over the subsequent 2 years to cover the costs of continued and rapid growth in pursuit of the higher paying, more lucrative premium accounts of companies, organizations and government bodies.

- 🌍 \$1,000,000 personnel
- 🌍 \$1,500,000 servers and technological infrastructure
- 🌍 \$500,000 marketing and advertising
- 🌍 \$1,000,000 research and development



ROI Analysis

The return on investment is calculated as follows: $ROI = (PV \text{ Benefits} - PV \text{ Costs}) / PV \text{ Cost}$.^{iv} Therefore, based on our market research and current market trends, the ROI on the initial 3-year investment would be approximately 250% with dividends paid to investors in increments of \$830,000 at the end of each year (plus interest at prime rate). Though it is difficult to accurately gauge expected revenues beyond the next 3 years, our market research indicates that the ROI will close to triple in the subsequent 2 years.

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Conclusion

Communities of practice within and across educational systems need to collaborate in an effort to develop goals, resources, ideas, and local educational systems that can help modify curriculums and extra curricular activities to integrate ESD.^v Therefore, SUSTAINABLE^eLEARNING is both an excellent financial investment opportunity, as well as an excellent investment in our planet.

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- i Education for Sustainable Development Working Group (2010).
 - ii Totally made-up research as part of the role play of this assignment.
 - iii Planware.org
 - iv Iteconcorp.com
 - v McKeown, R. (2002)

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