
E-Learning Creates a Painless Environment to the 21st Century Learners

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The development of technology is placing new demands on expertise and it is also leading to the increasing use of information technology in teaching and learning. Wireless connectivity, notebooks, PDAs and their design and use, a transition from e learning to m learning is one of the challenges being faced by educational institutions. The world is going through a phase of globalization and the success of an organization depends on how quickly its workers are able to learn and transmit various skills required today. Education via the Internet, network, or standalone computer. Network-enabled transfer of skills and knowledge e-learning refers to use of electronic applications and processes to learn. e-learning applications and processes include Web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital collaboration. Content is delivered via the Internet, intranet/extranet, audio or videotape, satellite TV, and CD-ROM. This article explores the definition, types, needs and advantages of e-learning.

Keywords: Internet, Education, Learner, Collaboration and Classrooms.

Definition of e-learning

E-learning refers to the use of information and communications technology (ICT) to enhance and/or support learning in tertiary education. It covers a wide range of systems, from students using e-mail and accessing course work on line while following a course on campus to programmes offered entirely online. E-learning can be divided into several types. In all cases, a campus-based institution is offering the courses, but using e-learning tied to the Internet or other online network to a different extent. Web- supplemented courses focus on classroom-based teaching but include elements such as putting a course outline and lecture notes on line, use of e-mail and links to online resources.

Web-dependent courses require students to use the Internet for key elements of the programme such as online discussions, assessment, or online project/collaborative work, but without significant reduction in classroom time. In mixed mode courses, the e-learning element begins to replace classroom time. Online discussions, assessment, or project/collaborative work

replace some face-to-face teaching and learning. But significant campus attendance remains part of the mix. And when courses are offered fully online, students can follow courses offered by a university in one city from another town, country or time zone.

Scopes of e-learning

The term e-learning comprises a lot more than online learning, virtual learning, distributed learning, networked or web-based learning. As the letter “e” in e-learning stands for the word “electronic”, e-learning would incorporate all educational activities that are carried out by individuals or groups working online or offline, and synchronously or asynchronously via networked or standalone computers and other electronic devices. These various types or modalities of e-learning activity are represented in the following Table

Individualized self-paced e-learning <i>online</i>	Individualized self-paced e-learning <i>offline</i>
Group-based e-learning <i>synchronously</i>	Group-based e-learning <i>asynchronously</i>

Individualized self-paced e-learning online refers to situations where an individual learner is accessing learning resources such as a database or course content online via an Intranet or the Internet. A typical example of this is a learner studying alone or conducting some research on the Internet or a local network.

Individualized self-paced e-learning offline refers to situations where an individual learner is using learning resources such as a database or a computer-assisted learning package offline (i.e., while not connected to an Intranet or the Internet). An example of this is a learner working alone off a hard drive, a CD or DVD. Group-based e-learning synchronously refers to situations where groups of learners are working together in real time via an Intranet or the Internet. It may include text-based conferencing, and one or two-way audio and videoconferencing. Examples of this include learners engaged in a real-time chat or an audio-videoconference.

Group-based e-learning asynchronously

Refers to situations where groups of learners are working over an Intranet or the Internet where exchanges among participants occur with a time delay (i.e., not in real time). Typical examples of this kind of activity include on-line discussions via electronic mailing lists and text-based conferencing within learning managements systems.

Types of E- Learning

There are a few of the most common types of e-Learning. They are as given below

- Technology Based Learning (TBL)
- Web Based Training (WBT)

- Computer Based Training (CBT)
- Synchronous and Asynchronous e-learning
- These are
- a few of the most common types of e-learning.

Technology-Based Learning (TBL)

The phrase, interchangeable with e-learning, technology-based learning includes deployment of methods that use recent technological developments such as computer-mediated communication, videoconferencing, multimedia, groupware, video on demand, desktop publishing, intelligent tutoring system, virtual reality just to name a few.

Web-Based Training (WBT)

Generally, web-based learning, e-learning uses streaming media, text, and graphics to develop exciting learning environment that is deployed right on the user via the internet. It is a great way to e learning for the large group of people scattered across the globe, but it can present the same deployment challenge that the audience encounters in dial-up connecting.

Computer-Based Training (CBT)

This is great alternative to WBT for graphic or audio rich e-learning, computer e-learning, deployed via CD-ROM, which elements the streaming issues that can be associated with WBT.

Synchronous and Asynchronous e-learning

With synchronous e-learning, learning and teaching takes place at the same time while the trainer and learners are physically separated from each other. Examples of synchronous learning are as follows:

- Internet telephony
- Web conferencing
- Online lectures
- Distance learning via-interactive satellite

Audio/Video Conferencing

Asynchronous e-learning means that the user can take the training indent of any schedule. At Resource Bridge it refers to this as “wherever they are whenever they need it,” asynchronous e-learning does not need a facilitator or instructor, and is one of the more popular e learning deployment methods. Examples of asynchronous e learning are the following:

- Self-paced courses taken via internet on CD-ROM.
- Stored audio/video level presentations or seminars.

Advantages of e-learning

There are a number of benefits to tertiary learning online that are unique to the medium. Some of which are extracted here.

Anytime

A participant can access the learning programme at any time that is convenient - not just during the specific 1-3-hour period that is set for a conventional course. The episodes can be quick snatches at odd times or long late-night sessions. Cross-time-zone communication, difficult to arrange in real time, is as easy as talking to someone across town when using the Internet.

Any place

The participants do not have to meet. That means they can be anywhere. International sharing is feasible. Individuals can log on at work, home, the library, in a community learning center or from their hotel when traveling.

Asynchronous interaction

Unlike face-to-face or telephone conversations, electronic mail does not require participants to respond immediately. As a result, interactions can be more succinct and to-the-point, discussion can stay more on-track, and people can get a chance to craft their responses. This can lead to more thoughtful and creative conversations.

Group collaboration

Electronic messaging creates new opportunities for groups to work together; creating shared electronic conversations that can be thoughtful and more permanent than voice conversations. Sometimes aided by on-line moderators, these net seminars can be powerful for learning and problem solving.

Advantages to the Learner

Along with the increased retention, reduced learning time, and other aforementioned benefits to students, particular advantages of e-learning include:

- On-demand availability enables students to complete training conveniently at off-hours or from home.
- Self-pacing for slow or quick learners reduces stress and increases satisfaction.
- Interactivity engages users, pushing them rather than pulling them through training.
- Confidence that refresher or quick reference materials are available reduces burden of responsibility of mastery.

Disadvantages to the Learner

The ways in which e-learning may not excel over other training include:

- Technology issues of the learners are most commonly techno phobia and unavailability of required technologies.

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- Portability of training has become strength of e-learning with the proliferation of network linking points, notebook computers, PDAs, and mobile phones, but still it does not rival that of printed workbooks or reference material.
 - Reduced social and cultural interaction can be a drawback. The impersonality, suppression of communication mechanisms such as body language, and elimination of peer-to-peer learning that are part of this potential disadvantage are lessening with advances in communications technologies.

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