
LMS & LCMS: Understand the Difference

Introduction

LMS and LCMS are often used interchangeably giving rise to the confusion regarding the terms. Before elaborating on the differences between LMS and LCMS, it is important to understand what these abbreviations stand for.

LMS stands for Learning Management System and LCMS for Learning Content Management System. LMS is used for planning, organizing and managing e-learning workflow, whereas LCMS focuses on content creation with authors or subject matter experts designing/writing training content and also publishing, delivering and analyzing content consumption.

LMS vs LCMS: Understanding the Difference

To clearly understand both the terms, it is important to remember that LCMS provides features and functionalities specially designed to create learning content for any training environment. Therefore, most LCMSs come with an integration tool that makes the migration of proprietary tools easy and less time-consuming. On the other hand, LMS is a high-level solution designed for planning, managing, and delivering training events within an organization.

Essentially, LMS is more an idea on how to structure/manage learning processes, whereas LCMS is more like a tool for authors and instructional designers. To put it shortly, an LCMS is an LMS with the ability to author content built-in.

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To sum it up, the main difference between the two systems is precisely the single word that sets them apart: content. LCMS is essentially an active content-authoring application meant to help produce training content but also allows you to publish, deliver and measure the usage of that content. While an LMS is simply a platform that can deliver and measure content usage. Determining whether you should consider an LMS or an LCMS comes down to whether you want one consolidated tool that allows you to develop, deliver and measure all in one tool, or whether you simply want a tool that can deliver training and provide reports on who took it.