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# New trends in eLearning: user-generated content

***Companies are increasingly using user-generated content. What is it and why is it so important for online training?***

That users intervene in the generation of content is something that social networks have accustomed us to. That this is also happening more and more in **corporate training** is a trend to which the exponential increase in remote work also contributes. According to a study carried out by the ic4P Institute for corporate productivity, almost half of the American companies surveyed say they use user-generated content or want to start using it because of the shift in the remote workforce. What is user generated content and why is it so important for online training?

## What is user generated content in eLearning?

In eLearning, **user-generated content** is content produced by learners, not by the instructional designer, subject matter experts, or human resources. They can take on different formats, depending on the tool used:

- **Video, audio and images** that can be produced using a simple smartphone
- **Video tutorials or demonstrations**, produced with the screen recording features of an authoring tool or a simple PowerPoint
- **Comments, questions and answers** left on the forum of your LMS, learning management system, or in the company's internal knowledge base

## Why use user-generated content in online training?

The main benefit of user-generated content is the active participation of learners in their own learning process. The knowledge to be learned doesn't just come from above, according to pre-established training plans, but also comes from the drive to share experiences and knowledge with colleagues. All of this has significant advantages for training purposes in terms of:

- **Student engagement**: a video produced by an employee will be authentic, it will deal with real issues found in the workplace, so it will be more engaging
- **Social and informal learning**: sharing experiences means learning from others, comparing, exchanging best practices and improving, breaking the monotony of solitude dictated by remote work
- **Formal Learning**: If content is produced by employees who are subject matter experts, it can also make a significant contribution to achieving mandatory training objectives.

## How to use user-generated content within an LMS

Corresponding to all these benefits are two potential challenges of user-generated content: relevance and security. In both cases, it's up to the **training designer** to engage users in the right way, making sure that the content they produce is relevant and placed correctly within the LMS. In this regard, the trainer may decide to integrate user-generated content as part of:

- **Checks**: one of the users' tasks can be to produce **podcasts**, images, videos, infographics related to the training content, to be shared during the virtual classroom.
- **Exercises**: producing texts for a real conversation simulation could be a great tool to practice communication and sales skills
- **Additions** to training content: subject matter experts in a department can be encouraged to produce a portion of the training module

Due to their realistic, engaging and participatory nature, and complicit with the desire to share after this extended period of **remote work**, user-generated content is gaining momentum within corporate training. The impact on social, informal, and

formal learning can be significant if user-generated content is channeled by the trainer and integrated into the LMS, as long as it is relevant and secure.

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