

Citizens Advice (CiTA)

Supporting the introduction of blended solutions

CiTA was keen to explore the use of blended learning to increase access to training and help reduce long term costs. As staff are geographically spread and mainly part-time, attendance at workshops in central locations is problematic, presenting a major opportunity for blended solutions.

The challenge

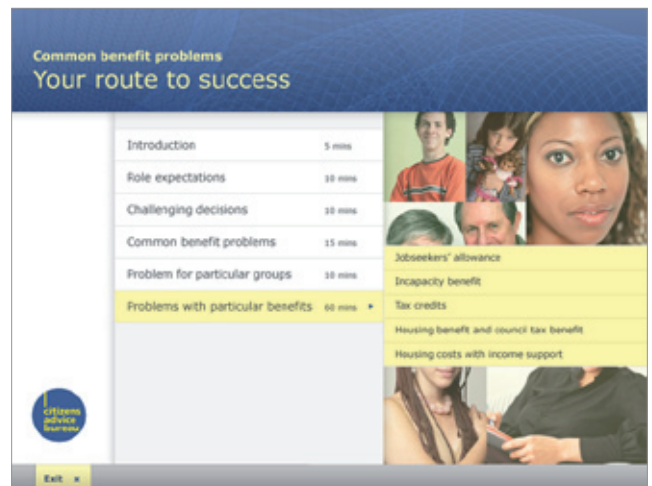
- ACiTA commissioned Epic to:
- Investigate technologies for remote training, support and supervision
- Investigate generic authoring tools to facilitate long-term in-house development
- Determine how CiTA could address their training needs with the resources available
- Model how a pilot project could be developed, delivered and evaluated and so inform full roll-out

Our consulting team reviewed existing materials, visited bureaux to talk to staff, conducted focus groups/design sessions with the CiTA team and developed a cost-benefit analysis of the potential for blends. We also engaged with key stakeholders, including organisations involved in similar initiatives, such as Money Advice Trust. This further informed our thinking, enabling us to recommend how CiTA could achieve maximum return on investment.

The solution

Epic submitted recommendations for implementation of the blended learning strategy:

- Initial development of 8 pilot e-learning modules on benefits - Income Support, Disability Living Allowance etc - to support front line staff when dealing with customers' queries
- Purchase of 'Lectora' authoring tool
- A route-map for development of blended solutions in other subjects
- Plans for making CiTA self-sufficient in design, development and delivery of blended solutions, under a staged process (see below)



Joint working to build capability

To facilitate this strategic direction, CiTA partnered Epic to jointly deliver the benefits e-learning. This was achieved by ensuring the CiTA team:

- Agreed a staged approach, with clear milestones and success measures
- Were fully engaged in the process, from planning to delivery
- Jointly agreed designs and templates for the benefits training
- Worked side-by-side with the Epic design, graphics and programming teams

A staged process of development, with Epic coaching and mentoring CiTA, initially in design, then in use of Lectora, has enabled CiTA to build subsequent materials themselves. Primarily, we built CiTA's capability through direct involvement in Epic's activities, the best way to learn blended learning design and keep costs to a minimum, a key priority for not-for-profit customers.

For more information on our work in this area, call +44 (0) 1273 728686