ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 3 - number 62 Wednesday 27 march 2019

Learning object: what it is and what it is used for

The Learning Object (LO) consists in the possibility of re-using, in the context of e-learning courses, educational material in digital format that can support the student for learning purposes.

The Learning Object gives the possibility of reusing material in digital format as part of an e-learning learning program. To understand well the value of the Learning Object we must start from the concepts of modularity, availability and interoperability.

What is modularity

One of the most important characteristics of distance education is the possibility of managing the contents and organizing them according to the training objectives. A learning object, which can be referred to as an educational object, can be used for different training courses, as long as the contents are modulated.

What is availability

Availability means the possibility of easily identifying the physical space in which the learning object has been stored. This is the result of a process of identification of the set of metadata aimed at classifying the entire range of resources by virtue of a series of previously established parameters.

Thanks to metadata it is possible to find learning objects in specific digital archives, also known as repositories, whose task is to catalog the educational objects based on the metadata classification criteria themselves.

What is interoperability

Interoperability refers to the fact that learning objects can work correctly on multiple platforms that deal with the delivery of educational materials. This result is obtained from the Reference Model for Shared Content Objects (more briefly SCORM), a model created to facilitate the exchange of content in digital format, in a way independent of the platform used.

How to manage educational objects

When preparing an e-learning course the teacher has an important task. It must assess the possible presence of potentially reusable, distinguishing them from the material that, instead, will have to be produced from scratch.

In particular, it is important to analyze how much a didactic object is relevant, in the contents, with respect to the course that must be realized. Furthermore, it is essential to consider the type of target the course is aimed at.

In fact, the re-use of a learning object in an e-learning course can succeed well if the material is easily understandable and can be interpreted by the users who will follow it. If the answer is negative it does not mean that the material must be discarded. Probably, it is necessary to work on it to adapt it to the context and make sure that it represents an added value for the students who will use it.