



WHITE PAPER

Trends in eLearning

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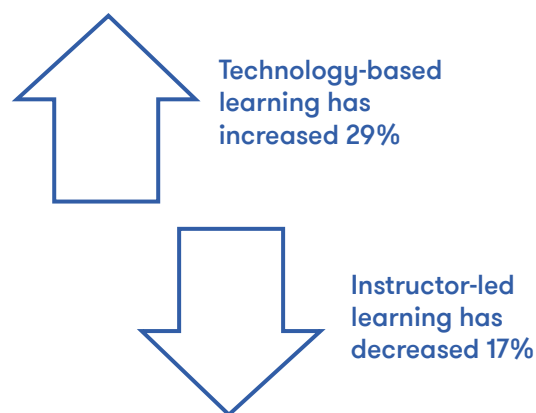
What You Should Know and Consider in Technology-Based Learning

Even a cursory examination of the training marketplace shows, eLearning (also commonly referenced as e-learning or e learning) represents a rapidly developing industry. However, an important part of the dramatic growth can be attributed to the fact that more businesses, rather than just academic institutions, are embracing and developing online training solutions. Research indicates online training, as a methodology and toolset, supports the needs of both business and customer demands. Cloud-based software is making it easier and cost-effective for businesses to update their training materials. eLearning platforms support cost-effective customization allowing highly specific training and organizational needs to be met based on the employee audience.

Educational institutions and business organizations continue to embrace the benefits of online training classes and solutions. It has become a key tool for organizations seeking to gain a competitive advantage by upgrading their corporate training strategies in a highly accountable way. In fact, the corporate online training market is expected to grow by 13 percent per year through next year (2018). Today,

77 percent of domestic companies offer some form of online corporate training to improve the professional development of their employees (Pappas, 2015).

As the shift towards broader corporate eLearning evaluation continues, organizations have begun to supplement or even replace traditional instructor-led employee training with eLearning methods (Yashchin, 2014). Per a survey from the *American Society of Training and Development*, instructor-led classroom hours dropped 17 percent at Fortune 500 companies from 2006 to 2012. Meanwhile, technology-based learning time increased 29 percent.



The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) model continues to show its strength and influence in the wider eLearning marketplace. This form of instruction emerged a decade ago, initially among academic institutions as an online alternative to traditional correspondence courses. These MOOC offerings include videos of lectures, assigned readings and problem sets as well as interactive features with instructors and other students.

In their early years, many high-profile universities including Harvard, Stanford and MIT began offering such courses, often tuition-free. For-profit and non-profit organizations created their own courses or partnered with universities. Today, online training statistics and adoption rates suggest professionals increasingly expect a future employer to offer eLearning as they seek to polish their resumes. Employers seek to stay competitive by providing employees with advanced training.

For example, MOOC providers have been increasing their advanced offerings in areas

such as business management and computer science. LinkedIn® has partnered with some MOOC providers to create a “direct to profile” certification program that adds completed courses and certifications to individuals’ online profiles. Seventy percent of firms surveyed by a consulting firm said they were interested in exploring the use of MOOCs for corporate training, and 31 percent already had plans to do so (Bersin, 2013).

eLearning market trends suggest many factors driving growth for the category.

These same factors also impact emerging trends within its platforms and systems. This white paper takes a closer look at key eLearning trends continuing to gain popularity:

- Personalized Learning
- Big Data and the Cloud
- Mobile Devices

Growth Contributions
Personalized Learning
Big Data & the Cloud
Mobile Devices

Personalized Learning

Personalization

eLearning research indicates the goal for employers “is no longer to craft a learning program but to move beyond programs to curate the learning experience... building a compelling and dynamic experience for employees and helping employees learn how to learn” (Pelster, et al, 2016).

This trend in eLearning also is being driven by the evolving demands and expectations of employees, particularly Gen X, Gen Y and Gen Z who are at ease with computer technology and

enculturated to accessing information online. Offering online training for employees that fits their career development plans and professional priorities ensures businesses meet talent management objectives as younger staff are called upon to take the place of baby boomers exiting the workforce.

“Employees can now take a course on nearly any subject online, search for an expert video or podcast to learn a quickly needed skill, and even earn a college degree in a new topic like data

science without leaving their desk—or couch or coffee shop” (Pelster, et al, 2016). Those companies whose L&D departments provide employee-centric learning will have a more productive and knowledgeable team of leaders and gain an advantage on global competition for talent.

This demand is apparent in the rapid adoption of self-paced eLearning programs which allow learners to study at their own pace without fixed starting dates for courses or completion dates for assignments (Docebo, 2014).

Automation

The production, modification and reproduction of traditional training materials often consume a substantial share of a firm’s total training budget. Automation, as facilitated by the best-in-class eLearning providers, removes a substantial portion of this manual updating and rework.

“Courses can be optimized to match the preferences and needs of individual users. Once the learner’s skills and knowledge level have been assessed, automated tools can offer algorithmic suggestion to modify the course content accordingly... Automated tools can generate tests and exercises and then scan the answers to determine the most important aspects to be analyzed” (eLearning.net, 2015).

Textbooks are being replaced by online learning programs that link to the progress of individual students and to reference data collected from other students (IBIS Capital, 2013).

Social Media

Experts say social media may become a significant part of eLearning personalization by providing users with forums on Facebook®, Twitter® or other common social media apps to discuss their experiences, questions or insights.

“Learners can voice their opinions, concerns, ideas and solutions and discuss issues relevant to them, fueled by the concepts and information provided by learning events. This adds a dynamic dimension to learning and makes the course materials come alive” (Penfold, 2016).

Taking a more user-centric social approach to learning provides various new opportunities for social flexibility—altering the pace of instruction, choosing when to tap into related learner interests or classmate questions, and even allowing learners to choose their own learning path and tools such as presentations, videos, gamification and more.

Visual Experience

Online training trends, not unlike most forms of interactive media, emphasize visual elements that are not only appealing, but engaging to learners. Screens filled with gray text are largely being replaced by more engaging visuals and graphics (Boller, 2014). eLearning design options, templates and videos create an enhanced experience for learners and help courses gain popularity with users.

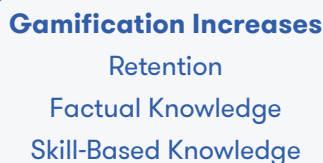
This new emphasis on visual eLearning design and development benefits from the assistance of ready-made templates with illustrations, charts, graphics and animations that can serve as blueprints for building content quickly and cost-effectively. eLearning templates provide a series of slides that can be easily updated from a single “master slide” to give courses a consistent, professional look in terms of colors, structure and navigation (Pappas, 2015).

The availability of inexpensive, high-resolution cameras, ranging from point-and-shoot handhelds such as GoPro® to advanced smart phones, are driving the incorporation of more

video into eLearning. It is no longer always necessary to hire expensive professional videographers and editors to do all the work. Post-production can be done in-house on a workstation, smart phone or tablet; “homemade” quality video has become more acceptable thanks to YouTube™ (Boller, 2014).

GAMIFICATION

Behavioral scientists have experimented for years with taking subject matter that may be perceived as dull or uninteresting, yet still important, into the now commonplace world of video games. eLearning games built to incorporate key workplace topics encourages voluntary training participation and a new level repetition that delivers knowledge retention. The demonstrated success of gamification to drive home factual knowledge could well lead to it being a central ingredient for certain types of employee online training in the near future. eLearning training programs incorporate elements of computer games, such as simulations and scenarios to stimulate interest, points and badges to reward success and leaderboards to encourage competition among employees.



Gamification Increases
Retention
Factual Knowledge
Skill-Based Knowledge

Researchers have found that gamification increases retention by nine percent, factual knowledge by 11 percent and skill-based knowledge by 14 percent among employees (Gopalakrishna, 2016).

Examples of gamified training include:

- A simulation for media planners in the television industry that provides the learner with an increasing portfolio of advertising to place in a TV schedule based on company and industry standards. Learners can progress through promotions or, in the worst cases, be fined or fired (Pappas, 2015).
- A sales course for dispelling misconceptions about a product rewarded learners who successfully identified clients’ misconceptions with a medal and a humorous video (Ibid).
- A training course to teach legal terms that employees had previously struggled to master created a situation where learners had to “explore” the topic more comprehensively before moving on to the next part of the game. Legal terms were incorporated into the game with quizzes and visual aids. As learners completed the tasks they were given immediate feedback as encouragement (Ibid).

Big Data, Business Intelligence and the Cloud

Today, eLearning vendors support business intelligence directed at training and human resources evaluation. By accumulating useful sets of employee data, employers can track the activities of individual learners and analyze

group patterns to determine why, when and how learners succeed or fail to master subjects and how they prefer to access their learning. It can be used to modify online training development.

Accumulating this data may help employers to fine tune their training strategy and enable content vendors to better tailor learning experiences to meet learners' needs (Penfold, 2016 and eLearning.net, 2015). Adjustments to online training development tools could significantly improve results for both the employer and employees.

eLearning systems that track relevant course data help meet corporate compliance requirements in areas ranging from accounting, communications, IT, HR, compliance and safety, project management and more. Businesses can keep training budgets under tighter control and reduce recruitment costs and productivity losses by developing and retaining existing employees.

The Cloud

In order to provide senior and middle management timely, accurate views of training performance, best-in-class eLearning systems rely on cloud-based architectures. Stronger

encryption measures have allayed the security concerns of many organizations that had been hesitant about entering HR data in the cloud and the benefits of not maintaining a local server deliver immediate and long-term hard and soft cost-savings.

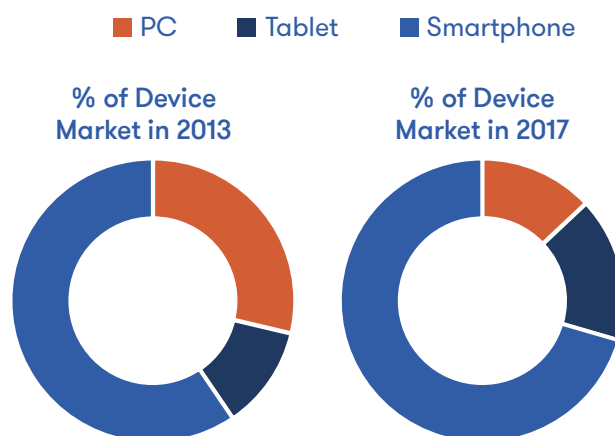
Companies report finding that cloud-based approaches have in fact reduced eLearning training costs while making it faster and easier to update content. Utilizing a cloud-based eLearning provider also makes content more accessible to employees (eLearning.net, 2015).

As the adoption cloud-based eLearning continues to rise, corporations are also looking at ways to integrate an existing cloud-based learning management system (LMS). The LMS market is still considerable, and expected to be worth over \$7 billion in 2018. The highest proportion of revenue contribution is expected to be generated in North America (Pappas, 2015).

mLearning or Mobile Learning

With smart phones and tablet computers now reaching saturation levels in the U.S. and many foreign countries, eLearning has large-scale opportunity to further increase user engagement by freeing learners from their desktop.

To put the migration in context, IDC reports the number of PCs will fall from 28.7 percent of the device market in 2013 to 13 percent in 2017. Tablets will increase from 11.8 percent in 2013 to 16.5 percent by 2017, and smartphones will increase from 59.5 percent to 70.5 percent (Docebo, 2014).



As mobile devices are proving to be a millennial's leading source for news and communication, implementing eLearning platforms on such devices offers an effective way to give learners immediate access to their classes and learning materials at any given time and place. Eighty-seven percent of organizations in the United States and Canada that participated in a 2013 international survey said they had adopted mobile devices in their training programs. Internationally, use of mobile devices for workplace training nearly doubled in just three years, from 36 percent in 2010 to 71 percent in 2013 (Towards Maturity, 2014).

This rapid adoption has been aided by new eLearning authoring programs that make it easier to effectively format content across different platforms. For example, a responsive designed LMS can modify placement of images, text blocks and layout based on the device to provide all

learners with comparable experiences (Pappas, 2016). Some LMS providers offer features that automatically detect a learner's location and deliver appropriate content. A learner in Japan, for example, may be able to receive a course with Japanese subtitles and culturally appropriate online activities (Ibid).

While some organizations are providing employee learners with mobile devices, others have adopted a BYOD (bring your own device) policy which allows learners to use their device of choice. Some experts believe that tablet computers will become the favored device for mobile learning. They doubt whether learners will consider smart phones a convenient or comfortable tool for long, involved training courses given their limited screen size. Rather, phones may be most useful for "micro-learning" to locate information sources or for quick reviews of concepts (Boller, 2014).

eLearning Trends Key Questions

1. How can you personalize your eLearning courses, content and options to engage your employees?
2. How much time and effort does your organization lose manually producing training materials?
3. Could you leverage social media to improve the training culture?
4. Are your courses visually interesting or do they look like a standardized test?
5. Can you really measure how effective your training is today?
6. What aspects of your more uninspiring training needs could be augmented by games?
7. If you have a distributed workforce, how can you make mobile devices part of the training solution?

About Pryor Learning

Fred Pryor Seminars and CareerTrack, divisions of Pryor Learning, create one of the most respected international providers of professional training. Since pioneering the one-day seminar in 1970, our organization has built a reputation for high-quality, convenient, and practical business-skills training around the world, in every industry and sector. Our recent name change to Pryor Learning, LLC better represents our full line of training which includes live seminars, online training, and enterprise solutions.

Today, with more than 13 million satisfied customers, we continue to pride ourselves in providing the superior training you've come to expect. Our cutting-edge research and course development are designed to meet the adult learning needs of your employees and your organization.

At Pryor, we offer training for any learning type—in-person and through live seminars, online with videos, quizzes, e-books, webinars. Every learning style is an option based on the company

and employee needs. As a cloud-based LMS, learning is three clicks and three days away from adoption of learning plan.

Tracking and measurement can be cost-effective and simplified. Drive accountability and ROI with Pryor's advanced admin features. Admins can assign, track, and report on training in real-time with single-click reports or export to Excel. Learning objectives can be tied to professional development goals to more accurately gauge employee performance around review time.

With the Pryor LMS turnkey solution, businesses can be up and running quickly. Ongoing support and maintenance is covered. You can save money on resources and manpower to launch and train employees on how to use the system. Built-in custom marketing campaigns are available to aid in the launch and roll-out of company directed business goals such as employee emails or poster campaigns to welcome new learners; and reminders to existing learners on where to access to all online and in-person offerings. ■

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