



EDUCATION IN EXPONENTIAL TIMES

In the multi-screen world of the 21st century, with tablet computers, smart phones and the internet at our fingertips, we now consume more than 11 hours of information each day.

Alvin Toffler first coined the phrase 'information overload' in his 1970 best seller, *Future Shock*. Yet even he would be unable to fathom the sheer amount of information available to us today. A mind-boggling 800,000 petabytes (a million gigabytes per petabyte) in the storage universe and 3.6 zettabytes (a million petabytes per zettabyte) is consumed in homes each day, and this is expected to increase 44-fold by 2020.

At the same time, the amount of technical information available is doubling every two years.

In this brave new world, we are just as likely to learn about the latest Green Star rating tool from our iPad while sitting on the train as we are in a classroom or conference.

In *The Information Diet*, author Clay Johnson argues we should all consume information that is as close to the source

as possible – and the closest source for reliable, relevant information on Green Star is now online.

During the past decade, the Green Building Council of Australia has trained more than 40,000 people, giving them a 'top level' view of Green Star. Now we're helping these people get down to the detail.

Our new online courses recognise and encourage increased specialisation within the industry. We understand that the education requirements of an architect, engineer and facility manager differ dramatically. Short online courses are available to help people to zero-in on the information they need to work smarter and deliver sustainable outcomes.

At the same time, the CPD program now features five professional streams: Green Star Accredited Professional status for Design and As Built, Communities, Interiors, and Green Star Associate, with a new accreditation also being launched to coincide with the release of the Green Star – Performance rating tool later in 2013. Each accredited professional

stream has prerequisites, including a tailored foundation course and eligibility criteria, and each stream's course content focuses on the development of specialised Green Star skills.

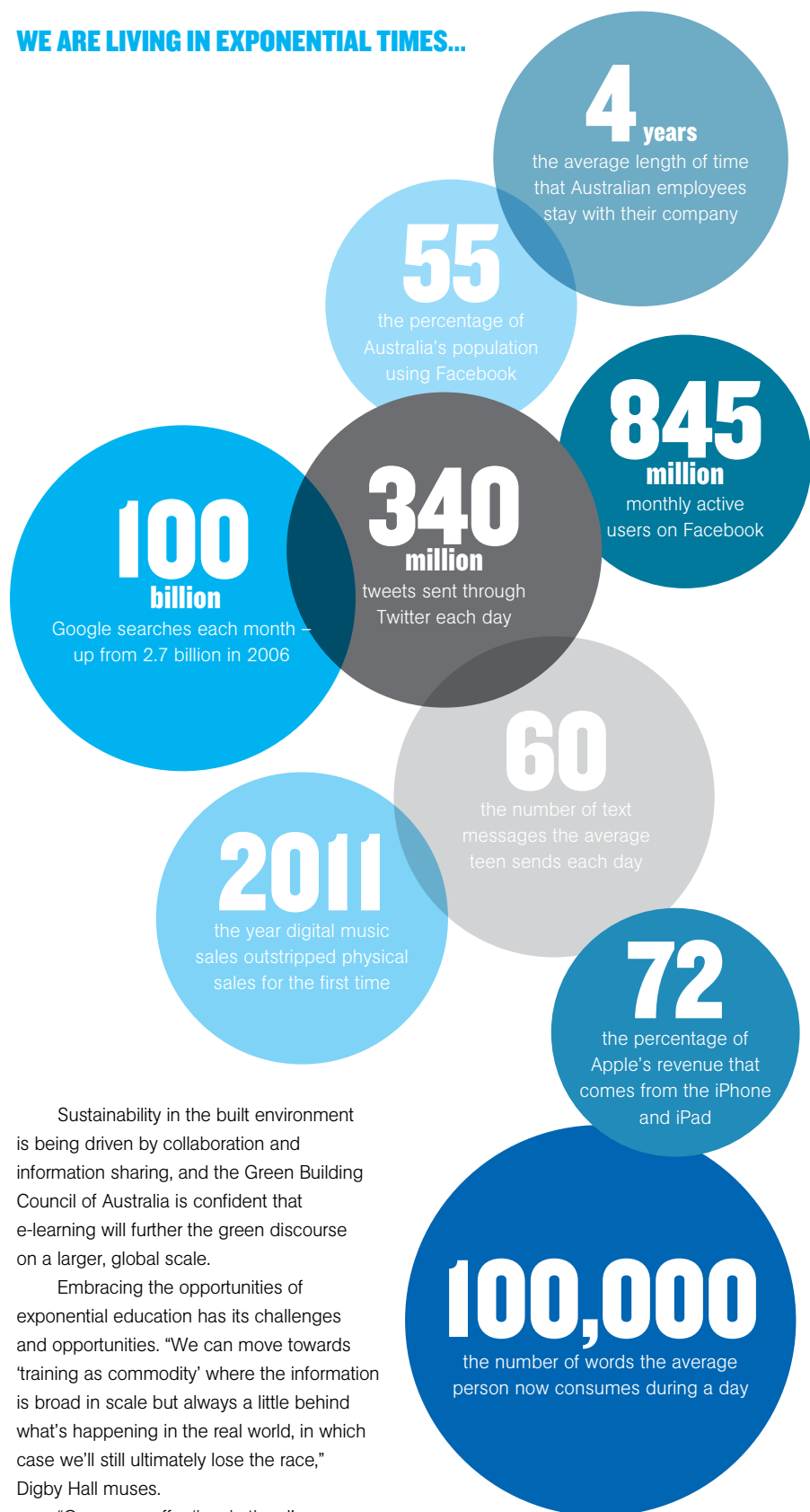
Green Star Faculty member, Joe Karten of Built, argues that e-learning has the potential to drive the uptake of green building practices in regional and remote Australia, and to share our green building expertise with the world.

"People crave a human connection and require educational 'hand-holding' when the content is new. However, webinars make it possible for instant feedback between students and teachers. We will see this method for delivering green building education continue to flourish. The benefit to industry will be the convenience and scalability of on-demand Green Star education."

Aurecon's Digby Hall, another member of the Green Star Faculty, believes it's important to differentiate between 'information' and 'learning'. While a vast amount of information, from certification processes to technical manual interpretations,



WE ARE LIVING IN EXPONENTIAL TIMES...



can be successfully consumed online, Digby believes that "face-to-face is still by far the best format for learning about collaboration, team work and project management as it simulates the way project teams actually work in the real world."

The GBCA is continuing to meet demand by delivering both public and in-house courses face-to-face, while the new online learning platform will enhance the well-established education delivered in person through Green Cities, Master Classes, 'In the Know' briefings and Green Star Day. The material covered in online courses can also be delivered face-to-face on request.

Organised site tours also provide the ultimate in education, enabling people to see, feel, hear, smell and understand green buildings. Self-guided walking tours that can be downloaded from the GBCA website, the first of which was developed for Sydney in conjunction with World Green Building Week, are also helping people to engage with green buildings and understand their increasingly important place in our cities.

Sustainability in the built environment is being driven by collaboration and information sharing, and the Green Building Council of Australia is confident that e-learning will further the green discourse on a larger, global scale.

Embracing the opportunities of exponential education has its challenges and opportunities. "We can move towards 'training as commodity' where the information is broad in scale but always a little behind what's happening in the real world, in which case we'll still ultimately lose the race," Digby Hall muses.

"Or we can offer 'inspirational' education, where the training provides cutting-edge knowledge, connects people around the globe with the best knowledge and experience in every field and is almost like a social network of green knowledge that is freely shared. Which direction this takes is up to us."

Watch out, as the reach and impact of green building education grows exponentially! ●



Statistics current as of October 2012.