
Content Creation vs Content Management in Learning Systems

Introduction

Learning Management Systems, or LMS, generally provide [training for employees](#), partners, salespeople, and pretty much everyone involved in the company workflow. An LMS is designed to offer flexible solutions, targeting all types of learners and audiences to increase productivity and to support continuing skill development. Through different hubs, LMS integrates learning, practicing, reporting, and social knowledge sharing. When an LMS is in place, employees can browse through the training courses, choose, and enroll in different learning programs based on their roles or their department's need. Not only this, they can keep track of their progress. Managers/Trainers/Authors assign priorities and deadlines for courses and can make certain programs mandatory for employees. Most LMSs also offer customized training, restricted courses, or limited-audience learning packages.

Content Creation

Content creation is not an easy task, as there are varying factors to be included in the process, such as team size, content amount, subject/topic at hand, audience's knowledge, business goals, and strategies. Before creating any learning content, the author(s) – who could be an experienced teacher or a manager in charge of providing the training sessions – has to keep in mind the following:

- **Learning objectives**

The most important guidelines to follow when conceiving any piece of content or sequenced packages. Never lose sight of the “final training destination” of the students.

- **Addressing the gaps**

From the beginning, identify the trainees' level of knowledge and skill to adapt/create the content in such a way that it would cover the gaps

- **Short and Long Term Planning**

Evaluation and deadlines play a vital role in the training cycle, but the main goal is to apply the acquired skills in the workplace. Even if the training is just a class or a course addressing one

specific issue, think of the possibility of integrating it into an extensive learning package for further use.

- **Run a content inventory**

Recycle, adapt, sync, update, redesign the existing content. Don't discard old content just because it's old. Obsolete content doesn't mean "bad content".

- **Convert the raw content into engaging content**

Any content could turn into useful learning material if used correctly to catch the attention and interest of students: funny stories, clients' comments, experience, personal events, industry-specific jokes, or even trivial news.

- **Whiteboard before designing**

Brainstorm and collaborate to mock up the content you are about to create: title, brief description, sequence draft, additional resources, real-life scenarios. Whiteboard ideas before proceeding with designing.

Content Creation tools may include:

- Integrated toolbox or interactive dashboard to add collaborative content to the project.
- Quick design for interactive course manipulation.
- Progression and performance tools to measure the learning progress/curve.
- Reporting features and general activity overview.

The LMS interfaces use different naming conventions for these features to ease the access and to simplify the authoring process. The authors have more flexibility in using the interface, changing and updating the content, compared to the end-users (students) who are mostly consumers of the content/lessons.

In general, authoring LMS interfaces support designing capabilities to create and enhance interactive courses, using either a stand-alone tool or only the browser. Authoring tools are usually fully-integrated or linked in such a way that the author doesn't have to switch between applications. In most cases, authoring capabilities are dependent on the assigned licence. Some LMSs offer full access to authors and content managers alike, some others restrict the access to functionalities based on organizational role types.

Content Management

The term "content management" in LMS is typically used in reference to the administration of

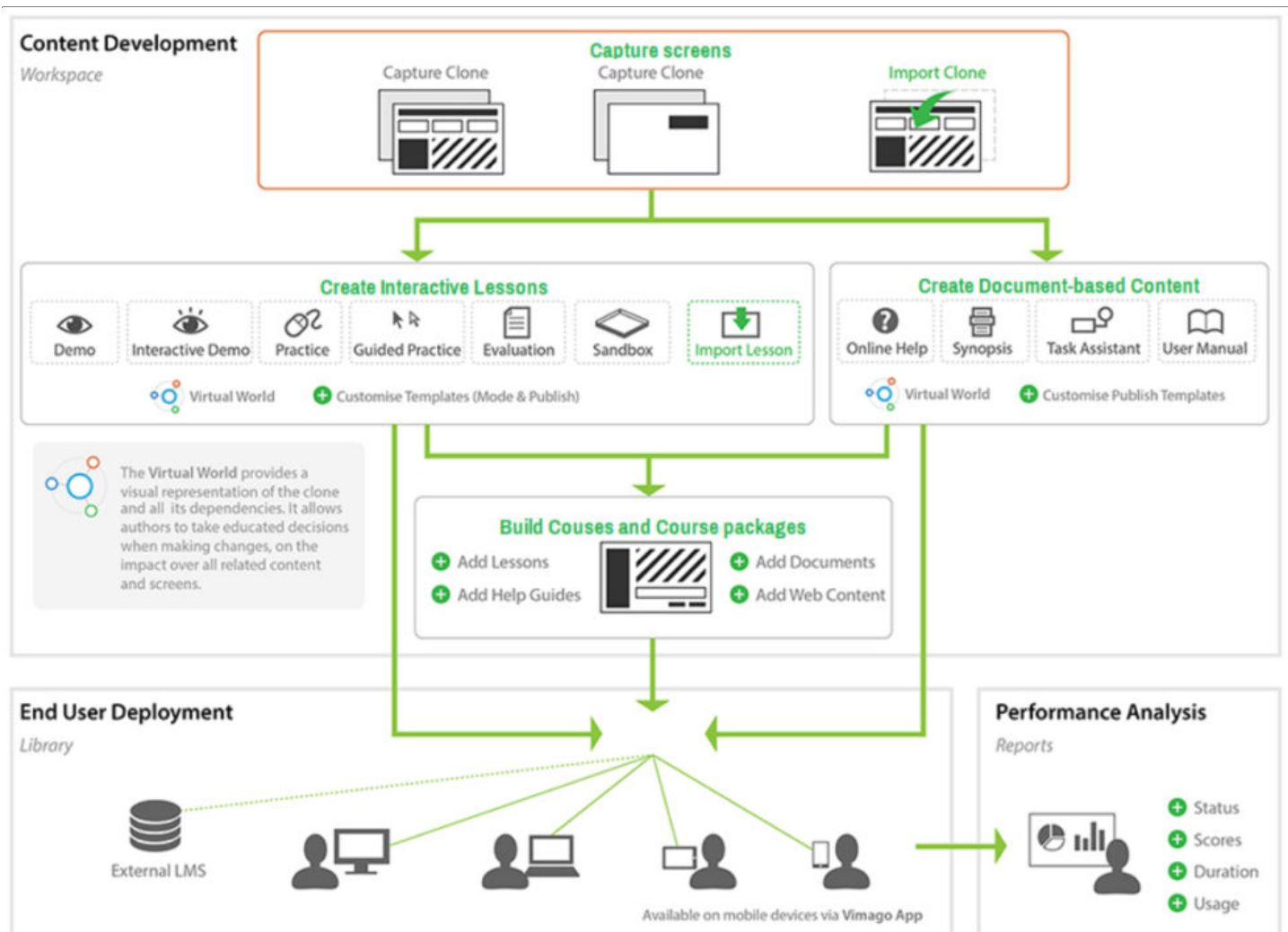
the learning content (in its physical or digital form) and the lifecycle of the above-mentioned content. The lifecycle pit stops of managing content should include the following:

- Organizing/classifying the content.
- Creating new content and integrating it into the main content structure.
- Storing content based on ease of access, delivery speed, security, and other factors depending on the organization's needs.
- Moving the content to maintain consistency and a seamless workflow.
- Editing and versioning to track changes and multiple content versions.
- Publishing (distribution) to officially deliver the content to (end) users.
- Archiving/removing the infrequently accessed or/and obsolete content.

Almost all LMSs on the market these days have an integrated content management platform that could provide automated processes for collaborative content management and content creation. Some organizations use their content management platforms that integrate with the Learning System, thus delivering a comprehensive management solution to “centralize” their workload and business goals.

Some LMSs come with a content management capability that facilitates all mentioned actions. Depending on the interface or the platform, some of the actions could be sequential or parented by other actions/features. For example, content editing could be under the content moving tab or storing assimilated with archiving/deleting functionality.

In the diagram below (the structured workflow of an LMS), the content creation and content management functionalities are somewhat overlapping: adding lessons or documents to an existing package belongs to both creation and management. Generating interactive lessons from the existing content could be considered at the same time, management and content creation task.



Moreover, organizing a library is as creative as any content creation task. The way the library is structured and indexed can impact the lesson output and therefore change the learning process and its progression.

Learning Portals

Introduced worldwide primarily by educational institutions, learning portals are now used as corporate learning tools with access points dedicated to users. By registering with member access code/username, the learning portals deliver key resources, training, knowledge database, offer virtual help, give access to learning hubs, create working groups, allow collaborative project participation.

The main difference between learning portals and LMSs is that an LMS manages the roles and access permissions to the learning database; whereas the learning portal has one single access point for all users. With an LMS, you can customize groups' access, role permissions, condition content visibility, and interaction based on users' profiles. Portals are more user-oriented than an LMS as the users can themselves access and manage content. For the LMS, the author and the manager are more involved in making decisions on the content directed to the end-user (the trainee).

Lots of companies are currently introducing different platform extensions plugged into their internal portal to create an easy-access knowledge base dedicated to both learning and working audiences. When it comes to corporate learning, the training process seems to become very sophisticated and complex; each company develops and uses specific tools or a one-stop

solution to address its learning and training needs.
