

# E-Learning: a boon for organisations

E-learning is already widely distributed amongst higher learning institutions, including universities, around the world. Similarly, corporations with staff and partner



organisations dispersed across geographic locations are delivering technology-based training, learning and developments programs in this converged, borderless world.

*“The use of personal computers and the Internet for training purposes has enjoyed steady growth and technological advance since its debut in the mid 1990s. For example, e-learning courseware has become a popular workhorse for businesses, government organisations and academic institutions after shedding its image as a tedious ‘electronic page turning’ exercise.”*

[Training Industry, Inc. and Citrix Systems, Inc.).

The quote from industry leaders reflects the rapid uptake of organisations both large and small throughout the world, employing live online training as a driver to increased productivity as well as delivering a capacity for maintaining their competitive edge. Technological advancement coupled with digital media has resulted in a massive shift in the range and deliverability of learning and development tools.

## How mobility has helped shape e-learning

One of the more radical outcomes of the dizzying array of computer-based technologies has been the ability of companies to “connect” with their employees and, importantly, it has given them the ability to conduct live training and meeting sessions via the computer to widely distributed audiences. Indeed, when one factors in the expansion of mobile and wireless technologies into the equation, companies and organisations not only have connectivity across multimedia platforms but also have a greatly augmented mobile workforce.

The use of smart phones and portable devices (printers, mobile devices etc) combined with a dramatically expanding broadband capacity in most countries in the Asia-Pacific region has meant that great efficiencies can be obtained not just in the sales and service function, but also in HR functions of learning, development and training.

## Maximising resources

Businesses can experience significant savings by avoiding expensive travel and lodging required for training on site. This is augmented by also improving performance and morale. Web-based training applications provide an online environment in which companies can deploy interactive, virtual classroom learning, the scope and breadth of which is being enhanced continuously.

Timely and accurate product and service information for customers are the core platforms of any marketing activity. Training programs and learning and development programs will often deal with ‘Marketing Collateral’ as a sales tool, assisting the marketing team and salesperson to be more effective in their work. One of the most rapidly expanding applications of online training technologies is the delivery of timely and useful information about products and services to customers as well as suppliers, distributors, manufacturing partners.

Flowing from the convergence of technologies in e-learning is a veritable cornucopia of delivery methods becoming available for organisations to present sales and marketing critical information in formats that are convenient and appealing to the variety of audiences and their respective needs. These and the more traditional learning courseware such as simulations are now readily available in electronic format, complimenting live, game-based tutorials and virtual classroom training presented live or on-demand.

## Collaborative learning

The collaborative workplace is a buzz word for 21st century organisations as is the ubiquitous Internet. Web interface for meetings, seminar, forums are well integrated into most contemporary organisations, enabling e-learning and collaborative Web conferencing throughout the world.

For the leader, e-learning presents tremendous leverage potential not just in terms of the efficiencies but also for creating a workplace - both virtual and physical - where employees work as a unified team.

In some ways e-learning is a response to the needs of businesses clamouring for convenient, secure and cost-effective alternatives to gatherings of the ‘old world’ type. It has also lead to the phenomena of “knowledge management,” a relatively new discipline which is based on the principal that there is an informal learning benefit to be gained from organisation information, which comprises most of the corporate knowledge transfer within many organisations. An e-learning platform can be used to encourage and facilitate informal learning activities.