

In-house e-learning creation checklist

Do I need a standard tool?

Any (especially a large) company should aim to standardise on one or more tools (as few as possible) to ensure ease of use, build up of competence and easy re-use and sharing of content company-wide.

I'd recommend that you focus on finding a tool that will support your processes and enable your users to actually create quality content without having a computer degree...

What to look for in a tool?

The tool should cover the following:

- easily used by novice users (typically internal **resources** like subject matter experts) but it needs to be flexible and powerful enough to also allow for development of professional quality interactive solutions
- automatically ensure standards-compliance (both e-learning standards like SCORM and company specific standards like company design manual etc)
- allow easy company-wide reuse and sharing of content and assets
- allow cooperative development and QA reviews (multiple authors, reviewers etc)
- enable users to produce and publish content rapidly
- make it easy to create accessible versions of courses

Depending on your company needs; I'd also look into the tool's abilities to handle **multiple language versions (translation and localisation)** and how easy it is to **re-brand courses**.

Many international enterprises have a need for multi-language content and to be able to brand courses differently for different corporate entities/brands or for external use towards suppliers/clients/partners.

Taking the above issues into account when looking for a tool will give you huge cost-savings and allow for shorter, more flexible development-cycles.

Who can actually create e-learning?

Whether to let the “ragged mob” of subject matter experts (SMEs) start creating content or not is a very pertinent question.

Should you keep all development in-house in your expert e-learning team, or let everyone loose trying to unleash the creative and knowledgeable resources in your organisation?

Your choice of tool will be very relevant in how it will allow you to use the best of both worlds!

I think that it is important to realise that you can have **both** with a tool that will allow cooperative development AND which is easy enough for subject matter experts to use.

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How might it work?

We work with a number of clients where their internal SMEs do a lot of content creation. Some projects (typically small, simple modules) are done 100% by their SMEs. Other projects (more complex, larger, higher quality) are done in a cooperative effort between SMEs and an internal (or external, outsourced) e-learning unit.

The degree of involvement from our/their experts (instructional designers, graphical artists, animators, scriptwriters, PMs etc) will vary from project to project according to the client's needs.

By using a common, shared tool and resources, working with virtual teams where everyone is accessing and working on the same "code", you have an extremely flexible way of utilising all available internal and external resources optimally to create appropriate e-learning solutions.

At the same time, you can easily set up approval/review schemes to ensure that all courses are reviewed and certified to be up to the corporate standards for e-learning. For example, any course produced by (teams of) SMEs have to go through an approval process by the central, corporate e-learning unit to ensure that it meets the standards.

Also, if you intend for SMEs to create learning content, it is important to actually support them in doing so...

Example:

- set up initial training (1 day) on the tool to be used (must be intuitive to use)
- set up a scripting workshop for their first projects (how do you write/plan for interactive e-learning programmes?). Topics for this day and potential follow-up workshops will depend on both the SME competencies, ambition-level and available resources
- make expert resources available for sparring/review/participation in the first 1-2 projects
- KEEP IT SIMPLE – expect to create short, simple courses in the beginning. More impressive results will come as competencies and ambitions grow
- create an internal community for SMEs related to e-learning with access to the internal e-learning experts

You can get amazing results using your internal resources, if you do it right and enable them with the right tool and support.

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