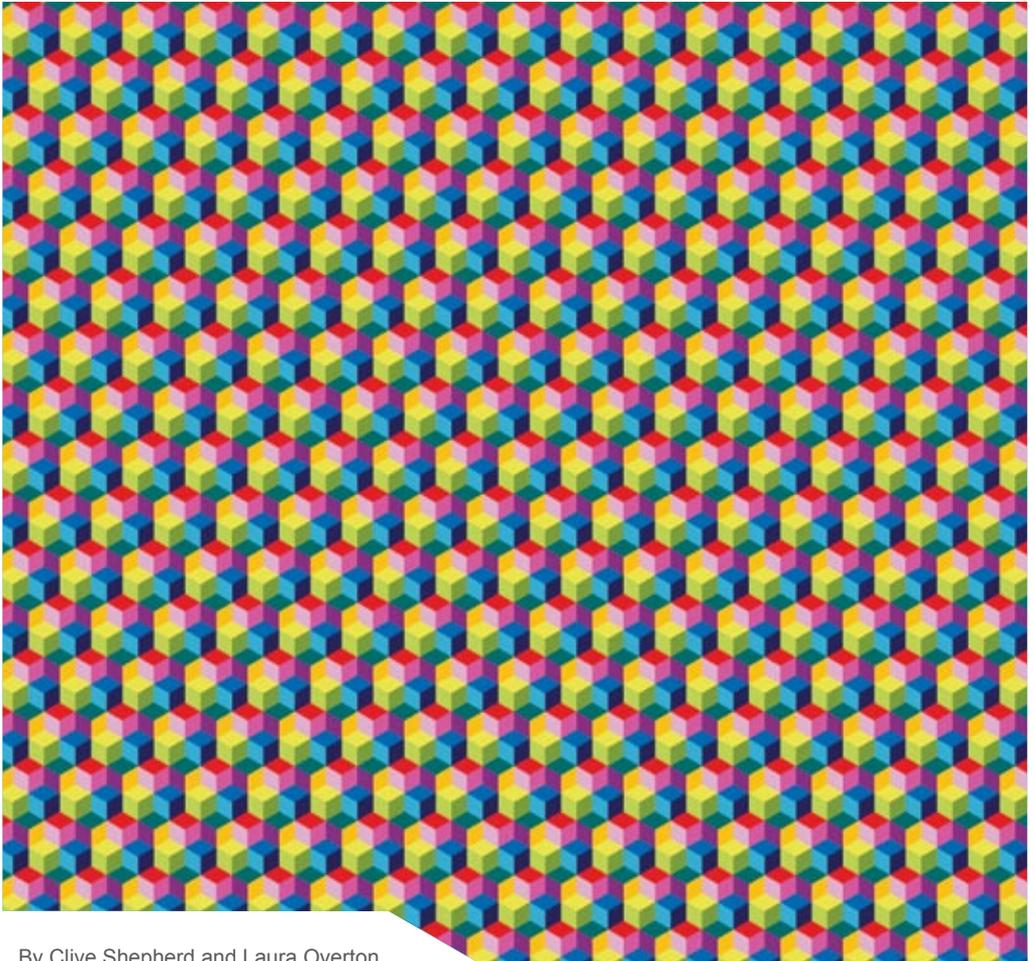# What every learning & development professional needs to know about e-learning

By Clive Shepherd and Laura Overton

The Sunday Times described the business transformation at Cable & Wireless as one of the biggest turnarounds attempted in British business in the last 50 years.

"Learning technologies in our organisation have evolved over the years to become a critical, integrated component of the overall business transformation strategy. This is next generation learning at work and it's delivering results!"

Mike Booth,
Learning Technologies Manager,
Cable & Wireless

TOWARDS MATURITY

CIPD Learning & Development Survey 2009:

74%

of organisations surveyed are using e-learning. Of these, 60% have increased their use in the past two years.

CEGOS Survey, 2009:
For

89%

of employees across Europe, blended learning is living up to their expectations 'well' or 'very well'.

LMMatters/Training Zone Survey, June 09:

47%

of respondents who have seen their budget significantly reduced, have increased the use of e-learning.

Annual growth rate of 16.3%

Ambient Insight, April 09: Predicts a compound annual growth rate of 16.3% from 2008 to 2013 for learning technology products and services.

Change and opportunity

Surprising as it may seem, most educational and training methods are relatively timeless. Most of the familiar options, whether that's providing instruction, leading discussions, delivering case studies, running role plays and simulations, coaching, apprenticeships and so on, have been practised for hundreds, if not thousands of years. True, we do make different choices from the available methods, as we learn more about learning (we're less likely to deliver lectures, we're more likely to engage learners in work-based projects), but the options stay pretty consistent.

Learning media options, on the other hand, have been growing exponentially. Put yourself in the shoes of a trainer, just thirty years ago. You'd have felt lucky to have such a plethora of media choices available to you - including blackboards, flip charts, film and video, slides, books and posters. You'd have been familiar with all these media, because in those days, no trainer would have regarded any of these as particularly specialised - they were the basic tools of the job.

But with the arrival of PCs, mobile devices and in particular the internet, the media options available have increased so dramatically that it has been hard for the trainer to keep up. As a result, many of the tasks associated with the use of technology for learning have been left to specialists, and many trainers have become disengaged, perhaps even alienated from technology.

Technology has already transformed our personal and business lives, but its impact on learning and development has been patchy. Yes, e-learning has grown steadily, but only a few of its possibilities have been exploited and far too few trainers feel they have any role to play in its usage. The purpose of this booklet is to try and remedy this situation, to help you to understand just how extraordinary the opportunities are for improving the impact, accessibility, flexibility, timeliness, cost-effectiveness and environmental friendliness of our learning and development interventions; oh, and most importantly of all, to show how you can play a vital role in bringing this all about.

E-learning is a new name for an old idea. For as long as we have had computers, we've been trying to find ways to use all that speed and power to try and bring efficiencies to the worlds of education and training. Some of these initiatives have been extremely successful, although in the early days they were severely hampered by high hardware and software costs, a lack of IT skills amongst teachers and learners, and the limitations imposed by the fact that computers were typically stand-alone devices, unable to talk to each other.

All that has changed, and dramatically. Computers, in their various forms – as PCs, laptops, mobile phones and other handheld devices, games consoles, TV set-top boxes, DVD players and much more – are so inexpensive as to be available to almost anybody who wants one. At the same time computer literacy has grown significantly, particularly amongst the young, and the internet now allows any computer to be connected to billions of others around the world at high speed.

While early computer-assisted learning was limited to the delivery of self-paced lessons to individual learners, increased connectivity means e-learning now has a much broader scope. While it's still extremely useful to be able to connect learners to relevant learning content, perhaps the greatest benefits come from the connections that can be made between learners and trainers, and between learners and their colleagues. Think about the way your own use of the internet has changed over the last ten years: chances are that you now spend as much time interacting with other users, through technologies such as email, social networking and instant messaging, as you do hunting down information or making transactions. Learning is no different, except perhaps in that communication is even more important to its success.

Both the power of modern computers and the increased availability of high speed broadband connectivity have also helped to move e-learning on from its early, text-heavy and relatively static beginnings. Expect to see increasing use of 3D graphics to create immersive and life-like simulations, as well as rich and engaging audio, video and animations. And you won't be limited to sitting at your desk to take advantage of all these possibilities - mobile devices such as smart phones, PDAs and iPods allow you to access reference material and engage in learning activities wherever you are.

Self-paced content

For many trainers, e-learning is synonymous with self-study; the learner working on their own through lessons delivered on a computer monitor. While this only represents a very narrow view of what e-learning can be, there's no doubt that, for many organisations, self-paced e-learning is an attractive option. Employers like the flexibility that this approach provides, the speed with which large numbers can be trained, and the cost-savings that can be made. Employees benefit too by being able to work at their own pace, in small chunks and on a just-in-time basis.

Self-paced learning has an important role to play, but can be over-used. While it's clearly useful when your goal is to impart knowledge, often a blended approach works better, combining a number of different approaches. And learners are not always comfortable working without any support, particularly when the course is longer or more complex, so trainers may have an important role to play in providing this backup service.

New 'rapid development' tools and processes mean that trainers can increasingly develop effective self-paced content for themselves. Obviously not every trainer will enjoy this sort of work, but if you're the sort who relishes putting together PowerPoint slides and handouts, then you're likely to be at home designing online materials.

More ambitious content that involves more complex interactivity and rich multimedia is likely to be designed and developed by specialists, whether in-house or externally. In the case, trainers still play an important role in providing subject-matter expertise, contributing to the design, liaising with the specialists and helping to implement and support the materials.

Businesses benefit from self-paced content because:

- learning materials can be made available to employees wherever they are and at the times that suit them best;
- large numbers of employees can be trained very quickly and consistently;
- assuming there are sufficient numbers to cover the expense of developing the materials, costs per employee can be very low.

Self-paced content is:

- at its best when clear and to the point, relevant to the job, highly interactive and well supported by relevant images and multimedia;
- best avoided when the subject is unsuited to self-study, it's long and laborious, text-heavy and short on meaningful, challenging interactivity.

Self-paced content in action in the Police

You don't have to shy away from self-paced learning just because the subject is difficult to handle. The National Centre of Applied Learning Technologies (NCALT) design learning for over 200,000 police staff in the UK and won a gold E-Learning Award in the 'Excellence in the Production of Learning Content' category for their course 'Sudden Death'.

In a survey of 43 forces, dealing with an incident involving sudden death was one of the areas in which staff felt most apprehensive. Traditionally taught in the classroom, the procedural side was handled with consistency and clarity, but it was recognised that the 'emotional intelligence' aspects of handling a sudden death varied depending on the tutor.

Keen to avoid developing a course that was overwhelmingly dark in mood, NCALT used a wide variety of techniques, including animated sequences, case studies and scenarios. In a typical scenario, the learner attends the early stages of a potential investigation and has to make decisions on how to handle the case.

At each step of the process, a world authority on working with bereaved families offers advice through a series of video interviews, sharing his considerable reservoir of experience.

One learner commented: *"I didn't think that you could cover such an emotive subject as dealing with bereaved families using online learning. However, I found that the NCALT package is an excellent tool for letting you deal with this difficult subject in a safe environment."*

Find out more

If you want additional information about self-paced learning at NCALT or are looking for hints and tips from others, including how to :

- improve productivity in a distributor network (Toyota Motor Europe);
- support induction training (SAB Miller);
- enable business turnaround (Cable & Wireless);
- support an IT rollout (Kirklees Council);
- address health and safety (Royal Shakespeare Company)

… then go to www.towardsmaturity.org/tag/first-steps-self-paced-learning

FACT: Easy-to-use tools that help you to develop self-paced content as a quick response to business needs are growing fastest – the use of rapid development tools grew 43% in the last two years, while podcasting was up 195%. Towards Maturity 2009 Benchmarking Report

Live online sessions

Sometimes it seems that web conferencing is one of the best kept secrets in learning and development, at least as far as the UK is concerned; whereas in the USA, at least 10% of all formal training is delivered this way. Web conferencing (often referred to as a 'virtual classroom' when it's used for education and training) makes it possible to run live group sessions online, incorporating voice, slides and text chat, as well as - depending on the software used and the available bandwidth - the sharing of desktops and applications, electronic whiteboards, break-out rooms and communication through webcam video. Quite a package, and capable of being used to run any sort of event from one-to-one sessions to small group workshops to seminars involving tens, if not hundreds of users (often called 'webinars').

Your organisation may already subscribe to a web conferencing service for business meetings. If not, it's easy to set up an account on a pay-as-you-go basis or an annual contract. Why would you want to do this? Well, web conferencing makes it possible for you to run short sessions at a distance, without participants needing to travel. And the sessions can be recorded for the benefit of those not able to attend. Web conferencing can be used to increase the range of training that you offer or as a substitute for face-to-face events that are uneconomic.

If you're a classroom trainer, you won't find it difficult to transfer your skills to working online, although you'll probably benefit from a little training or coaching. You may find the experience of training online a bit strange at first, but you should be able to adapt many of your existing classroom methods to the virtual classroom.

Businesses benefit from live online learning because:

- You can still carry out live training, but without the travel costs, wasted time and environmental damage;
- live training can be provided in much shorter chunks than would be practical with typical classroom events;
- sessions can be recorded for the benefit of anyone who misses the live session.

A live online session is:

- **at its best** when sessions are relatively short (typically less than an hour), well supported by visuals and highly interactive;
- **best avoided** when endless PowerPoint, monotone speakers, no participation.

Live online training in action in the dental profession

The pace of change and innovation in dentistry is high and increasing. As a result, dentists are required to complete a number of verifiable hours of Continual Professional Development (CPD) each year. However, it is difficult and costly for dentists to leave their busy practices to attend conferences and courses.

Whilst high quality, self-paced learning helps to address some of these needs, the opportunity to meet other learners is still important, particularly as a large proportion of dentists work on their own or in small groups. So Dental Channel brings the benefits of group study directly to the dentist's computer through a programme of live online conferences and lectures that can be verified for CPD.

Dental professionals log onto live online sessions which provide an opportunity to hear experts first hand, see close-ups of detailed images, ask questions and interact with other learners. Dentists participate from the practice during the day or at home in the evenings, joining with staff from other practices all over the UK. If they miss a session, they can always catch up later as each session is recorded for future reference. The sessions are now also embedded within the delivery of wider qualifications.

As one user explains, *"The fact that you can learn from home but have contact with your peers and lecturers at that time is really convenient - it seems more personal than attending a lecture."* According to Andrew Gould at the Dental Channel, *''Live online sessions have helped us to improve the quality of the CPD that we can offer to dental professionals, but it has resulted in significant efficiencies too – when we consider time and cost savings, individuals are able to address their needs at 25% of the cost of traditional methods."*

Find out more

If you want additional information about live online sessions at Dental Channel, or are looking for hints and tips from others, including how to:

- support a global management programme (Plan, the international aid agency which supports children in developing countries);
- deliver efficiency savings (Devonshire County Council)

… then go to www.towardsmaturity.org/tag/first-steps-live-online-sessions

FACT: Live online training has grown by 23% in the past two years. Towards Maturity 2009 Benchmarking Report

Online distance learning

Many of you will have undertaken a course of part-time study, perhaps working towards a professional certification or an academic qualification, or maybe just to top-up your skills in a particular area. If you have undertaken this study recently, with a distance learning provider, you'll probably have seen how increasing use is being made of the internet to facilitate both collaboration between learners and the sharing of resources. The days of the old correspondence course are long gone; now you are more likely to be listening to podcasts and watching online videos, working on assignments with your fellow learners, and discussing issues related to the course in an online forum.

Now enterprising organisations are applying these techniques to internal courses, particularly those that include a wide range of activities and run over many months. Here the techniques of distance learning are used to keep the group in touch and working together between any formal events, and to help embed any new learning in the workplace. Often distance learning is combined with face-to-face activities to create innovative blends that bring out the best in each medium while minimising cost.

If you design longer and more complex courses in your organisation, then you'll want to know how to integrate online methods into the mix. And if your specialisation is more in the delivery of these courses, then you'll find exciting new challenges in facilitating, moderating and supporting online distance learning.

The business benefits from online distance learning because:

- courses can be more readily integrated into working life - learning becomes an ongoing process rather than an event;
- distance learning can be as engaging and collaborative as face-to-face sessions.

Online distance learning is:

- **at its best** when it mixes self-paced and live activities, encourages group collaboration, runs to a strict schedule, is well facilitated;
- **best avoided** when mainly self-study, the materials are dull, there is little contact with the facilitator.

*FACT: During 2007/8 the Open University, one of the pioneers in the use of technology to support distance learning, made academic awards to a total of 29,756 students!

Online distance learning in action at Pfizer

The MSc in Pharmaceutical Medicine was developed for physicians and non-medical professionals in the pharmaceutical and health care industries wishing to move into leadership positions by continuing their professional development. Studying for a masters degree for any student is a huge commitment, and for those in employment having to attend on-site classes and tutorials, places additional pressure on busy people. In fact 78% of those surveyed by Pfizer claimed that they had been reluctant to further their education because of the time needed to travel to class.

By working with Hibernia College, students at Pfizer can choose from a variety of interactive, self-paced study patterns and can also take advantage of an extensive online reference library. Participants can enjoy the flexibility and accessibility of online, recorded lectures in addition to live online tutorials, where interaction with fellow students and direct contact with course faculty occurs. Through discussion forums and email, students can be part of an international student community regardless of location, time or ability to travel.

The business benefits to Pfizer are evident. Within Pfizer, selection for enrolment on this programme is viewed by employees as a very definite reward.

76% of current students state that they feel valued by their company, suggesting that they will feel encouraged to remain with an employer that has invested in them.

"At Pfizer we use next generation learning tools to engage our global colleagues and develop key talent. Hibernia College's online MSc in Pharmaceutical Medicine helps us build the knowledge, technical skills and leadership capabilities of Pfizer's employees, which are very much required to be competitive in a rapidly changing and challenging marketplace," explains Soeren Rasmussen, Senior Director, Department of the Chief Medical Officer, Pfizer.

Find out more

If you want additional information about the online distance learning MSc at Pfizer or are looking for hints and tips from others, including:

- the Royal College of Radiologists;
- the Coca-Cola virtual leadership programme;

… then go to www.towardsmaturity.org/tag/first-steps-online-distance-learning

Knowledge sharing

If you're a regular internet user then you're probably well aware of the wide range of tools now available to help us share information, network and collaborate online. You may well be a member of a social networking site such as Facebook or LinkedIn; perhaps you share videos, photos or presentations through sites such as YouTube, Flickr and Slideshare; maybe you have your own blog (an online journal) or read the blogs of others; at very least you're likely to be a regular visitor to the Wikipedia, the encyclopaedia created by its own readers.

All of these tools can be categorised by the fact that they are informal, social and led by users rather than website publishers. They are so different from old-style websites that they're commonly referred to as Web 2.0. You might wonder what relevance this has to learning and development in the workplace, but employers are increasingly using these tools (or similar ones that are designed for use by enterprises) to stimulate knowledge sharing. Similar tools are also finding themselves into learning management systems so they can be employed directly within blended learning interventions.

As a trainer, it's not appropriate for you to try and direct or control the use of Web 2.0 tools in your organisation, but you might be able to assist in ensuring the right tools are chosen, sensible policies put in place for their use, and employees provided with all the support they need in capitalizing on the opportunities that these tools provide. One of the best ways to get started is to become an active user of Web 2.0 tools yourself. You'll soon get to understand just how valuable these can be in supporting informal learning within organisations.

Businesses benefit from knowledge sharing because:

- employees can take an increasingly active role in their own learning and development
- readily-available expertise means less wasted time and duplication of effort.

Knowledge sharing using Web 2.0 tools is:

- at its best when lightly regulated, well supported, integrated into the workflow;
- best avoided when used as another management mouthpiece, strictly censored, used as a gimmick.

TIP: Create practical guidelines for staff to publish content, that reference existing policies around internal company communication.

Knowledge sharing in action at BT

In response to a staff survey which found that 78% of employees preferred to learn from their peers, BT created a new learning opportunity to augment traditional routes of structured, online and face-to-face learning.

Dare2Share is an internal YouTube-style platform which allows employees to create and upload short learning nuggets to share with their colleagues. BT employees learn from each other by rapidly capturing and spreading learning throughout the organisation. This can take the form of videos, podcasts, discussion threads, blogs, news feeds and other traditional knowledge assets such as documents, courses and portals.

Dare2Share ensures that content can be quickly located and used. The system not only allows staff to comment on content, but also to discover and contact the experts behind it. As a result learning is immediate, relevant and presented in a real-work context.

Since its introduction, BT has found that the potential for subject categories and styles was limitless, ranging from product overviews, leadership thoughts and strategies, hints and tips, lessons learned and project overviews.

Participants created practical demonstrations, slideshows with voiceovers, system simulations, interviews, stories and lectures. While this type of information was already being shared within the business, Dare2Share has ensured that the process was both transparent and subject to suitable guidelines.

"Not only do employees love the new approach, but the business case shows an exceptional financial benefit to BT Group, and Dare2Share will help us address our unmet learning and development needs. I strongly believe Dare2Share will contribute to the company's workforce transformation agenda and becoming the industry leader in customer service, which are the ultimate goals," says Peter Butler, Director of Learning, BT PLC.

Find out more

If you want additional information about knowledge sharing at BT or are looking for hints and tips from others, including:

- how BAE Systems transformed global learning;
- introducing the Performance Zone at Bupa;
- 'Building Business Performance with Social Media' from Jane Hart;

… then go to www.towardsmaturity.org/tag/first-steps-knowledge-sharing

Simulations and virtual worlds

Some skills can only be practised in the real world and without a computer in sight. Other skills are much better rehearsed in the security of a virtual world, because that way there's no risk to reputation, bank balance, health and safety. Would you rather have the airline pilot who takes you on holiday practise on a simulator or in a real plane with passengers? The same goes for surgeons, lorry drivers, emergency workers, operators at nuclear power plants and those who work on oil rigs in the North Sea. They all perform tasks which entail high risks; it makes complete sense that they hone their skills and experience the wide range of situations that could occur in the real world within the safety of one that is virtual.

Simulations allow people to learn from their mistakes without risk to life and limb and without embarrassment. They are at their most glamorous when they take place in highly-realistic 3D worlds, involve fast action and a hint of danger; but simulations can as easily be found on humble spreadsheets (for a financial simulation, say) or involve tasks no more dangerous than a sales interview. Simulations can be created from toolkits but most commonly require a great deal of specialist expertise. Unless you are one of these specialists, your role is more likely to be in spotting the opportunity, defining the processes that the simulation needs to model, and helping to support implementation.

Another area of increasing potential is the use of multi-player virtual worlds, which allow a number of participants to interact together online in a 3D environment. A good example is Second Life, a virtual world in which any internet user can hang out, explore and meet friends. From a learning and development perspective, the real fun comes when you develop a 3D model to represent some aspect of your workplace (say a retail store) and then have learners role play situations that arise. The environment will be much more realistic than you could achieve in a classroom and none of the participants actually has to be on site. Your job remains the same as if the role play really was in a classroom.

Businesses benefit from simulations and virtual worlds because:

- critical skills can be honed without risk to the organisation or the employee;
- vital resources (such as expensive equipment like aircraft) don't have to be tied up for training;
- training can be more authentic and powerful.

Simulations and virtual worlds are:

- **at their best** when they behave like the real world does, look like the real world too, allow for repeated practice, help learners to learn from their mistakes;
- **best avoided** when used as another way of conveying knowledge, used to assess performance, behave unconvincingly, poorly supported.

3D virtual Worlds in action at ACS

ACS is a global outsourcing and services company who have historically made extensive use of learning strategies and technologies to address fast changing business needs. However they wanted to use 3D virtual worlds to prototype a learning environment that would incorporate benefits of collaboration tools and a mix of online/virtual delivery within an overall immersive and engaging experience, allowing them to address ongoing business needs with innovation and efficiency.

They used 3D virtual world technology solutions to create an ACS-branded training room that was effective for both presenting training content and having group discussions. Within the facility, learning was delivered live to participants via a combination of PowerPoint, access to web content, user profiles, and a social network, and the opportunity for participants to share their own applications as well. ACS also created integrations to a poll, a survey and an LMS to demonstrate tracking of trainee's satisfaction with the virtual training experience and course performance. Trainees also got to role play their new skills in sessions that were recorded and replayed so the instructor could critique their performance.

The sessions covering subjects such as engagement management, negotiations, and account leadership, were delivered live and included break-out discussion groups as part of the curriculum.

Lyn Maize , Director of Marketing, ACS Learning Services says that *"We believe that virtual worlds allow progressive companies the ability to explore simulated learning experiences in a safe environment. This approach has allowed us to conduct cost-effective yet highly engaging training meetings across the globe without incurring the disruption and cost of travel."*

Find out more

If you want additional information about serious games at Volvo or are looking for hints and tips from others, including:

- how simulation helps support business studies;
- the use of gaming in the military;

… then go to www.towardsmaturity.org/tag/first-steps-simulations-and-virtual-worlds

FACT: Users of Second Life spent nearly 400m hours in the virtual world in 2008.

Computers in the classroom

We end this tour of the e-learning world in familiar territory - the classroom. If you're an IT trainer, you'll need no convincing of the usefulness of computers in the classroom - after all, that's how your participants get to practise. If you're in the business of communicating information, you may use PowerPoint as a visual aid. As a soft skills trainer you may have no use for computers at all. Of course every situation is different, but the opportunities for using computers are multiplying all the time and we have yet to really take advantage.

Consider the possibilities. You could demonstrate a skill by showing a video, clarify a complex process using an animation, play background music, explore a piece of equipment using a 3D model, engage learners with a quiz game, take a tour around a website, solicit and collate opinions with an online survey. All you need is a laptop, a projector and now and again an internet connection.

Businesses benefit from computers in the classroom because:

- classroom training can be made more engaging and powerful;
- valuable digital assets such as videos and 3D models can be exploited more widely.

Computers in the classroom are:

- at their best when they assist the learning process, do a more effective job than traditional tools, are used in moderation;
- best avoided when they are used to deliver endless bullet point slides, get in the way of group collaboration, act as a shield for the trainer.

> **TIP:** Planning to introduce new learning technologies such as virtual worlds or informal knowledge sharing? Try them out in the classroom first to build confidence and awareness.

Computers in the classroom in the Royal Navy

Engineering training for modern apprentices in the Royal Navy is a time-consuming affair – it is critical that apprentices have a strong understanding of engineering theory before moving onto potentially hazardous practical exercises in preparation for the challenging conditions at sea. The problem was how to compress the time spent in theoretical and safety training, while increasing practical, hands-on experience?

The Royal Naval School of Marine Engineering introduced The Buzzing Hub, an e-learning website covering online theory about all a ship's systems. Trainees study in the e-learning area, supported by instructors; then e-assessments are used to check understanding, before they move next door to the practice area. The same instructors operate in both areas; they ensure learners have the knowledge they need before letting them loose on electrical systems or gas turbines and diesel engines. The instructors are practical engineers who like using the e-learning in the classroom with learners; they find it easier to help learners catch up and support those who get ahead. The pre-testing requirement increases the instructors' confidence that trainees are safe in the workshop and machinery area.

The process has resulted in a shorter course, allowing trainees to spend more time in practical and leadership activities without compromising on standards. Commanding officers believe that those completing the course can now make a valuable contribution to operational capability from the moment they step on board.

"This approach to using learning technologies in our core programmes has helped us to improve the quality of the service that we can offer to both learners and to our organisation. We have found that not only has competence increased but by also concentrating on character, leadership and management training, confidence has also improved. As an added bonus we have also seen efficiency improvements in the process, such as a shorter course achieving better competence earlier and making trainees better prepared for sea. This has had a significant positive effect on the drop out rate increasing the efficiency of training even more." Commander Andy Cree

Find out more

If you want additional information about how the Royal Navy use computers in the classroom or are looking for hints and tips from others, including:

- how the BBC captured best practice online & embedded it into leadership training

… then go to www.towardsmaturity.org/tag/first-steps-computers-classroom

So what's the big deal?

Technology now provides so many opportunities for learning and development that it is no longer viable for trainers to keep their distance, leaving new media to the geeks and the digital natives (that's those brought up in the land of computers, as opposed to most of us, who've immigrated there). The pace of change is so fast that those who keep their distance stand to be marginalised on a permanent basis. The new learning technologies provide opportunities for every trainer to play an active role, whether that's as an online tutor, facilitator or moderator, or as a content designer or developer. All that's needed is a willingness to get engaged, adapt and apply. Without the involvement of those who really understand adult learning and how it applies to their workplace, e-learning could easily be applied inappropriately,

as it has been on occasions in the past. With every trainer engaged, new media options can be properly integrated with existing approaches in the form of blended solutions that deliver results effectively and efficiently.

In some ways e-learning is no big deal, it's just a new channel for learning materials to be made available to learners, and for learners to communicate with peers and with trainers. But it would be a mistake to play down the consequences of this new channel, because it's capable of delivering learning interventions to more people, more quickly, more cheaply and more flexibly than any technology we've encountered before. In 2009, when we face greater challenges at work than we have in a generation, e-learning is a very big deal indeed.

Find out more

You can meet the authors online or in person at learning events around the country. They are also happy to deliver workshops to your team live and in-person! Their passion is to motivate learning & development teams to participate fully in the future use of learning technologies.

If you would like to keep in touch with the authors' work in this area or find out how you can raise the awareness of your l&d professionals to the issues covered in this publication, then please contact us at http://www.towardsmaturityenterprises.com/contact. We are also happy to discuss adapting this publication to meet the needs of specific audiences.

Note that this document can be downloaded free of charge at: http://www.towardsmaturityenterprises.com/first-steps

Clive is widely acknowledged as one of the UK's foremost experts in learning technologies. He is a prolific author and blogger, and speaks regularly at major international conferences. He was formerly Director, Training and Creative Services for American Express and a co-founder of Epic Group plc. He was recognised for his Outstanding Contribution to the Training Industry at the World of Learning Conference in 2004.

For the past 5 years, Laura has been at the forefront of research with UK businesses to capture and share good practice around effective e-learning implementation in the workplace. She is a regular industry commentator and international conference speaker. She has over 2 decades of implementation experience and now works with government to represent employer interests.

This booklet has been created to support Next Generation Learning in the workplace, a national initiative to improve the awareness of the benefits of adopting technology in learning. www.nextgenerationlearning.org.uk/work