ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 7 - number 230 Wednesday 18 January 2023

Trends that will influence LMS platforms

LMSs appeared during the pandemic and have been revolutionising education ever since. But how are they evolving?

In the world of eLearning, LMSs, or Learning Management Systems, have become indispensable tools. These tools, called 'learning management systems' in Italian, allow the entire training process to be managed via software platforms, i.e., more simply, from a computer.

We have already covered this topic in the past in an article explaining in detail **what LMSs are**. A year and a half has passed since that article and this technology has developed a lot. Hundreds of new companies have launched into this field and existing companies already active in the field of training are investing significant capital in this area. This is evidenced by the size of the **LMS market, which was valued at $15.1 billion in 2022 and is expected to reach $76.18 billion by 2030, with a growth of 17.04% from 2023 to 2030**. In this article we explore how LMS platforms are transforming by looking at the trends that are having the biggest impact on this technology.

What are they and why are they so popular?

For those who are not particularly well versed in the subject, let's take a brief look at what LMSs are. Learning management systems, or LMSs, are software platforms that allow educators to manage, deliver and monitor training. They are mostly used in the corporate environment to deliver online courses and monitor employee progress or to provide compliance or customer training. However, the world of public education, i.e. primary and secondary schools and universities are also starting to adopt these tools.

They like LMSs because they are easier for both the trainer and the student than the traditional training model. Some of the most appreciated advantages of these platforms are:

- Managing training plans and courses more easily and quickly
- Managing course content more dynamically
- Monitoring student usage
- Assign specific content
- Keep track of progress
- Update content
- Create progress reports
- Discussing and answering students' questions
- Browse the course catalogue
- Enrolling and attending courses

Although at first sight these changes may not seem particularly significant, they have a great impact on the use of training. The result is that **training becomes simpler, more accessible, faster and cheaper**. The benefits of using an LMS are not limited to this, they include improved learning outcomes, increased efficiency and productivity.

The popularity of LMSs is demonstrated by the interest they manage to attract. Forbes, one of the most famous business magazines in the world, dedicates an observation portal to the best LMS platforms around. They identified the main factors that users (students and teachers) take into consideration when using these tools and, based on these, monitor the market to select the best ones.

According to Forbes, when choosing an LMS, the main concern should be the budget. After that, one must focus on the needs of the users who will use the software. This includes the platforms' ease of use, available functions, customer support options and scalability:

- **Ease of use**: The best LMS platforms are easy to use and must be intuitive. They are interactive platforms, where users have to perform many different actions at the same time, so intuitiveness is a key prerogative.
- **Features**: The best LMS platforms offer a robust feature set that meets a broad spectrum of needs, from companies and educational institutions to employees and students.
- **Customer support**: The best LMS platforms offer excellent customer support. The reason for this is twofold: on the one hand, customisation of certain platform functionalities is often required, and on the other hand, to get help when needed. Another important feature these platforms must have is security. it is important to check for security factors such as two-factor authentication (2FA) or multi-factor authentication (MFA), documentation showing frequent security updates and patches, intrusion detection, user activity monitoring, data encryption and privacy protection.
- **Pricing**: The best LMS platforms are affordable and offer a variety of pricing options to suit different budgets. The cost of an LMS varies depending on the features and functionality required. Generally, LMS platforms are priced per user/month, with discounts for larger organisations. Some LMS platforms also offer free versions with limited functionality.
- **Scalability**: The best LMS platforms are scalable, so you can grow the learning programme or the number of users.

Trends influencing the adoption and use of LMSs

All sectors have evolved over the years and the same trend can be observed in the LMS sector, especially at a time of great enthusiasm and collective interest in the subject of eLearning. New investments in this field are indeed leading to new technologies and delivery methods that lead to better learning outcomes. Below we see the main trends that will influence the future of LMS platforms.

1. The growth of AI-powered learning management systems

Developments in artificial intelligence are among the most important trends to watch in the world of LMSs. In the coming years, artificial intelligence will be so widespread in LMSs that it will become something we will no longer notice. Based on the developments of LMS platforms on the market, it can be assumed that artificial intelligence will be used to:

- Automate processes
- Improve the quality of learning
- Reduce costs
- Learning analytics, measurement and analysis of learning outcomes

2. The spread of Gamification

Gamification consists of introducing game elements such as leaderboards, point systems and well-defined objectives into everyday learning and training situations.

By making training more fun and engaging, the company and employees benefit, such as:

- Improved retention rates
- Increased employee trust
- Increased team involvement and collaboration
- Increased enthusiasm for new learning opportunities

Most LMS platforms already offer several learning-by-play options and those that do not have them are rushing to include these features. Not only that, platforms continue to invest in making these games more and more engaging and interactive.

3. Microlearning

According to a Microsoft study, the average attention span is now eight seconds. This is even shorter than that of a goldfish, which reaches nine seconds.

Microlearning involves students receiving information in small, easily digestible chunks and represents another trend in the future of learning management systems. This type of learning is mainly conveyed by devices we carry around with us all the

time such as smartphones rather than on computers.

Learning management statistics show that microlearning is the ideal solution for today's short attention spans, allowing for better engagement, absorption and retention of information. When you think about it, it is not much different from adapting traditional training to the type of content preferred by today's generation and found on popular social media.

4. Personalising the eLearning experience

Personalisation consists of adapting content to the learner's characteristics and needs.

Today, it is possible to personalise training through a number of methods, the main ones being:

- **Artificial intelligence and machine learning**

Machine learning algorithms use data on learners' behaviour and goals to make recommendations on the next actions to take in the learning process. Recommendations suggested by artificial intelligence are based on previous actions taken by learners.

- **Recommendation engines**

A recommendation engine uses data on learners' past behaviour to suggest relevant content. In this way, personalised suggestions can be obtained from a learning management system.

5. Preference for mobile learning

Organisations, from companies to educational institutions, prefer mobile learning applications to desktop training solutions. In fact, mobile devices are the most popular way to access the Internet and this trend is growing exponentially. Suffice it to say that **85% of the US population now owns a smartphone**, up from 35% in 2011. And the number continues to grow as more and more people adopt smartphones and tablets as their primary computing devices. Mobile eLearning applications are an excellent way to deliver content on these devices. In fact, LMS platforms increasingly incorporate functionality that can be used from both desktop and mobile devices. This facilitates the inclusion of gamification elements in their design, making them more interactive, engaging and fun for learners and better than purely static web pages on small screens with poor resolution.

Challenges for LMS platforms

There are two obstacles that LMS platforms will have to deal with in the not too distant future, these issues are:

- **Virtual Reality**

A challenge in recent years for LMSs is the support and tracking of virtual reality and augmented reality content. The difficulty in keeping track on LMS platforms of the learning experience undertaken by the user by means of these technologies is one of the most concrete difficulties. For companies that invest so much in research and development in this area, this is one of the biggest challenges, especially considering the spread and popularity of virtual reality as a tool to enhance the learning experience.

- **Diffusion**

The second problem is relative in the sense that the popularity of these platforms and the size of the market indicate that they are spreading in most educational environments. At the same time, there are still limitations for LMSs that restrict their diffusion:

- **Price**

The cost of LMS platforms is still quite high, and is probably an obstacle for some public institutions and especially for poorer countries. However, given the advances in LMS technologies, costs are expected to come down in the not too distant future.

- **Teaching physical skills**

Some physical skills have to be taught in person and online training or testing is not sufficient. Although more advanced technologies such as virtual or augmented reality can solve some problems, as we have seen, existing technologies do not yet allow us to incorporate these technologies into LMS platforms.

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