



February 2011 Newsletter

What is e-Learning?

One of the newer methods for training delivery is called e-Learning. So what is it, actually? The simplest definition, it's a method that delivers training to learners through the internet or a company's intranet in a self paced user controlled environment. The delivery environment is a Learning Management System, or LMS.

ASTD embraces the methods of e-Learning as one of the essential tools to be employed for training delivery and knowledge management. This method incorporates instructorless interactivity by utilizing software tools to engage the learners in ways that even instructor led training can't duplicate. Enhancing instructor led training (ILT) with e-Learning is called blended learning and has proven to be quite effective.

Just because we delivered it in the classroom live a certain way doesn't mean it will translate directly into effective e-Learning. Obviously, some things we can do in a live session with learners can't be replicated, but that becomes the new challenge for training design and development. Training Design for e-Learning requires chunking of courses into 30 to 190 minute sessions, with 60 minute or less sessions being most desirable.

Because the training can be delivered on demand, 24/7, it offers great flexibility for the learner. A best practice is to assure that a learning screen within the LMS doesn't require the student to scroll to view the content. Average student seat time decreases when you move from ILT to web based. A six hour ILT class becomes 4 hours of e-Learning.

Course Design incorporates many of the following software tools to build the components of the e-Learning course.

- [iSpring Presenter](#) for animation, voice over, and interactive quizzes using the PowerPoint materials you already have.
- [ADOBE](#) software such as Captivate, to create interactive presentations with branching, quizzes, and software simulations. A complete suite of software for developing courses is called [ADOBE E-Learning Suite 2](#).

- Filming movies is a great way to replicate some classroom activities and even chalk talks. These movies are then converted in flash (flv) movies for the web.
- Tools and templates for the learners to apply what they have learned are also a way to get them engaged.
- You can still do breakout sessions, but it is up to the learners to actually complete them.
- Testing, Testing, and Testing with interactivity and feedback also engages the learners.
- The components of a course become shockwave movies, flv movies, and html web pages.

Once a course is designed and created with all the new technology the question becomes how do we package the course for delivery? That is where [SCORM \(Sharable Content Object Reference Model\)](#) comes into play. OK, so what is that? SCORM is like a DVD, it can play on any DVD player. SCORM is a standard that Learning Management Systems (LMS) use to present the course. The elements of the course once converted into a SCORM package are uploaded into the LMS, actually any LMS for delivery to learners.

One of our fellow ASTD members, [Brian Caudill, JCA Solutions](#), has developed a software package that simplifies the packaging of the e-Learning course components into SCORM Compliant packages. Once packaged, a course can be delivered to learners via any LMS. A free testing ground for courses is the [SCORM Cloud](#), which becomes your personal LMS to review, revise, test, and validate e-Learning courses.

We have help within our chapter to get you started, [just send us an email](#).