

# HOW TO CAPITALIZE ON TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES TO ENRICH WORKPLACE TRAINING



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**Disclaimer:**

*The software tools and applications suggested in the eBook are for providing an overview of DIY tools currently used in the market. They are chosen based on their ease of use without the need for programming knowledge. There may be other tools and programs that are equally good or better which we may have inadvertently missed. Users are advised to do appropriate research and use their discretion to identify the tools that best work for them.*

*The links provided in the eBook are based on information obtained from the internet and are accurate at the time of publication.*

# 1. Introduction

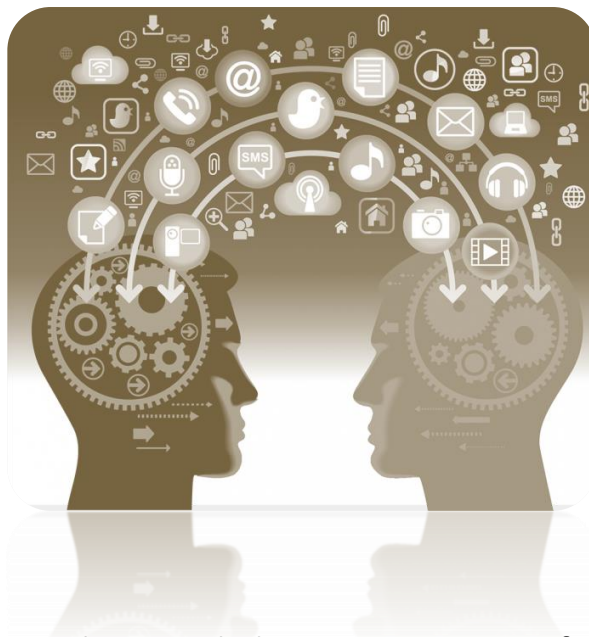
In the 15th century, Gutenberg's printing press revolutionized the way knowledge was shared. It played an important role during the renaissance movement and contributed to the scientific revolution making learning available to the masses. Five centuries later, it is the internet, telecommunications and other technological tools that are creating a similar revolution that is changing the way people communicate with each other, learn from each other and seek knowledge.

Technology has influenced in all aspects of our day to day lives right from the way we purchase our groceries, hail a cab, withdraw money from bank, or search for information instantly, when we need one. In the same way, it has influenced the way training is organized in organizations. Training departments are now Learning and Development departments that facilitate learning rather than enforce teaching.

Technology has the power to expedite learning. Organizations can capitalize on this to empower employees whose knowledge and skills need to be updated on a regular basis in a dynamic world. In this eBook, we will see how technology can be used to create resources catering to different training needs AND make them easily accessible to employees This is what we call “Technology-enabled-learning”. Let’s elaborate more on this in the next section.

## 2. What is technology-enabled learning?

The term technology-enhanced learning is used to describe the application of information and communication technologies (ICT) to learning and teaching (Kirkwood & Price, 2005). ICT can include computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, digital cameras, social media platforms, software applications and the internet.



It means employees can be provided access to a range of tools that support a learning need when required and enable them to obtain a deeper understanding of the subject or content. This can be achieved with flexibility to suit the working schedule of employees within the organization, across different time zones or geographies. If employees do not have access to desktop computers or laptops, training can be administered via mobile devices, smartphones or tablets. If employees are located in low bandwidth areas, they can have access to resources that allow podcasts or mobile learning resources.

By smart and planned integration of technology into the training curriculum, employees can have access to learning through methods that are powerful, easily accessible and need-based. These technologies provide opportunities to training managers and stakeholders in organizations to widen the scope of training to suit varied circumstances, situations and employee profiles.

### 3. Benefits of technology-enabled-learning

It is needless to emphasize that technology has brought in numerous conveniences and these include the benefits to organizations in the training domain. Here, we will briefly touch upon the main benefits of technology-enabled learning.

#### **Reduced costs:**

Technology allows multiple options of training delivery without the need for employees to physically congregate at a single location. It reduces the cost of training considerably as more employees can be trained within less time. Additionally, travelling, boarding and lodging costs are limited or nil in most circumstances.

#### **Reduced training time:**

Technology enables training to take place quickly and easily. Once training programs are rolled out, the Learning Management Systems, on which the courses are hosted, automate the training administration activities. Scheduling, assigning and tracking of user registrations can be done with a click of a button. Reports can be prepared and evaluation of training programs can be done, swiftly and efficiently. In all, the effort and time spent on organizing and administering training is reduced.



### 3. Benefits of technology-enabled-learning

#### **Varied instructional strategies:**

Technology allows development of training resources that appeal to individuals with different learning preferences and styles. Interactivities for kinesthetic learners, podcasts for auditory learners and animations/graphics for visual learners can be accommodated within each training module. Additionally, different instructional strategies can be adopted based on the training need. Simulations can be used for software training, story-based strategy can be used for safety or compliance training and so on making the courses rich and engaging to all types of learners.

#### **Personalized learning:**

When individuals access an online training module, the voice over of a virtual instructor speaks to them directly. Modules and training paths can be created to suit employees who have varied knowledge levels on a particular subject matter. Novices can start from the basics while advanced or experienced employees can choose to skip the basics by testing to go to advanced levels. This way, novice individuals need not be intimidated with complex content and senior employees need not get bored with the basics. Such personalized learning is made possible through the technology used in learning management systems.

#### **Easy access to SMEs and Trainers:**

Individual employees can have direct access to subject-matter experts (SMEs) and trainers. Discussion forums, chats and other collaborative tools make it easy for trainers and employees to interact and share experiences and knowledge. This facilitates faster knowledge transfer, particularly when an employee requires just-in-time learning while on job.

### 3. Benefits of technology-enabled-learning

#### **Consistency in training quality:**

Online training ensures all employees have the same quality of training and access to same resources across the organization. Employees in regional offices or those at remote locations can have the same access to the training program that is given at the head office. As it is not dependent on individuals and courses are standardized, it ensures consistent quality across modules and training programs.

#### **Employees in control of their learning:**

Last but not the least, employees have complete control over their learning. They can choose what they want to do, how they want to complete the course and at their own pace. They also have the option to start a course at work, complete it while travelling through their mobile device or simply access the resources or short modules when they need to refresh their knowledge of a particular topic. They are the masters of their learning, and this is the best part of technology-enabled training.

It requires creativity and imagination to blend technology into the training curriculum. With some thought and planning, training needs can be effectively addressed by using a combination of technological tools that suit a particular training requirement or target group of employees.

In the next section, we will see how multiple learning formats can be integrated into a single platform that is easily accessible to learners on one hand and helps training managers to track learner progress on the other.

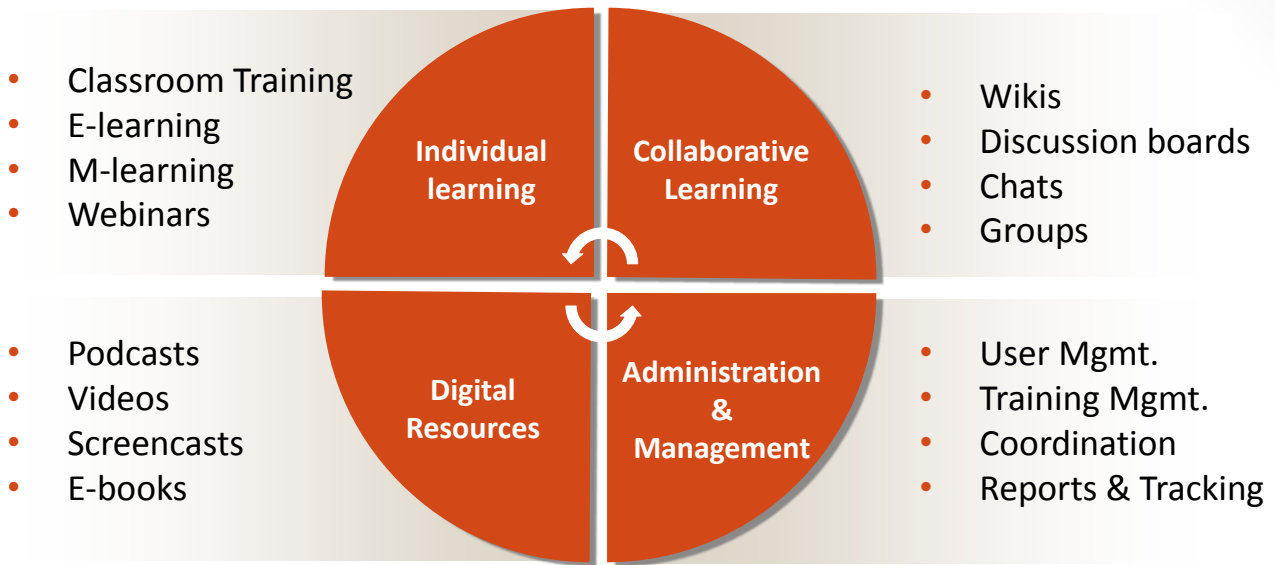
## 4. Integrate technological resources into a single learning platform

Training can be done using multiple formats such as classroom training, e-learning courses, m-learning courses, podcasts, screencasts, digital books and so on. Each one of these performs a particular function and is suitable for a specific training situation. But, how can users reap the benefits of all the resources for a single training need? For example, let's say we need to provide product training to sales people who are managing diverse territories. They might have attended a one off classroom training session when they first joined the organization. Since then, they have spent most of their time on the field, and in the days of tough market conditions and competition, it is unthinkable for sales people to stay off the field, lest they lose their grip in the market.

In such a situation, **e-learning** is a good option. However, since sales personnel are predominantly on the field, making learning available on their mobile devices (**m-learning**) is the other ideal option. At the same time, they can benefit from training resources such as **videos, podcasts, screencasts, discussions** or **collaborative tools** that they can access at the time of need, when they face a tough challenge or situation on the job and need to dip into the experience of peers.

So, how can all these resources be combined under a single platform? One can do it with a customized Learning Management System. Some of the essential features that are required in today's learning platform can be represented in the following diagram.

## 4. Integrate technological resources into a single learning platform



### Individual Learning

It is no longer possible to rely on just one form of learning such as classroom training. A blended learning approach incorporating classroom training, virtual classroom training, e-learning, m-learning and webinars has to be adopted. Features of individual learning can be:

- Bite-sized modules
- Multiple learning paths or options
- Multiple delivery formats

## 4. Integrate technological resources into a single learning platform

### Collaborative Learning

The LMS has in-built features to facilitate group or collaborative learning. Collaborative learning will offer employees the facility of:

- Forum discussions in which employees can initiate and participate
- Real-time chat either in a chat room or one-to-one, depending on the number of employees available online.
- Reading and commenting on the blogs written by SMEs or experts
- Email support to ask a specific doubt or question with the *Ask the Expert* feature which will open an email. The experts may include not only the SMEs but also other employees who may volunteer.

### Digital Resources

Learning is an on-going exercise and does not end on the completion of a course. Therefore, it is important that employees are provided with easy options to tap into a reference library or learning resources that can come handy during the course of their work. Digital resources enable employees to access it anywhere through their smartphones or other mobile devices. Examples of digital resources are as follows:

- Podcasts
- Videos
- Screencasts
- E-books

## 4. Integrate technological resources into a single learning platform

### Administration and Management

The technology-enabled learning platform has to be backed by the often neglected service component, which is very important for the success of any technological solution. Service is an integral part of the solution, which means a dedicated team of professionals need to be available 24 x 7, to administer and manage the training solutions, on behalf of organizations and assure employees of an uninterrupted access to knowledge, at all times. Some of the key aspects of training and administration are:

- User management (setting up user accounts, registering users for courses, sending them notifications etc.)
- Training activities management (setting up courses, curriculum, and so on), fostering collaboration etc.
- Coordination (working with managers to ensure their direct reports are assigned relevant courses)
- Reports and tracking (enabling visibility into the status of training and users' training snapshots through the reporting and tracking ability of the LMS)

If training managers are able to understand the potential of such a technological platform, they will be able to better plan and coordinate training events and resources and provide learning experiences that are commensurate with current demands.

In the next section, we will list down the different technological resources that can be created to provide a holistic and integrated training resources portfolio.

# 5. Media being used for training at the workplace

There are many ways in which technology is being used for training at the workplace. In this section, we will list down the various technological resources or media that are available for the purpose of training.

## Digital Books

Participants of classroom training sessions are given manuals for references. In an online format, many resources can be compiled and presented in a digital format and uploaded to an easily retrievable place, which can be accessed easily by employees as and when required.

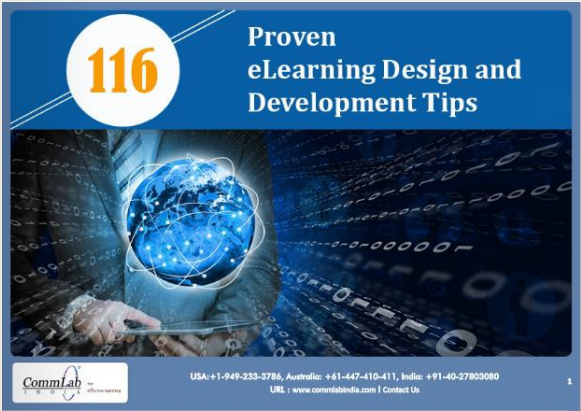
## Suggested Software Programs

Free/Open Source	Paid
Creatavist	Flipbook Maker
Digital Book Creator	eBook Maestro
Flip E Book & Digital Magazine Maker	iBooks Author

## Training situations it can be used:

Digital books can be useful for any training situation. Audio, Video and external links can be embedded to make it interactive and useful.

Click the image below to view a sample



# 5. Media being used for training at the workplace

## E-learning or online courses

E-learning modules or online courses provide structured learning to participants but without having to commit to a specific time or location for the training to take place. Online courses can be created as short modules using rapid authoring tools. These can be uploaded on to an LMS, intranet site or a learning portal so that employees are able to access them easily. When the training content is long, it can be divided into modules to form an e-learning curriculum that can be completed over a period of time.

## Suggested Software Programs

### Free/Open Source

Adapt Learning

CourseLab

Multimedia Learning Object  
Authoring Tool

### Paid

Articulate Storyline

Adobe Captivate

Lectora

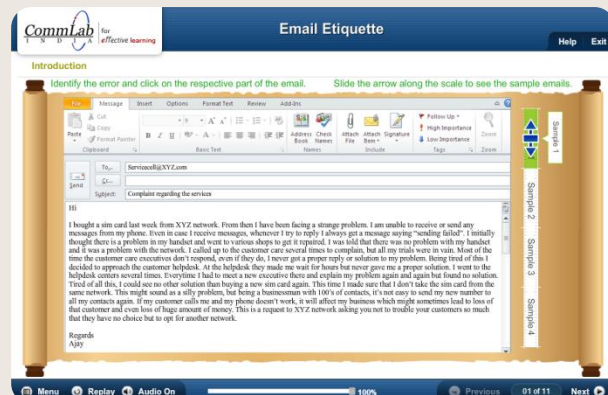
## Training situations it can be used:

Almost all training needs can be addressed in some way through e-learning.

Works great for:

- **Process training**
- **Software Simulations training**
- **Product training**

Click the image below to view a sample



# 5. Media being used for training at the workplace

## Mobile learning

Mobile learning refers to any learning that happens when a user is not tied down to a specific location and can access it from mobile devices such as smartphones, iPads or other tablet devices. In simple terms, portability and connectivity to information sources are the cornerstones of mLearning. It is likely to shape the way learning takes place in future.

### Suggested Software Programs

Free/Open Source	Paid
Adapt Learning	Lectora Inspire
CourseLab	Adobe Captivate 8
Maqetta	Articulate Storyline

#### Training situations it can be used:

Mobile learning is very useful to people who work on the field and are away from their desks for extended periods of time such as sales people, service engineers, pharma sales representatives and so on. This format can be used for:

- **Product Training**
- **Safety Training**
- **Performance Support**

## 5. Media being used for training at the workplace

### Podcasts

Podcasts are digital audio files that can be made available over the internet and can be downloaded to a computer or mobile devices. The podcasts can be short audio snippets that could be extracted from full-fledged e-learning courses or created as a part of e-learning courses. They could also be an independent learning resource that could be developed as per need or as per a particular theme. Podcasts can also be made interactive or combined with audio and video elements as shown in the example that is shared here.

### Suggested Software Programs

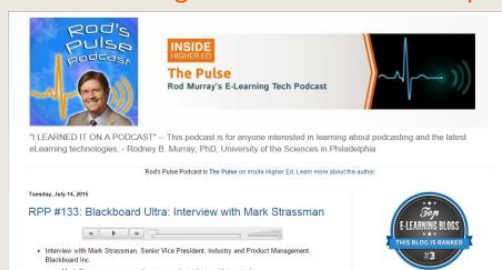
Free/Open Source	Paid
PodProducer	ePodcast Creator
Wildvoice Podcast Studio	Propaganda
Audacity*	ePodcast Producer

*\*Audacity offers basic editing features and you might need MP3 Encoder, media player or file transfer software separately to produce podcasts. It is still worth a try. For more information click [here](#).*

### Training situations it can be used:

- Sales Training
- Product Training
- New Employee Training

Click the image below to view a sample



Source: [www.rodspulsepodcast.com](http://www.rodspulsepodcast.com)

# 5. Media being used for training at the workplace

## Screencasts

Screencast refers to the capturing of action that takes place on a computer screen and includes audio narration. It can be a useful tool to create a tutorial about a software or an application on the computer. They provide an opportunity to training managers to create short learning bites that address a single learning need. These can be used as standalone resources or as a part of an e-learning course or a training video.

## Suggested Software Programs

Free/Open Source	Paid
Jing	Camtasia
Screenr	Captivate
Autodesk Screencast	ScreenFlow

Additionally, there are screencast applications specifically for devices such as iPads, Android or Chromebook devices.

## Training situations it can be used:

Screencasts are beneficial where employees need to get first hand exposure to work on an application or software program.

- **Software Applications training**
- **Database training**
- **How to videos such as How to use the LMS**

Click the image below to view a sample



Video Source: YouTube Video uploaded by Lauren Itbcot

# 5. Media being used for training at the workplace

## Self-assessments and Evaluation Options

Online assessments can be in the form of summative and formative assessments and can be given as a part of a course or as an independent quiz to seek feedback on a training program or to understand to what extent participants understood the training content. These can be hosted online and retrieved by participants at their convenience.

### Suggested Software Programs

Free/Open Source	Paid
QuizStar	Joomla Quiz Deluxe
LimeSurvey	Articulate Quiz Maker
TrainingCheck	Assessment Generator 2

### Training situations it can be used:

Assessments and evaluation tools are useful in all training situations and can be administered creatively based on the training requirement and audiences.

### Resource:

Here is a blog that gives tips on using assessments and quiz questions in e-learning courses. Click [here](#) to read the blog.

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