



Frogkick “Green Paper” Rapid e-Learning versus Web-based Training

Overview

This Frogkick Green Paper explores the trade-offs between Rapid e-Learning solutions and Web-based Training (WBT) solutions from two perspectives:

- Defining Rapid e-Learning and WBT
- Relative Pros and Cons associated with Rapid e-Learning and WBT

It also provides a comparative checklist to assist you in evaluating your own e-Learning needs and identifying the best option to address those needs.

Defining Rapid e-Learning and Web-based Training (WBT)

Rapid e-Learning

Rapid e-Learning utilizes authoring tools specifically designed to make design and development of e-Learning easier than it would be with traditional web-based development tools. This type of e-Learning is inclusive of virtual classroom technology and on-demand solutions. After creating an instructionally sound Design Document, content is created utilizing PowerPoint rather than a traditional web-based training (WBT) storyboard, and then it is published to its final e-Learning format.



In this way, Instructional Designers and Subject Matter Experts perform the actual “development or production” of solutions. Examples of Rapid e-Learning tools include Articulate and Macromedia’s Breeze.

Below is a list of the pros and cons associated with the use of Rapid e-Learning tools:

Pros

- Shorter development cycle
- No formal programming resources required
- Sharp look and feel with user friendly navigation
- Interaction and quiz capabilities
- Reporting and LMS integration features
- Easy to update and maintain
- Traditionally, lower development costs than WBT

Cons

- Limited in the complexity of animations and streaming media capabilities
- Restricted in the complexity of interactions
 - » Must select from interactions within the tool
- Limited learner tracking capabilities
 - » Must select from tracking features within the tool
- Does not facilitate a learning object approach – can not leverage specific program elements across other training initiatives



Web-based Training

Web-based Training (WBT) solutions require the use of authoring tool specifically designed for that purpose. Leading tools today include Macromedia's Dream Weaver and LMS content authoring systems. Storyboards are created that define content for each screen including text, visuals, and media assets. The storyboards are then brought to life by a development team that could include graphic artists, multimedia developers, programmers, and network specialists.

Below is a list of the pros and cons associated with the use of WBT authoring tools:

Pros

- Robust animation and streaming media capabilities
- Unrestricted in the complexity of interactions
- Sharp look and feel with user friendly navigation
- Enhanced interaction and quiz capabilities
 - » Offers an open palette to create custom designed activities and quiz question formats
- Superior reporting and LMS integration features
 - » Offers the ability to track learner data at a more micro-level
- Facilitates a learning object approach – leveraging specific program elements across other training initiatives
- Better serves as repository for larger learning programs that contain extensive content and that will have a long shelf-life

**Cons**

- Longer development cycle
- Formal programming resources required
- Traditionally, higher development costs than a Rapid e-Learning solution

Conclusions

While the decision to utilize a Rapid e-Learning solution versus a WBT is influenced by cost, resource availability, time, and other project attributes, it truly should be most influenced by the critical design factors that are required to achieve the desired learning and business results. In other words, the tools do not alleviate the need for good instructional design.

To assist you in evaluating your own situation, we've prepared a comparative checklist that can be utilized on a project-by-project basis. This checklist is available on the following pages.

For more information on e-Learning alternatives, please feel free to visit our website (www.frogkick.com) or contact us directly by sending an email to leap@frogkick.com.



Rapid e-Learning vs. Web-based Training (WBT)

A Comparative Checklist

Answer each question based on your e-Learning needs.

Question?	Yes	Somewhat	No
1) This e-Learning project has a short timeline for development.			
2) I have a limited budget for this e-Learning solution.			
3) I have limited access to e-Learning development resources.			
4) The content for this e-Learning solution does not require use of multimedia assets such as video.			
5) This e-Learning solution will have a short shelf life.			
6) Elements of this e-Learning solution will not be leveraged in other training programs.			
7) The only learner data to be captured as output from this e-Learning solution is quiz/assessment results.			

Refer to the scoring breakdown on the next page to interpret the results.



Use the Assign 1 point for each Yes response, 2 points for each Somewhat response, and 3 points for each No response. Add up the subtotals to get a total score.

Yes Subtotal = _____ x 1 = _____

Somewhat Subtotal = _____ x 2 = _____

No Subtotal = _____ x 3 = _____

Total Score = _____

If you scored 13 points or less, then you may want to consider Rapid e-Learning as an option for this e-Learning solution. If you scored 14 or more points, traditional WBT may be a better option to address your given e-Learning needs for this project.