

Learning Management Systems: What you need to know before choosing a Learning Management System.

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Learning Management Systems

Over the past two decades, the Internet has had a tremendous effect on humanity. It has dramatically changed almost every facet of life, from industry to communication to entertainment. A major benefit of the Internet revolution has been the increased **accessibility to education**. It is now inexpensive, easy and effective to take courses and training programs online. Online learning programs are known as Learning Management Systems or LMS, and a popular one is the eLeaP™ Learning Management System (LMS/LCMS), developed and headed by President Don Weobong.

The general trend in corporate and business education is moving away from a training mindset and structure and towards a learning and performance philosophy. The most prevalent learning systems that corporations are using to educate their staff are known as Learning Management Systems. These systems are far more than a training manual; rather they are a completely facilitated education system.

The cream of the pie, of course, is that online Learning Management Systems carry a rather light price tag compared with the costs incurred from traditional corporate training. In the past, companies typically consulted experts in certain fields and paid exorbitant rates in order to train its employees in a particular skill. In fact, experts and consulting firms typically charge over \$10,000 for only four or five days of work (or fewer). Online e-learning platforms and training programs like eLeaP™, on the other hand, can be acquired and implemented, starting at only \$125. This difference is huge.

LMS offers **extensive course management** along with collaborative learning and online training. These LMS can function on a number of operating platforms such as Microsoft .NET and Java EE. LMS are highly important for the spread of Internet-based education. The virtual learning environments currently in fashion are simply a variant of the LMS. These virtual learning environments provide the user with an outline of the course structure, its duration, how the courses are graded, and the assessment of scores.

Most LMS are web-based to allow for the '**anytime any place**' access to learning for students. They are highly favored by regulated industries in which training is a necessity (such as financial services). They are also entirely performance based. As such it means they are extremely easy to assess a student's progress and development, and are completely suited to corporate training.

A completely functional LMS will include a control panel that shows managers what their employees are learning, a system that enables knowledge sharing throughout the company, a system that recommends the best way to learn depending on the

student's abilities, a system that transfers information to portable and mobile devices such as PDAs, and a system that allows employees to learn in any language.

The best way to get started for individuals or organization is to seek some of the best Learning Management Systems in the industry and actually trying them out. Also research what other successful professionals or companies in your field are training with. But there's no substitute for personal experience – the popular eLeaP™ Learning Management System offers a great 30-day Free Trial for both individuals and organizations seeking to learn and improve their skills in their fast paced industries. With a secure, scalable, and on-demand e-learning platform, the Free Trial also includes free setup and easy-to-use training, and is jam-packed with rich and powerful capabilities and features. This may be your first stop if you're looking for good value and maximum results in your and your employee's career development.

With eLeaP™ Learning Management System's comprehensive and secure web training and e-learning program, **training managers need not be technically oriented** to develop, manage, and measure the progress of all users in their interactive training courses and learning programs.

Learning Management Systems are viewed by many as the key to creating a much more efficient and effective workforce in a short period of time. The growth of web based education has helped expose LMS to a wider audience. LMS are now viewed as an industry in itself, and constitute a market share of approximately \$500 million. They are the prevailing source of online courses for with in the United States of America.

The LMS style of corporate education is growing at a tremendous rate; it has overtaken training modules in the United States as the number one form of corporate education. Its performance-based style and wide range of features, which encompass every area of education, are perfect for corporate education.

What to look for when selecting or implementing learning management systems?

Learning management systems can be powerful tools for e-learning but they have had some resistance to adopting them. Why?

Because:

- Only 24% of LMS buyers are satisfied with their purchase
- 25% of LMS buyers are dissatisfied with their learning management system
- About 25% of all LMS buyers plan to switch vendors

At first glance these numbers can be disconcerting however...

For those [Learning Management System \(LMS\)](#) customers who are **satisfied** with their **training software** investment, they are planning to increase this investment in subsequent years. Some customers plan to roll out their LMS's program to other divisions of the their operations. Remember, since LMS's are mainly web-based, you can easily implement them across time zones and geographical regions.

Are you thinking about switching your LMS vendor or maybe you are ready to take the e-learning plunge? Here are some important tips to keep in mind.

Purchasing an LMS? What you need to know - LMS Vendor Features:

1. **LMS Uptime record:** Uptime refers to reliability of your LMS vendor's web servers. Do they experience interruptions in services? If you try to access your training and your browser keeps timing out or the web server is unavailable, then you might need to switch. You need to ask your prospective vendor about their uptime record. You can also access public sites like [Netcraft](#) to do independent research on uptime.
2. **Scalability:** Can your LMS provider grow with your organization? You started at 25 employees but your business has expanded to over 4000, can your learning management system absorb your growing user base? How much more would it cost? How reliable is the capacity of the system to absorb the increasing levels of usage?
3. **E-Learning Standards Compliance:** Perhaps you have heard about [SCORM](#)? What about AICC? Is your learning management system compliant with these government mandated e-learning standards? Is your LMS SCORM or AICC compliant? How about your authoring program?
4. **Data Exchange:** Does your LMS provider allow you to download data/reports from your account? Can the learning management system easily interface with your HR information system? How easy is it to upload your content and user list? Can user self-enroll for courses/training in your LMS?
5. **E-Commerce Capability:** For some content providers, e-Commerce (selling courses or trainings) is an absolute must. Does your LMS provider have e-Commerce capability? Is it easy to integrate into your existing website?
6. **LMS Security:** With phishing and data security being increasingly threatened on the Internet, your LMS should make security a cornerstone of their service. Does your LMS come with SSL encryption? How about password integrity? How is this maintained? Can you instantly activate and deactivate user accounts easily?

7. **Financial Solvency:** Is your LMS provider some kid with a computer in the basement? How many years has your LMS been in business? Ask for and follow up on all business references.
8. **LMS Support and Customer Service:** Once you have purchased the learning management system does your LMS vendor disappear? How is their customer service like? Do they provide online or live customer support? How about a knowledge center to help you get answers to technical questions?
9. **LMS Cost:** What is the total cost of ownership? Are there hidden charges or fees? What about set up fees? Is maintenance free? How about customer support? Do you have to pay for technical assistance? Make sure you get in writing all costs associated with your LMS purchase.
10. **LMS Software Updates:** Is your [training software](#) vendor a one trick pony? Do they have plans to improve or upgrade the LMS platform? What will it cost you to get upgrades? This is where the Software as a Service (SaaS) business model makes sense. Is your Learning management System vendor a SaaS LMS provider?

Carefully consider all 10 questions or criteria before making your e-learning purchase decision. Remember to take advantage free trials of LMS vendors. Test drive the system before you commit to purchasing the e-learning management system.

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