

**E-learning Authoring Tools  
An Analyst Perspective**

This is an important strategy shift for e-learning  
But is part of a more holistic view - not a replacement

Accelerating growth in adoption of these approaches within most large corporates

Multiple tools  
Assemblers and Asset producers  
Supporting resources and services

Realisation of the need for an integrated approach

Fragmentation of learning content and clarity of ownership  
Explosion in content assets  
Struggle for reuse  
Maintenance nightmare in waiting

Realisation of need for a proper learning content management strategy

**Where do we see this going?**

Lack of skills within the business to utilise tools  
Educational quality and validity of outputs  
Manageability and reuse of resulting e-content  
Standards and LMS integration

L&D (says it) is worried about:

Finding better ways of keeping its people up to speed  
Subject experts getting sucked into doing L&D's job for it  
L&D trying to interfere too much

The Business is concerned about:

**What are the key issues/barriers to success?**

The authoring tool is only one part of the digital problem

buttons, icons, graphics, animations, complex logic, ...  
cultural change  
clarity of strategy  
reuse  
and yes, educational value!

These are generally assembly tools, but what about the underlying assets for assembly?

Appropriateness of use  
Good e-learning content design  
Use of tools and underlying asset technologies  
Longer term management and maintenance

Skills and understanding

Creating  
Publishing  
Maintaining

General Usability

Built-in educational structure and technical standards

Including Office tools and Learning asset tools  
And with LMS

Ability to support and integrate with existing tools

Commercial viability

**Selection criteria for tools**

Own authoring capabilities via tools like Lectora etc.  
E-presentation tools like Breeze, Impactica etc.  
System simulation tools like Robodemo (Now Macromedia Captivate)  
Recurrent interest in recording live virtual presentations, e.g. recording Centra sessions

For use within L&D  
For use within the business  
For use within IT

Other approaches  
Acquiring tools from generic content providers along with content assets  
More relevant for niche industry content

**What choices are they making around tools etc?**

Sensible selection of tools (see later)

Creating standard templates to enforce educational structure and technical standards


Providing a strong support infrastructure for users

Rigorous checking of LMS compatibility and integration

Piloting with a carefully selected target users

Providing easy mechanisms for publishing, distribution and access

**What are the initial steps to success?**



**Founded in 1996**

Independent Corporate Learning Analyst

Corporate Best Practice Research & Services  
Corporate Strategy & Advice

Topic Areas:  
E-learning, learning strategy, blended learning, Enterprise LMS, sustainability, measuring value & ROI, leadership development, e-communities, e-assessment, rapid content development ...

Customers:  
B&O, BP, Cable & Wireless, Chubb Insurance, Coca-Cola Europe, HSBC, Marks & Spencer, PricewaterhouseCoopers, RBS, Reuters, Unilever, Vodafone, ...

Contact  
E: davidw@elearnity.com  
T: +44 (0)20 7917 1870

Resources  
Market News  
<http://www.elearnity.com/news>  
Best Practice Research  
<http://www.elearnity.com/research>  
eLearnity White Papers  
<http://www.elearnity.com/whitepaper>

**Once upon a time, a large corporation ...**

Decided that e-learning looked really interesting and could solve lots of learning problems

Appointed an E-learning Manager who went to lots of conferences and talked to lots of vendors, resulting in the company ...

Investing in e-learning by:  
Signing up with NETg (or whoever) for access to a catalogue of generic e-learning content  
Paying Epic (or whoever) to develop some custom content for them  
And buying and implementing an LMS (of some form) to manage most (but not all) of their learning

Usage of their generic e-learning was a fraction of their anticipated levels (but 10 titles were used lots!)

2 to 3 years later (i.e. now) they realised:  
They had delivered some really cool custom projects but they took too long, cost too much, were too inflexible, and were becoming difficult and expensive to maintain  
And meanwhile, they had not really cracked the problem of how to make e-learning a generic in-business learning tool

**The realisation:**

Current e-learning strategies (i.e. our story tale) are too limited

Often extensive use of a narrow set of e-learning content?  
But low use of the broad range of generic e-learning provided  
And very low penetration (by intervention) of organisationally-specific learning

Need to target in-business learning activities

Within L&D  
Within the business itself

And realign current e-learning provision

Realignment (and renegotiation) of generic provision  
Reengineering external custom development

Multiple providers  
Greater diversity of approach  
High impact one-off to quick and dirty multifold  
Clearer rules  
Standards  
Granularity  
Maintenance

**Does In-business e-learning production actually work?**

Early indications are positive  
Business interest and uptake is usually strong  
But takes quite a lot of support initially to get it going in the right direction  
Compromises have to be made on all sides

Pragmatism is key