ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 2 - number 10 Wednesday 31 january 2018

Do you write e-Learning or eLearning?

We finally come to the head of a frequent spelling and semantic debate in the area of educational technology.

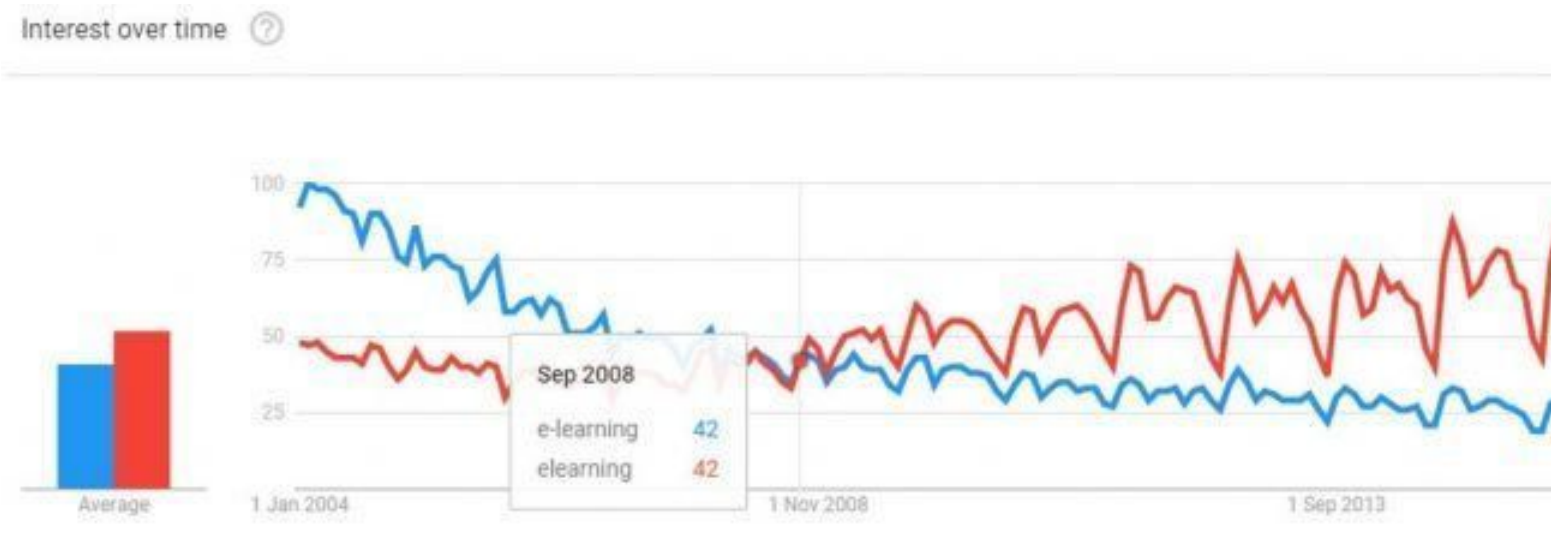
It is a term that is increasingly widespread. It defines the training provided by computer or digital device, in which technology facilitates learning at any time and in any place. It is a system used to study, for work reasons or for personal development purposes. But **how do you spell it correctly?**

e-Learning vs. eLearning

The debate is taking place in the academic and professional world (excluding other less used forms of writing such as E-learning, Elearning, and learning, elearning and many others ...).

Greg Blackburn (eLearning Researcher and British General Manager) deepened the question wondering what was the most common term. What did he discover? In January 2018, on **Google** the term "e-Learning" appears to be slightly favoured, having found about 55,200,000 results against the research "eLearning" which returned about 55,100,000 results. The research "e-Learning" and "eLearning" on **Wikipedia** (2018) redirects to a single page called digital Learning. Likewise, searches on different online dictionaries for "eLearning" redirect to "e-Learning" or return no results. Based on these data, it would seem that "e-Learning" is the most widespread form.

However, **Google Trends** tells another story. The data indicate the primacy of the "e-Learning" form in the early 2000s, then surpassed in popularity in search engines from the "eLearning" form since 2008. In short, today people type "eLearning" to do their research on web. In the near future, will the dash in "e-Learning" disappear? It is possible: often words with hyphen are born as neologisms, but as soon as they become commonly used the hyphen is abandoned. Let's think of "e-mail", "e-books" and "web-sites": the common use made them lose the meaning of compound words with which they were conceived as separate units, and caused the loss of the hyphen (Greenfield , 2012).



The semantic debate

With regard to the semantic debate, we discuss the definition of eLearning as an educational technology, digital learning or technology-based learning. Even if this may seem insignificant, however, **there is not any single agreed-upon definition of eLearning** in the literature (Lin, Chen & Liu, 2017, Sherwood, 2017) and a wide variety of terminology is used, such as Computer Assisted Learning, Teaching Technology, Educational Technology, Information and Communication Technology,

Computer Assisted Learning, Computer Aided Assessment, Distance Education and Computer-mediated Communication (Bayne, 2015; Januszewski & Molenda, 2013; Moore, Dickson-Deane, & Galyen, 2011). This lack of precision in terminology, as Fernández-Pampillón and Pareja-Lora (2017) say, "generates some confusion: the term risks of defining anything: from the hardware designed specifically for the educational application, to applications for mobile devices, software used for education, learning management systems (LMS) and authoring tools to design courses ". As stated by Lin, Chen & Liu (2017) the definitions differ according to different positions or points of view.

To use the term eLearning in a coherent way it is sufficient to be aware of the fact that it is a generic term used to describe a wide range of technologies applied to training, with a special emphasis on learning through the web.

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