Top Ten
E-Learning Myths

We talked with John V. Moran, president of GPe Learning Technologies, and he shared what he and his company have determined about e-learning: It's worth it, it's doable, but don't expect a walk in the park. Here are Moran's top 10 e-learning myths.

10. There is a substantial knowledge base and loads of experts in the e-learning field.

"We're just now building on the knowledge base," says Moran. "It's best to be wary of people who say they've been doing this for 20 years."

❑ Only 2 percent of training was Web-based in 1999; 75 percent of that was in information technology.

❑ Of $63 billion spent on training, only $1.14 billion of that was over the Web.

9. Web-enabled learning management systems are easy to integrate. Employee data flows seamlessly from your legacy HR systems into the LMS database.

In reality, this is the hardest aspect to achieve, especially in multinational organizations. In order to track learners for training registration, progress, and so forth, the most fundamental function is a learner's name and address.

One size doesn't fit all; as you can see from the example, not all letters of the person's name fit. That will lead to more problems using this LMS platform.

8. Loads of Web-enabled content exists, and it works on all LMS platforms.

❑ There's little existing content that can be migrated easily from one LMS platform to another.

❑ Even when migration is accomplished effectively, course functionality can be lost.

"That's a problem with most Web-enabled providers," cautions Moran.

7. Your information systems department is happy and supportive of your plan to deploy e-learning over its systems.
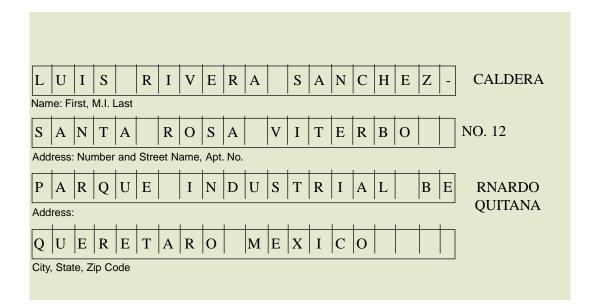
In most organizations, the IT systems are already taxed, and most IS departments don't want to deploy e-learning through their pipelines, using up their bandwidth.

"You need to get IS on board early, or it can be costly," says Moran.

6. Your IS department welcomes the use of desktop plug-ins.

No, and that's no surprise. Moran says that you can "spend a lot of money on generic content and then find out it won't work without plug-ins."

5. Most of your employees

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City, State, Zip Code

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know what a mouse is.

❑ In fact, 50 percent of the U.S. workforce still doesn't know how to use a computer.

❑ Computer illiteracy is as rampant in the boardroom as on the shop floor.

"Most employees have poor navigation skills. You need to prepare the workforce through selling, cajoling, and knowledge—or else even a good learning event will fail," says Moran.

4. Most adults enjoy looking at the hourglass waiting for downloads of meaningless video clips.

"In fact," says Moran, "too much of most e-learning is what learners don't need to know."

❑ Studies show that the average adult learner loses attention after 15 seconds. At one company when a simulation took too long to download, employees lost interest in online learning. It took the company two years to recover.

❑ People don't want extraneous video and audio. One reason is that they don't want strange noises coming from their computers, lest other employees or their boss think they're playing games.

Says Moran, "Video and audio are fine, as long as they add to the learning objectives."

3. Employees love to learn on their own time.

Increasingly, employees are expected to take online learning either during work hours or after hours.

Both options can present a problem: Employees don't like interrupting job

> ### Some e-providers promise you a rose garden, but it can be a briar patch.

tasks, and they don't want to feel they're working for their employers 24/7 by learning job skills after hours.

The lesson: Employees need to be prepared in order for them to take advantage of online learning.

2. Adults like learning on a computer, particularly when their navigation skills are challenged.

Moran says GPe has found that "the number 1 reason adults don't finish online courses is because they can't navigate."

1. E-learning is "click and easy."

"We hear that all the time, but e-learning is a difficult journey, though well worth it," says Moran.

❑ There's a big upfront cost for setting up a Web-enabled LMS, for repurposing existing content, and for the trailing (hosting, serving). But in the long-term, the expense can be from one-third to one-tenth of that for traditional training.

❑ E-learning implementation will be challenged by employees and IS.

Bottom line: "Classroom training will remain. But in five years, there'll be no distinction between e-learning and Web-based training," says Moran. "All e-learning will be delivered over the Web; CD-ROMs won't exist." ❑

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