

Rapid e-learning at enterprise level

Over the past three years, the rapid e-learning market has grown to represent a significant portion of e-learning content. Rapid e-learning is generally used to describe e-learning programs that can be developed quickly and inexpensively. Industry guidelines suggest that traditional e-learning projects produced in-house can take 10-plus weeks from conception to final publishing. Rapid e-learning is designed to reduce this to several weeks.

By 2005, rapid e-learning represented 36 percent of all e-learning produced, and this is expected to reach 50 percent of all e-learning produced by 2008.¹ A recent survey of HR managers indicates that up to 72 percent of training requirements are time critical and need to be addressed inside 60-90 days.¹ This ties in with the tenets of rapid e-learning.

Enterprise-scale e-learning

Our most innovative brands and businesses are now locking on to the potential of e-learning across the enterprise to help deal with large, geographically dispersed workforces. As enterprises become more complex, efficient e-learning infrastructures tend to become more mission-critical. Training requirements are extremely broad, with corporates often requiring job-specific training for employees. This can incorporate regulatory compliance, quality control, health and safety, diversity, product, processes and internal systems training. In the case of product training, enterprises typically have a large number of products and large sales

forces and, in many cases, are supposed to present solutions to the customer, rather than just a series of separate products. All of this greatly increases the need for up-to-date training.

The case of global IT provider Insight is a good example; after taking over a major competitor, dramatic revision of the e-training infrastructure has become a cornerstone in the company's consolidation drive. Since acquiring Software Spectrum last year, Insight has been eager to integrate as quickly as possible and share best practices across the newly enlarged enterprise. Making the Mohive e-Learning Publishing System accessible across the entire organization has been the fastest way to ensure that knowledge and critical information is disseminated at the speed today's competitive technology marketplace demands.

Insight's new enterprise scale e-learning system will support training hubs in the UK, France, Germany and three sites located in the US, with web-based programs accessible to the company's 4,500-plus employees, operating out of over 170 countries.

The cornerstones of rapid e-learning

The challenge with rapid e-learning is to develop training programs that address the business issues within the organization and to ensure that the training is consistent, approved and delivered to the entire organization in a timely fashion, while keeping costs at a reasonable level. The following three factors need to be considered.

Lars Unneberg

is CEO of Mohive, an Oslo-based provider of an e-learning publishing system for the enterprise business skills market. He is one of the founders of Mohive and has worked in the e-learning sector for over 20 years.



1. Enabling subject matter experts

Rapid e-learning depends on the concept of subject matter experts, who produce the e-learning content. Any program that is put in place should address their needs by making it easy for them to produce content in an efficient way. Factors to consider include streamlining the creation process by providing approved graphics and media and ensuring these experts are enabled to create new content and to re-use existing content.

2. Collaboration

Large e-learning projects will include some aspect of collaboration, incorporating numerous authors contributing content and editors reviewing their contributions. Ensuring that there is a platform available to support this collaboration will greatly reduce unplanned delays in the content creation process.

3. Review and approval

At enterprise level, the review and approval process is likely to be complex, especially in publicly listed organizations where strict controls are often in place. Given that e-learning courses disseminate a wide variety of information, various internal groups need to participate in the process. It is important to understand the review and approval process internally before beginning a rapid e-learning process, and to ensure the software infrastructure will support it.

References:

1. Bersin & Associates

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