ELEARNINGNEWS ARTICLE

Year 3 - number 76 Wednesday 10 july 2019

What features must a learning management system (LMS) include?

An LMS is used by those who create, manage and follow online courses. How do you choose the best platform for all these actors to agree?

A Learning Management System, LMS, is a platform with which online courses are created, managed and delivered. It is the most important tool that connects all the figures involved in eLearning: who creates the course, who manages the platform and who benefits from the course. Sometimes, the person who creates and manages the platform is the same figure and can be an e-learning professional or a company, while those who use the courses are a set of figures within the company (safety managers, employees, managers ...). Given this multiplicity of actors that revolve around an online course, the choice of an LMS is not so obvious because it must take into consideration both the needs of the offer and those of the demand for online courses. How to choose an LMS that can be used at the same time by those who create, who manages and who uses the courses? Simple, just ask yourself the right questions for each type of figure involved. To simplify, we divide the actors involved into 3 groups: instructional designers, companies, employees.

Essential feature of an LMS for an instructional designer

The figure of the instructional designer, or rather the professional who deals with the design of an online course, goes beyond the figure of the trainer. An instructional designer is the head of a multimedia project, which deals with using all the technical and human resources available to achieve the objectives of the course within the established times. The main features of an LMS for an instructional designer are those that allow collaboration with different professionals and with customers:

- **SCORM system**: allows the LMS to talk to any other LMS. Thanks to it, an instructional designer can build and deliver the course to various client companies that use different but compatible LMSs.
- **Sequential adaptation**: to have more control over the learning status of the modules of the online course, the instructional designers opt for LMS that give the possibility to set the release of subsequent contents only at the end of some modules.
- **Built-in editor**: the editor allows the instructional designer to freely choose which format to present the contents of an online course among texts, videos, audios, simulations, games. If the editor is already present in the LMS there will be no need to buy one separately and it will be enough to load your own material in the platform to create the course.

Basic elements of an LMS for companies

Companies are the main customers of online courses but often also perform LMS platform administration functions. Companies invest in an LMS not only to comply with legal obligations regarding security through online training, but also when they decide to invest in continuous training as part of their digital transformation process. To play this strategic role a company LMS should focus on:

- **Certifications**: a system for checking the expiry of the certifications imposed by law will allow to keep an eye on the expirations and renewals of the certifications, as well as the names of the employees with expiring certifications;
- **Data analysis**: an analytical system for processing learning data can be used to make training more efficient by improving the quality of learning and, consequently, the work performance of its employees.

The ideal LMS for employees

Last but not least, there are the employees who are the end users of the online course and also the key to its success. If employees are involved and learn effectively online training will be successful: not only for those who designed the course, but

also for the company that commissioned it and will find themselves with strengthened skills. To involve employees as much as possible, an LMS must be:

- Intuitive and easy to use;
- Suitable for use in different devices, especially mobile;
- Open to major eLearning innovations (from gamification to microlearning ...).

The choice of an LMS is not so obvious because this platform must satisfy at the same time those who create courses, those who administer them and those who use them. If an LMS is "able to talk with other LMS", it has a latest generation editor, data management tools and attention to the latest trends in eLearning, then it has all it takes to offer a successful training experience .