ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 6 - number 213 Wednesday 27 july 2022

mLearning: the importance of giving continuity to training

Learning on multiple devices can save organisations time and money and make life easier for employees and learners.

Any training course in 2022 must also be accessible from smartphones as workers access content from whatever device they have at their disposal when they need it: desktop computers in the office, PCs or tablets at home or in co-working spaces, and smartphones when moving from one location to another.
However, to date, many eLearning developers still prioritise the desktop when creating their courses and often the mobile version is only an adaptation of the graphics made at the end of the creation process.
Creating courses with the mobile version in mind is very different from creating courses just for the desktop. Learning from a smartphone is in fact a completely different learning experience from what you experience from a computer, sitting at your desk.
In this article, we will look at the concept of **mLearning** to understand what it is, what distinguishes it from eLearning and why it can play a key role in training.

Definitions

The 'e' in eLearning stands for 'electronic'. Thus, eLearning is a form of learning that is delivered via electronic devices such as computers and through channels such as the Internet.

The 'm' in mLearning, on the other hand, stands for 'mobile'. So mLearning is any form of knowledge that is delivered using portable devices such as a smartphone.
mLearning, or mobile learning, refers to 'learning on the move' that is typically consumed on smartphones/tablets and enables learning on all devices. Due to the changing dynamics of the workplace, training needs to be delivered in a way that meets the needs of remote, hybrid employees or learners and mLearning is a key ally of eLearning to help and facilitate the lives of learners.

How does mLearning differ from eLearning?

Different purpose

eLearning focuses on the acquisition of specific skills or in-depth information on a subject, such as yoga or quantum physics. mLearning aims to support a **continuous learning process** by providing h 24 short, bite-sized micro-lessons that allow information to be distributed quickly.

Different lesson lengths

eLearning lessons provide in-depth information and **therefore last 20 to 30 minutes**, whereas mLearning lessons are much shorter and rarely exceed **10 minutes**. They are suitable for employees who have little time but need quick access to important information.

Different output method

eLearning takes place via desktop and laptop computers, confining people to their desks. mLearning is delivered through mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets, allowing the learning process to continue regardless of where the learner is.

The contents

Generally when introducing mLearning in work and school environments, the contents are different from traditional eLearning. For example, since mLearning offers a seamless solution and content that can be found when and where one wants, videos will be more useful than real-time meetings.

The key difference: The purpose

When should one be chosen over the other?

eLearning is preferable when you have to teach specific or in-depth skills on a subject. You choose **mLearning** to support a continuous learning process where the learner needs quick access to information, usually when they are on the move.

If you need to teach someone how to operate a machine or have them memorise an organisation's security policies, choose eLearning. The keywords of eLearning are: **in-depth, formal and time-limited**.

If you want your learners to have a tool at their fingertips that gives them access to training material at any time, choose mLearning. Take advantage of mLearning to put training material in your students' or workers' pockets (in a fast-accessible form, of course) when they need it. The keywords of mLearning are: **immediate, easily accessible and usable when I need it**.

What is the significance of mLearning in training?

Here are some factors that have triggered the rapid adoption of mLearning:

- With the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the workplace, the need to offer eLearning solutions that can be used by students and workers working from home has become a necessity. The **difficulty in sharing content on different devices**, however, poses a problem in ensuring **continuity** of training.
- Most of us use smartphones for several times during the day.
- Increasingly, organisations are offering employees the option of choosing different devices. This practice is called BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and aims to facilitate engagement in learning by giving employees the opportunity to learn on the devices of their choice.
- Employees want **learning to be part of their workflow** in a constructive, easy and fast way by avoiding having to spend time searching for instructions.
- Learners prefer formats that engage them better. These include formats such as videos, animated videos, interactive videos or podcasts, which were not part of traditional eLearning but are an integral part of an mLearning strategy.

Benefits for workers and learners

From the perspective of workers and learners, mLearning offers the following advantages:

- Training on the move or while working from home.
- On-demand access, anytime and anywhere.
- Allows you to control when and how you consume content.
- Allows you to consume content at your own pace.
- Can be enjoyed according to personal needs rather than being imposed.

This offers the possibility of providing a form of learning that synchronises with the lifestyle of each individual student or worker.

Benefits for organisations

Here are the main advantages that mLearning offers organisations:

- Allows targeting remote workers and learners and a geographically distributed audience.

- Offers greater engagement.
- Improved completion rates.
- Ease of updating and reuse of content.
- Lower costs compared to face-to-face training.
- Saves time for workers and students.

What are the benefits of mLearning for corporate training?

Accessibility

mLearning is self-paced online training, available anytime, even on the go, through mobile devices such as tablets and smartphones. Ideally, the same training would also be available on desktop/laptop, albeit in different formats, allowing learners to learn on the device of their choice.

Practicality

Accessibility provides several practical advantages. If a worker needs to complete a task in a hurry but does not know how to do it, having the instructions to complete the task on a device they have at hand can save time.

Flexibility

mLearning offers enormous flexibility, even in terms of size, to allow learners to choose the device they want to learn on, when they want to learn and, most importantly, how quickly they can consume and assimilate the learning.

Involvement

Learners prefer formats that engage them as much as possible. For example, videos, animated videos, interactive videos, games, podcasts and infographics are formats that were not part of traditional eLearning but are an integral part of mLearning. In fact, mLearning is a continuous learning strategy, i.e. aimed at providing content over time, not just for the duration of a course. In this case, allowing employees to access training content through games or videos at any time of the day improves their engagement.

Why implement mLearning?

1. Simplify employees' work

Customised training can be offered in mLearning format to meet the different needs of employees, in particular:

- When there is a need to get information or instructions quickly at the point of need.
- To acquire new skills and put them into practice.
- To improve specific skills in line with corporate objectives.
- To develop personal skills such as leadership development.

2. Simplifying onboarding

Any corporate training initiative, especially the introduction and onboarding of employees, can benefit from an mLearning approach.

3. Use microlearning

The use of microlearning in combination with mLearning helps people to remember the information they have learned.

4. A versatile medium

Videos, podcasts, games are great tools to help corporate training and mLearning is the most logical way to distribute them to learners. You can exploit mLearning for learning based on new tools to **increase the impact of learning**.

5. Integrate gamification strategies

With the increasing adoption of gamification and microlearning in online training, smartphone training apps can leverage short, targeted forms of learning that can be presented in a game.

6. Encouraging continuous learning

eLearning makes training quick and easy by allowing people to switch from one learning device to another, from smartphone to tablet and then to laptop, and to continue learning anywhere, whether on the underground, in a café, at the airport or at home.

Although it may seem that eLearning and mLearning are two separate and competing forms of learning, this is not the case. As you may have guessed, eLearning and mLearning are more different than similar, so neither can fully assume the functions of the other. Rather, these two forms of learning are strengthened when they play together. ELearning and mLearning are thus two compatible learning strategies which, when implemented together, can lead to significant improvements in training. The provision of useful information from multiple devices to the work being done is a small change that, when incorporated into a training strategy, can save companies time, money and make life easier for employees.

Translated with www.DeepL.com/Translator