

Learning Management Systems

Navigating the What, Why, and When for Nonprofits

What is a Learning Management System?

- A software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, automation, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, or learning and development program
- Has tools that let you track how users move through the eLearning content
- Has tools that let learners interact with the content and each other

Key Advantages of Using a Learning Management System

Personalized Learning/
Learn at Own Pace



Experimental
Learning



Content
Standardization



Increased Productivity/
Gamification



Reduced
Training Costs



Real-Time Access &
Updates



USE CASES

Use Case 1: Learning for Students or Other Constituents

Your organization would like to offer your constituents online homeownership education and financial-wellness courses. You are looking for a tool that allows you to integrate summaries, videos, slides, quizzes, assignments, and various other features in a central location.

LMS Advantages

- Ability to easily track and monitor a student's progress at any time. Several Learning Management Tools include reporting and analytics tools for instructors
- Students can access materials centrally at any point in time
- Learning Management Systems often include tools that can help facilitate social interactions and collaborations through integrated forums or instructor notification features
- Opportunity to easily include a variety of media types such as videos, quizzes, audio, and text to keep students engaged

Use Case 2: Training for Employees or Volunteers

Your organization relies on hundreds of volunteers that need to be trained on basic safety and security practices. Your volunteers must be trained when they arrive at the volunteer site which significantly reduces the amount of time they have for volunteer work.

LMS Advantages

- Training remotely helps improve efficiency and convenience factors for trainers and trainees
- Policy or procedure changes can easily be made and communicated to users
- Ability to track affirmations and certification for compliance purposes through assignments or assessment tools
- May offer greater flexibility in accommodating employees and volunteers with assistive support needs

Use Case 3: Need to Reduce Training Costs

Your organization is scaling its community advocacy workshops and needs to scale training to more advocates while maintaining low costs without compromising on providing and delivering quality content. You also do not expect to receive additional resources to hire additional trainers or purchase additional physical materials to help facilitate these workshops.

LMS Advantages

- Standardized features of systems reducing manual effort maintain and updating materials, leading to time savings
- Reduced need to have multiple trainers leading multiple workshops
- Reduced or eliminated costs of travel and physical materials for in person or classroom training

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Navigating Change Management

- While you are exploring different Learning Management Systems, it is important to secure buy-in from your various stakeholders and have a change management plan for transitioning to the LMS:
- Identify your stakeholders and communicate why transitioning to an LMS will be advantageous to them. This includes securing buy-in from: Senior leaders, Managers/Instructors/Administrators, and Learners
- Involve end users in user testing and demo sessions as partners-in-change
- Create clear user guides and conduct training sessions on use of Learning Management System
- Share proof of success by collecting and reporting on data system usage and user feedback
- Identify product owner(s) for the LMS who will help set standards and promote best practices for users on an ongoing basis

Choosing a Learning Management System

Distinguish between Must-have and Nice-to-have capabilities

Defining Your Requirements			
Security	Functionality	Accessibility	Efficiency & Compatibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do you need to protect individual profile data or Personal Identifiable Information (PII) like ID numbers, addresses, or names? What level of ID and password protection do you need? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The LMS selected needs to be able to serve organizational goals. Is there a need to certify or test the user? What is the ease of transferring existing or creating new content into the LMS? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any accessibility requirements that your users will need? Will you need the LMS to have specific assistive technologies (Text-to-speech, Speech Recognition, High Contrast Color Options, Screen Magnifier)? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Will the LMS need to work across a wide variety of operating systems? Do you expect the LMS to be able to be used across multiple platforms (Mobile, PC, Tablet)?

Learning Management Systems Comparison Matrix

TIP: Many LMS software companies offer reduced or special rates for non-profit organizations. It never hurts to ask!

Learning Management System	Complexity	Flexibility	Functional Richness	Compliance	Cost
Atutor (Open Source)	Higher complexity to implement and support, simple interface	Web-based only	Extensive customization options	Available tracking	No cost for licensing or support, possible costs for infrastructure
EasyLMS	Low complexity, extensive support network, easy to create content, extensive existing content	Web-based only	Extensive customization options, integration with other systems	Available tracking	Monthly fees for service, infrastructure included
Edsby	Low complexity, extensive support network, easy to create content, extensive existing content	Web-based only	Extensive customization options, integration with other systems	Available tracking	Contact Edsby for licensing fees
Google Classroom	Higher complexity to implement and support, simple interface	Multi-platform support: Mobile, tablet, personal computer	Extensive customization options	Available tracking	No cost for licensing or support, possible costs for infrastructure
Moodle (Open Source)	Low complexity, extensive support network, easy to create content, extensive existing content	Low complexity, extensive support network, easy to create content, extensive existing content	Multi-platform support: Mobile, tablet, personal computer	Extensive available tracking	No cost for licensing or support, possible costs for infrastructure
Open edX (Open Source)	Low complexity, extensive support network, easy to create content, extensive existing content	Web-based only	Extensive customization options, integration with other systems	Available tracking	Contact Open edX for licensing fees
Schoology	Higher complexity to implement and support, simple interface	Multi-platform support: Mobile, tablet, personal computer	Extensive customization options, integration with other systems	Available tracking	Contact Schoology for licensing fees
TalentLMS	Low complexity, extensive support network, easy to create content, extensive existing content	Multi-platform support: Mobile, tablet, personal computer	Multi-platform support: Mobile, tablet, personal computer	Available tracking	Monthly fees for service, infrastructure included

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