Cloud computing brings agility to corporate learning environment

By Ivanna Granelli   27 Nov 2014

Cloud computing and mobile business solutions are clearing the way for companies to be more agile and efficient in the way that they use technology to support their training efforts.

The cloud allows companies to rapidly implement Learning Management Systems (LMSs) at a lower cost than they could if they built the platforms from scratch.

Implementing LMSs correctly

LMSs have had a somewhat mixed track record with a high failure rate. Many organisations have been disappointed by the results they produce, and often because they don't have skills and resources to maximise the value of these platforms. Yet LMSs can also deliver enormous business value when they're implemented correctly and used well. By opting for the cloud, organisations can vastly reduce the risks attached to an LMS rollout.

Cloud-based deployments allow organisations to rapidly roll out an LMS platform and then pay for it by the month. This reduces the barriers to entry and risk since companies don't need to make heavy investments in the software licences, infrastructure and skills to support the LMS. LMSs were typically only affordable to large corporates; now, these systems are accessible to smaller businesses, too.

Customisation is usually simple; what's more, most cloud-based solutions make it easy to offer end-users training on nearly any smart mobile device as well as their desktops or notebooks.

With a cloud-based LMS, it becomes easier to use social networking and other communications tools to drive human interaction and collaboration in the training and learning processes. The technology brings immediacy which drives efficiency.

Creating forums

Support for social collaboration and mobility are critical in an LMS platform because users expect it. We see social media bringing a human interface back into e-learning by creating forums where people discuss things. These tools are perfectly geared towards the millennial market.

Mobility also offers a range of opportunity to make training more flexible and engaging. For example, organisations could

channel learning content through mobile apps and use gamification to bring a new dimension to their materials.

One of the major benefits of the LMS lies in the data it allows organisations to gather about learning outcomes. A good cloud-based LMS solution will allow companies to mine their data for strategic insights.

Cloud-based LMS platforms give organisations an opportunity to be proactive about using data - but this means they do need to see training as strategic rather than simply tactical. The data needs to be interpreted and applied so that the organisation can use it to shape the whole learning and performance management strategy.

Software is not a panacea for training and development challenges. A lot of companies see software as the solution to all their learning and development problems - which is where disappointment with LMSs often begins in the first place. An LMS is merely a platform. It still needs to be driven and made relevant to the users. The tool is not the strategy - it should be regarded as an enabler for a thoughtful and comprehensive learning strategy based around the needs of the user community and the organisation's business goals.

ABOUT IVANNA GRANELLI

Ivanna Granelli - a teacher by training - moved into the corporate world as an IT trainer at SAPPI and First Paper House between 1991 and 1993. She decided in 1994 to create a business that combined her twin passions for education and technology and established Can!Do with the vision of helping companies to unlock the business value of their ERP systems through end-user training.
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