Common eLearning Technologies

Overview

This fact sheet provides an overview of some common eLearning delivery methods. A description of each method's associated features and appropriate applications can support program managers' decision to selecting a particular delivery method.

eLearning Delivery Methods

Early selection of a course delivery method/technology is important. The method selected will directly impact learner satisfaction and compliance, instructor comfort and logistical processes. As eLearning tools have evolved, instructors can build richer performance and improvement solutions with minimal or no computer programming expertise. Furthermore, the intended roles of the instructors and learners should be considered. For instance, if the intent is to have the instructor function more as a facilitator than a lecturer, or for the learners to have direct interaction with the instructor or each other then certain eLearning environments will better support the course objectives. A wide variety of features and applications allows program managers to choose the best application for their instruction needs while considering issues such as audience size and education level, desired degree of computer assisted interaction, compliance requirements, cost and logistics. The table below describes common eLearning delivery technologies, including important features and applications.

Delivery Method	Features	Applications
Teleconference – Telephone only and best suited for meetings rather than training	▪ Audio communication between groups ▪ Combine with distributed slides or handouts	▪ Basic level learning ▪ Mobile and dispersed learners ▪ Audience Size: <200; Global accessibility
Virtual classroom – Best suited for live virtual training where tracking attendance and participation compliance is required	▪ Audio via computer (no dial-in required) ▪ Website tours and public/private text chat ▪ White board, polling, slides and Website tours ▪ Multimedia/ Flash applications integration ▪ Sessions can be recorded for later playback	▪ High level learning for smaller groups ▪ Collaborative/ practice-oriented learning, scenarios and application training or demonstrations ▪ Tracks interaction level for compliance requirements ▪ Audience Size: <500; Global accessibility
Recorded virtual classroom – Best suited for review or for long application demonstrations	▪ Deliver with the real-time webcast but record for future playback. Recorded presentations cannot track participant interaction for compliance. ▪ Recorded white boarding, slides and website tours	▪ Basic-mid level learning ▪ Application demonstrations and follow-up refreshers ▪ Audience Size: No limit; Global accessibility
Self-study courses – Best suited for self paced, text-driven work and non-linear, decision-tree type self-studies	▪ Simple text, graphics and quizzes ▪ Multimedia/Flash can be integrated ▪ Can be downloaded for offline viewing ▪ Usually lower cost and easy access	▪ Basic-mid level learning ▪ Fact-heavy, detail-oriented material ▪ Scenarios and case studies ▪ Audience Size: No limit; Global accessibility
Web-based live conferencing – Also referred to as "webinars", these are best suited for real-time virtual meetings	▪ Presenters/learners hear via audio-conferencing ▪ White boarding, polling, slides and website tours ▪ Polling and quizzing results ▪ Sessions can be recorded for later playback	▪ Basic-mid level learning ▪ Practice-oriented learning, mentoring, application training or demonstrations ▪ Audience Size: <1200; Not globally accessible
Audio/video webcast – Best suited for one-way presentations with video	▪ Streamed video and/or audio from presenters ▪ Interactive polling, quizzing, chat and slides ▪ Measurement and performance tools	▪ Basic-mid level learning ▪ Panel sessions and videos ▪ Audience Size: Webcast limit of 1,000 learners for video events and 2,000 for audio-only events; May not be globally accessible
Video-conferencing – Requires training room with portable unit, Videoconference room or Tele-suite	▪ Full screen, two-way or multi-way video with audio ▪ Computer screen sharing ▪ Live video of participants, provided each site has appropriate technology	▪ Mid-high level learning ▪ Small sessions with audio-visual contact, multipoint trainings followed by group discussions and role playing ▪ Audience Size: <150; Global accessibility

Summary

A wide variety of eLearning delivery tools offer many features not available in or suitable for traditional, classroom-based environments. Multiple important factors require consideration when selecting the appropriate eLearning technology. When program managers carefully select the eLearning technology that most appropriately suits the content and learner needs, eLearning becomes a powerful viable, user-friendly training platform.

About the DCoE Training and Education Directorate

The Training & Education (T&E) Directorate's mission is to assess training and educational needs in order to identify and promote effective instructional material for stakeholders resulting in improved knowledge and practice of PH and TBI care.