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How to choose your new LMS?

Everything you need to know about learning management systems (LMS).

After investigating the cost of an LMS let's see what are its main features and who could come in handy.
Do you think you have all the information you need to orient yourself in the world of Learning Management System (LMS), so you can choose your new LMS?

What is an LMS for?

The main function of a learning management system (LMS) is to implement and monitor online training. How? Training materials (such as video lessons and documents) are uploaded to the LMS platform, making it possible for the students to use them at any time and in any place. Each student is given access credentials and this enables to keep track of information on the use of the courses.

How can an LMS be distributed?

- **Cloud-based LMS (SaaS)**

In the case of LMS platforms hosted in the cloud, it is the LMS producer who maintains the system up-to-date. No software is required and students can immediately access the system with credentials.

- **Self-Hosted**

These are LMSs that require a software download (either through the vendor's site or from physical disks). Self-hosted LMS platforms often offer paid updates, and the manufacturer does not manage the system remotely - you need an in-house IT know-how, but they allow more customization of the dashboard.

- **Desktop application**

The LMS app is installed on the desktop, on one or more devices.

- **Mobile application**

This is the case of LMS accessible anywhere via smartphone and mobile app.

Who can benefit From an LMS?

Learning Management Systems are beneficial for all companies of all sizes.

• Big Companies

Large organizations or multinational companies can use the LMS to monitor the training of thousands of employees in national offices or distributed on the globe, keeping the sales channels up-to-date.

• Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

SMEs use LMS because they allow them to respond to the needs of continuous training by optimizing the use of human resources.

• Freelancers

LMS platforms are mainly used by training professionals who want to offer tailor-made solutions to their customers.

LMS by type of license

• Open Source or free license

Open Source systems are available online for free. Thanks to online communities, it is possible to get suggestions for the resolution of any technical problems, but this does not mean that it is necessary to have some degree of IT programming experience. So the money saved on the license or monthly fees is usually spent on IT staff.

• Paid license

Paid SMLs require a monthly or yearly fee and offer user-friendly functionality and advanced support.

How are the prices of the LMS calculated?

• Pay-per-use

This pricing model involves a fee for each active user or user. The LMS provider can offer different price ranges depending on the active users. It is a great solution for smaller organizations that want to reduce the impact of online training costs, while remaining able to scale the cost of LMS in the event of business growth.

• License

As an alternative to payment per user, this LMS tariff plan provides for an annual fee that needs to be renewed.

• Freemium

These LMS platforms are free for basic (free) functionality, but with additional fees for more advanced features, such as add-ons or upgrades (premium).

What are the advantages of using an LMS?

1. Organize and securely store big data

LMS allows you to collect and manage Big Data and educational materials. In addition, most of LMSs are equipped with advanced cryptography, so that complete data security is guaranteed.

2. Monitor performance and progress of the learner

LMS platforms have integrated reporting and analysis systems to help keep track of various aspects of the online training program (e.g. performance, progress and user engagement). This way, you can identify patterns and trends.

3. Improve the allocation of resources

With an LMS platform you can identify aspects of your online training program that do not meet learners' expectations (by monitoring student engagement) or you can help the training team quickly update training resources; or, again, you can implement corporate training on a global scale.

4. Customize the online training experience

With an LMS it is possible to assign ad hoc training courses, in order to offer each student the training he/she needs. This means creating more effective and satisfying training experiences.

5. Worldwide accessibility

LMS allows you to implement and monitor online training courses without geographical limits.

Which features should never be missing in your new LMS?

1. Reporting and analysis

Essential requirement for monitoring student performance and answering many useful questions. For example: Are the contents of eLearning training engaging and comprehensive for learning? What percentage of students successfully completed the course? How long did they take?

2. Responsive Design

Today the use of online content from mobile (smartphone or tablet) is very common. It is important that your LMS is mobile responsive, or has a layout that adapts to the device used by the user.

3. Intuitive interface

The LMS platform must be easy to use, intuitive ... both for your training team, but above all for users. Before buying an LMS, make sure you have chosen a user-friendly system by comparing it with your e-Learning team.

4. Support services

LMS providers offer various support services: online communities, chats, online and offline tutorials, online guides, qualified telephone support. Define the level of assistance you need right from the start, assessing the level of experience of your e-Learning team and the complexity of the chosen LMS.

5. e-Learning Assessment Tools

To identify student gaps and plan their training, LMS must be able to support a wide range of eLearning assessment methods.

6. Gamification

If you want to increase students' involvement, make sure the chosen LMS integrates the game mechanics (which show progress in training in the form of rankings and medals).

7. Corporate compliance and mandatory training

To prevent violations and fines, it is possible to refer to the data recorded in the LMS.

8. Social learning

Many LMSs promote social learning: they allow students to compare and share experiences through chat and online discussions.

9. Geolocation

For organizations with worldwide operations it is essential to provide training in different languages. For this reason, some LMS have geolocation features that automatically show the appropriate language version of the course.

Obviously every organization has unique training needs and different budget constraints. So, the all the above reccomandations can only be a starting point in the selection of the best LMS for you.

Read the complete article...