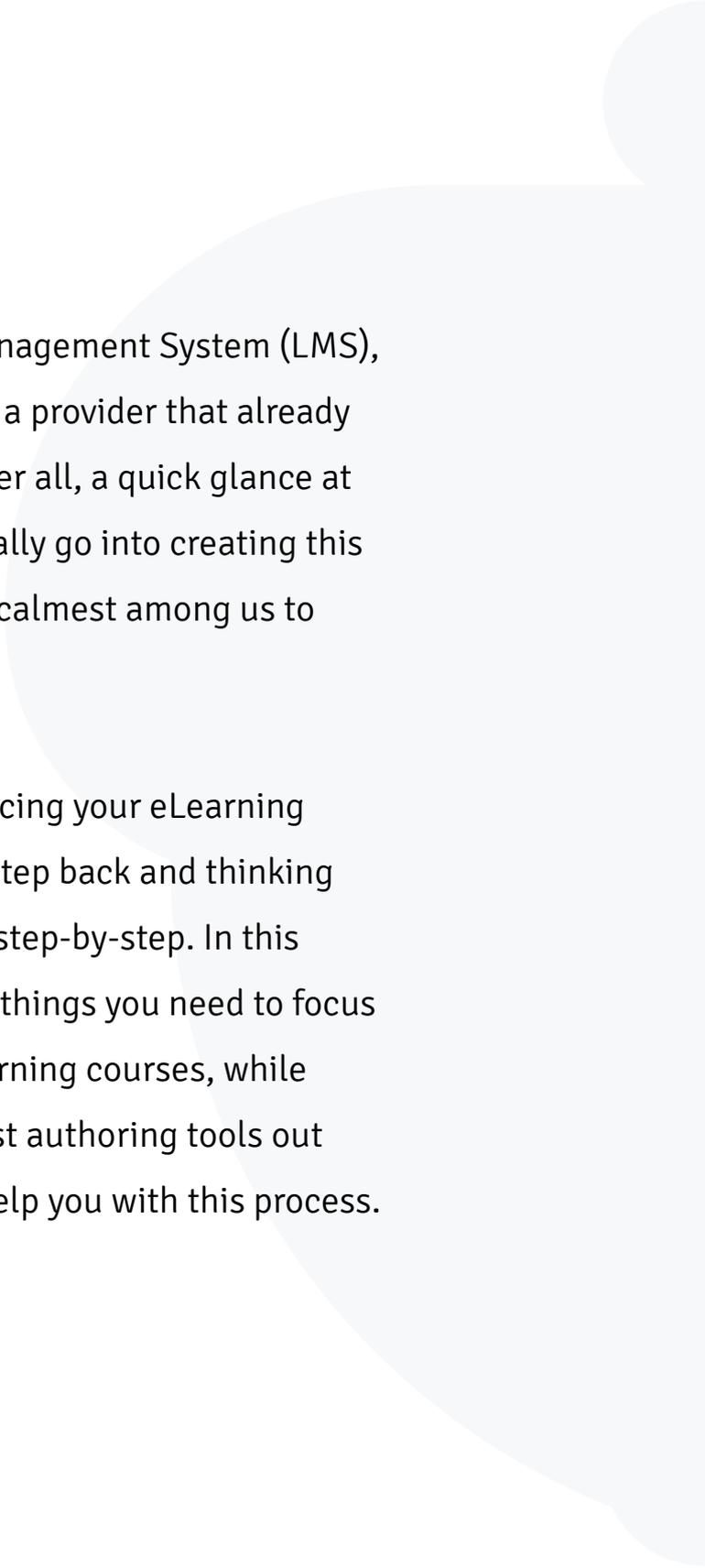




**Creating eLearning  
content without stress**





When buying a Learning Management System (LMS), it can be tempting to opt for a provider that already delivers its own content. After all, a quick glance at how much work can potentially go into creating this content will cause even the calmest among us to stress.

Before you consider outsourcing your eLearning content, it's worth taking a step back and thinking about the creation process, step-by-step. In this article, we'll go through the things you need to focus on to efficiently create eLearning courses, while highlighting some of the best authoring tools out there that are designed to help you with this process.



## Getting Started

The hardest part of creating any kind of content is simply getting started. There's always a million reasons you can come up with for delaying it, though one of the main ones is almost always a fear of creating eLearning resources that don't meet expectations.

### **KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE**

To make sure that you're not wasting your energy, it's important to get started with a bit of background research to establish who your audience is, why they need to engage with eLearning material, and what goals you're trying to achieve with it.

There are many forms of data collection that you can employ, from straightforward interviews and focus groups through to more detailed analyses of previous efforts. The ultimate aim, however, remains the same – to better understand what they actually want and need from your eLearning courses, what will motivate them to engage with your content, and how you can deliver this.

### **DESIGN THE RIGHT FORM OF CONTENT**

Once you understand better what your audience wants, it's time to clarify what kind of eLearning content you'll be producing. Generally, this depends on the type of engagement the audience needs. If decision-making should be a key element of their eLearning, then an interactive course with questions and quizzes might prove to be suitable.

Conversely, if your eLearning content's aim is to raise awareness of, or educate the audience about, particular issues that will be tested in a real-life setting, then click-and-read content may be more effective.

# Getting started cont.

## **DON'T GET TOO COMPLICATED**

When you're just beginning with creating eLearning content, it's best to keep things clear and simple. Just as guitar players have to learn the basic chords before they can even dream of hitting that AC/DC solo, so too should you begin with elements that are easier to get the hang of. Keep your multimedia elements to a manageable level at first, only integrating them more as you become increasingly comfortable with the process of making eLearning content.

## **HAVE REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS OF YOURSELF**

Perhaps one of the biggest impediments to creating eLearning content from a blank slate is the learning curve. Let's face it – none of us are perfect when we first try and learn a new skill. Using an LMS provider that already has its own content might seem like a good idea at this point, but its best to avoid this temptation. Though the content will generally be at an acceptable standard - It may not be customisable and relevant to your audience at all points. The only way to guarantee that the content is correct is if you experiment and create it yourself.

Of course, to properly experiment with producing eLearning courses, you need to have the right tools at your disposal. This is where authoring tools come in.





# Authoring Tools - Your Secret Weapon

An eLearning content authoring tool is basically a type of software that enables the user to create eLearning courses with multimedia and text in them. The whole point of these tools is that those of us who don't have any technical expertise can still use them. Their pre-programmed nature tends to provide a range of templates, tools, interactions and other media that, if it's a good authoring tool, it will be easy to manipulate and organise.

Some of the more common eLearning authoring tools include:



## Adobe Captivate 9

### ADOBE CAPTIVATE

Adobe Captivate is an extremely powerful and complex authoring tool. This software is available for both Windows and Mac, and relatively simple content can be easily produced using its pre-set themes and built-in screen recording capability. However, mastering this software is a time-consuming process that doesn't lend itself well to a collaborative approach. In addition, the support provided by Adobe can pale in comparison to some of the other authoring tool providers.



### VIDVERSITY

Vidversity is an Australian online video course creation software and video course platform. That allows you to easily create high impact video courses and assessments inside your LMS. Not only is it extremely cost-effective it is also incredibly user -friendly. In fact, no prior online learning experience is necessary! And not only can courses be simply and quickly created and delivered, but your courses can also be very easily updated or outdated content removed, addressing one of the major downsides of traditional eLearning.



## Authoring Tools - Your Secret Weapon Cont.

# articulāte

### ARTICULATE STORYLINE

This online training software is one of the more widely used authoring tools, perhaps due to the flexibility and high level of control and customisability that it provides. This means that there is an engaged and willing online community generally ready to troubleshoot any issues that you might run into using it – a good resource to have, since Articulate Storyline can, at times, be prone to bugs.

# Elucidat

### ELUCIDAT

A cloud-based system, Elucidat was designed with the goal of allowing users to create high-quality eLearning content with ease. Its built-in responsive output means that your content will be accessible across most devices, and its vast library of pre-existing templates allows for the production of flashy and highly customisable content. Though it's quite easy to use at first, Elucidat does require significant time to understand its finer features, and it can be a touch expensive for users only making eLearning content infrequently.

# Lectora®

### LECTORA

Lectora is one of the oldest and most well-known eLearning content authoring tools out there, with this software now currently in its 17th version. A web-based platform that allows for cross-device compatibility, it truly rewards users who have been producing content for a long time, and thus can prove to be a little cumbersome for newcomers. A cloud-based option called Lectora Online allows for better collaboration than the traditional option, however, and a team-based approach with this software could yield strong dividends.



## Choosing the Right Authoring Tool

Each authoring tool comes with its own benefits and drawbacks, which can make it difficult to know which is best for you – particularly if you’re a novice in terms of eLearning content creation. Here are some factors worth considering that might make it easier for you to decide which one to choose:

- ▶ **The skill level of your team:** If you and your content creation team have a fair degree of familiarity with eLearning authoring tools, it naturally follows that a more advanced and complex solution could provide the most benefit. The opposite also holds true – if you’re less experienced or unsure of the direction you want the content to take, an authoring tool with greater guidance should suffice.
- ▶ **The level of interactivity required:** It’s quite simple – the more interactive elements your eLearning content will have, the more sophisticated your authoring tool of choice should be.
- ▶ **The needs of the learners:** The type of user that your eLearning content will attract should also guide the authoring tool you opt for. What they have to learn, how

they should learn it, and whether they will benefit from a high degree of interactivity or not are all factors that should be kept in mind.

While choosing the right type of authoring tool is crucial to successfully creating engaging eLearning content, the truth is that employing any authoring tool will give you a leg-up in the process. Authoring tools give you the freedom to not rely on LMS providers that create their own content, allowing you to keep this element in-house and, ultimately, maintain control over what you produce.



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