



Epic White Papers

Epic's White Papers inform and stimulate thought about 'everything e'. They're lively, informative and a great read! Below is a summary of those currently available, free for download from www.epic.co.uk

Benefits of e-learning	
Carbon reduction and e-learning	The Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) is a crucial government initiative designed to transform the way we see climate change, and encourage organisations to reduce their carbon footprints . This White Paper explains what the CRC is and how it affects us, comparing the relative carbon footprints of elearning and traditional classroom-based models. It shows how elearning can help organisations meet their reduced energy targets.
E-learning: return on investment	Kirkpatrick's four levels of evaluation for training interventions, and Phillip's Return on Investment (ROI) model are well documented. But how do the levels relate to e-learning? This White Paper shows how to calculate ROI using a range of tools and templates, drawing on numerous case study examples demonstrating the high ROI delivered by online learning , distance learning and blended solutions
Organisational benefits of e-learning	This White Paper provides extensive evidence for the effectiveness of elearning in the public and private sectors , from both the UK and the US. It shows widespread benefits in terms of reduced costs, improved performance and organisational transformation. It also argues that too great an emphasis on cost disguises the real strategic potential of online learning. A must-read for anyone presenting a case for investment in elearning or researching the effectiveness of online training.

Subjects	
Smartphones: a smart way forward for learning?	Over the past decade, advances in mobile communications have created smartphones which offer the same functionality as a PC - access to the internet, input/transfer of data and access to text, audio and video files. Feature-rich, internet connected smartphones have seemingly limitless potential for information, education and entertainment. This White Paper explores how smartphones can be used for 'anytime, anyplace, anywhere' learning. It looks at the massive opportunities they offer individuals and organisations in the context of personal and professional development and shows how smartphone-delivered training could be the successor to traditional e-learning.
Induction and e-learning	There's no other point in an individual's career when they're more receptive to learning than when they first join a new company. Unfortunately, many organisations squander the opportunity to enthuse and engage their new recruits. This White Paper looks at eight common problems that occur with induction and how elearning offers the ideal solution . It explores how elearning offers a low-cost, consistent, flexible, 24/7 solution that's easy to update and can be instantly rolled out to audiences worldwide, can be used as ongoing support, and spur new joiners to take control of their personal development. It demonstrates why many organisations have found induction to be the killer application for elearning.
Compliance training and e-learning	This White Paper looks at the benefits of e-learning for compliance training – training required due to legislation, regulation, technical standards or best practice policies originating from an external body. E-learning has great advantages over face-to-face compliance training as it can be rolled out across large, dispersed populations. It's cost effective, easy to update, provides consistent messages and usage can be tracked and reported for compliance purposes. If ever there was an application for e-learning, it has to be compliance.
Soft skills and e-learning	It's the age-old question: can technology really be effective in teaching soft skills traditionally taught in the classroom? The answer's a resounding 'yes!' This White Paper looks at the different types of soft skills and how they can be taught via elearning. After a brief exploration of learning theory, it looks at the pros and cons of elearning for soft skills training, drawing on several examples where Epic has successfully employed soft skills simulations for clients.

Cont: Subjects

Healthcare and e-learning	<p>As one of the world's largest employers, with a workforce in excess of 1.3 million, the NHS faces a number of unique challenges for training design and delivery. A number of policy documents and strategic frameworks, such as 'Supporting Best Practice in e-learning across the NHS' and 'Modernising healthcare training: e-learning in the healthcare services' have highlighted e-learning's potential within the NHS. This White Paper investigates the strategic and organisational benefits of e-learning in providing consistent and effective skill development training to NHS personnel. It uses several case studies and a troubleshooting guide for introducing e-learning solutions within the healthcare sector.</p>
Systems training and e-learning	<p>With most new computer systems, the emphasis is on technical implementation – training is often left to the last minute or ignored completely! Fortunately, elearning is ideal for systems training. It can fully simulate the system and provide targeted, practical tips, enabling experimentation in a safe environment. And it can be rolled out quickly. This White Paper explores how to create effective systems training, based on Epic's experience of developing over 1,000 hours of online systems elearning. It explores a range of instructional approaches including our own 'Do it, View it' learning model and Sandpit consolidation tool, as well as the more traditional 'Show me, Try it, Test me' approach.</p>

Blended learning and learning design

Blended learning	<p>This White Paper starts with Elliot Masie's definition of blended learning as, "The use of two or more distinct methods of training" and then explores different types of learning. It shows how blending online components such as e-coaching, collaborative learning and knowledge management with more traditional, offline, classroom-based learning enables students to learn quicker and more effectively than by traditional learning alone.</p>
Blended learning in practice	<p>This follow up to our 'Blended learning' White Paper gives practical advice on constructing effective blends. Exploring different types of blend, it outlines a practical three-step guide to creating the perfect blended solution, combining elearning with face-to-face learning and other delivery methods. This innovative approach considers the type of content you're dealing with and how to overcome typical organisational constraints, such as tight deadlines, limited budget, resource availability and so on. And if the theory's too much, you'll find an invaluable case study of Epic's work with a major UK bank.</p>
Use of media in e-learning	<p>This White Paper explores the use of media in e-learning and how to combine them into an effective learning experience. It covers the use of text, audio, graphics, photographic images, animation and video, exploring the advantages/disadvantages of each and how they should be used for effective learning. Despite advances in technology and a continuing trend towards 'less is more', the paper concludes that text is likely to remain the dominant form of media in e-learning for some time. What is likely to change is the way in which text is supplemented by rich media.</p>
Learning design for e-learning	<p>Although there are no guarantees that training will lead to improved performance, good learning design can greatly increase the chances. This White Paper outlines Epic's approach to learning design and describes how we use best practice approaches to maximise our clients' ROI in elearning. Specifically, we define what learning design is, explain the five principles of 'good learning', look at the psychological theories which underpin our elearning models and reveal the three universal truths about learning.</p>
Usability in e-learning	<p>Well designed elearning is easy to use. But poorly designed interfaces or counter-intuitive structures are a major factor in learners dropping out of elearning programmes. In this White Paper we argue the need for content producers to adopt a learner-centric approach to elearning, exploring best practice approaches to interface design and how usability requirements should be intrinsic to the development process.</p>
Localisation and e-learning	<p>The overall aim of localisation is not just the translation and adaptation of software and content from the original language. It's more complex than that and involves rebuilding, testing and fixing the localised product to ensure it appears as if originally written in the target language. This White Paper outlines methods for localisation of e-learning, looking not just at translation, but the importance of understanding local culture and learning practices. It provides practical advice on how to 'design for localisation', including how to avoid language and culture-specific content in order to make localisation smoother and more cost effective. Several case studies demonstrate this theory in practice.</p>
Build, buy or both?	<p>The explosion in rapid elearning authoring tools means it's no longer a question of which supplier to work with, but whether to work with a supplier at all. 'DIY' elearning has its advantages, but is it really more cost effective than using a specialist supplier? This White Paper looks at the options available to any organisation looking to develop bespoke elearning and online solutions - build your own, ask a supplier like Epic to do it, or do both. The paper shows there's no universal solution - the most effective option depends on a range of factors specific to each organisation.</p>

Cont: Blended learning and learning design

Learner Centred Design in e-learning	Epic's Learner Centred Design (LCD) framework seeks to ensure that both learners and organisations benefit from the implementation of good quality, engaging and effective e-learning. This White Paper is structured in three discrete parts. Part 1 looks at the arguments in favour of LCD and how overlooking this approach can lead to failed projects, wasted resources and poor investment. Part 2 examines the 'how' of LCD and focuses on case study examples, describing best practice and spectacular failures! Part 3 demonstrates how elements of LCD, such as collaboration with stakeholders and learners throughout the design process, can increase the ROI of e-learning interventions.
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How people learn

Assessment and e-learning	With 21st century learning comes 21st century assessment. By exploring how to assess learner knowledge and procedural, mental, interpersonal and psychomotor skills, this White Paper studies the advantages of online assessment over traditional methods. It looks at why online assessment is a necessity, the potential problems with various methods of assessment and what to assess. A range of practical tips are provided for different types of online assessment and for interpreting user feedback.
The psychology of e-learning	To understand the changing nature of learning and how best to create e-learning solutions , it's crucial to re-evaluate traditional approaches to learning psychology. This White Paper provides an overview of the continuing shift from Behaviourism to Cognitive Psychology and Constructivism. It then considers these approaches in the spectrum of emerging technologies, identifying typical motivational obstacles and how to avoid them. And if the psychobabble doesn't convince you, we've identified ten benefits of e-learning over traditional training methods!
Motivation in e-learning	A recent UK survey discovered that 38% of adults had completed no formal learning in the past three years. It's clear that a significant number of people have become disillusioned with their learning experiences in school, at college and in the workplace. This White Paper looks at how behaviourist theories of learning have failed to address the fundamental issue of motivation. Behaviour can be measured as a learning output but it's the learner's willingness to learn which is important. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations are examined and the paper looks at how motivational obstacles can prevent a learner from considering, starting and completing any form of training, including elearning.
Pedagogy and e-learning	Pedagogy - the 'science of teaching' . But the science of learning is surely not just concerned with teaching, and learning is not necessarily a consequence of teaching. This White Paper seeks to unravel the confusion by looking at how the definition of pedagogy has changed over the past 5,000 years. It gives compelling evidence, in the form of research studies, for the shift from teacher-centric to student-centric learning, looking at how technological advances from the printing press right up to Web 2.0 have encouraged this pedagogical shift.

Innovation in e-learning

Simulations and e-learning	Learning through experience is long-winded, expensive and potentially dangerous! In contrast, simulations are quick, cost effective and safe. However, the use of simulations within elearning is still relatively rare despite their many benefits and their power to motivate learners. This White Paper examines the advantages of simulations, provides an overview of the different types and looks at best practice design, using several Epic case study examples.
Blogs	Unless you've been underneath a rock for the last decade, you'll know what blogging is, but do you understand its full potential? This White Paper looks at the history of blogging and why it has become such a worldwide phenomenon. It also takes an informative look at blogging do's and don'ts , blogging in business and of course, blogging and e-learning . Blogs succeed because of their informal tone, their passion and their human quality. We investigate why blogging is fast becoming a good companion for e-learning solutions.
Web 2.0	The first decade of the World Wide Web, sometimes called Web 1.0 , was about making large amounts of information widely and easily accessible. Web 1.0 has since been superseded by Web 2.0, a very different environment. This White Paper explains the shift from the one-way, read only, published internet environment to a many-way, participative environment. It explores the definition of Web 2.0 , explains the seven principles on which Web 2.0 is built and describes its impact on business and workforce learning. Finally, there's a glance at what's coming next - Web 3.0 , and what this could mean for the future.

Delivery

Change management and e-learning	Developing outstanding e-learning isn't enough by itself to deliver true business benefits. Users must be aware of the programme, want to complete it and be able to gain easy access. But typically, there are many barriers to successful implementation, such as an entrenched classroom approach, reluctance towards adopting new technology, time pressure and lack of line management support. This White Paper shows how Kotter's change management model can be used to market and promote e-learning , embedding it within the organisational culture. Drawing on a range of case studies and real-life examples, it provides a practical approach for delivering true change through e-learning and blended solutions.
E-tutoring	The benefits of e-learning are one thing, but people still need human interaction and guidance as they learn. This is particularly true if online learning isn't part of a collaborative, blended solution . Enter the e-tutor. This White Paper outlines the numerous roles of an e-tutor; from administrator to facilitator and assessor. An e-tutor acts as a focus for discussion, but to get started and maintain the learner's interest is more difficult than it might seem. This paper looks at how to use online tools like email and forums, as well as real-time tools.

E-learning technology

Open Source and e-learning	There's more to Learning Management Systems (LMSs) than Moodle. Whether you need to manage training or keep better educational records, there's now an LMS for every requirement. This White Paper looks at the current LMS market, the benefits, risks and myths, including practical tips on how to select the right open source LMS and a summary of selected providers. There's also a complete list of open source LMSs. So whatever your LMS needs are, the answer's here!
Reusable learning objects	Breaking e-learning down into small units, or reusable learning objects (RLOs), is widely accepted as good practice. It means content is on hand when required for 'just-in-time' learning and can be reused in numerous personalised solutions. This White Paper looks in detail at learning objects, defines what they are, debates how they can be used and explores the role they play within a blended solution. It explores the challenge of creating meaningful learning experiences from a mass of disparate learning objects, concluding that they work best when integrated within a framework e-learning programme.
Testing for e-learning	Effective testing is a crucial stage in the e-learning development lifecycle as it ensures delivery of high-quality materials. Yet many organisations undervalue testing, and even those that do recognise its value are prone to reducing testing time when faced with looming deadlines. Tucked between development and delivery, any project delays naturally put pressure on the testing phase. This White Paper shows how it's possible to combine a rigorous testing process with the demands and complexities of software development, including e-learning. It focuses on the importance and value of testing, explaining how to create a robust test plan and highlighting the benefits of outsourcing testing .

E-learning standards

Standards in e-learning	Standards are meant to make life easier. But when it comes to e-learning, an array of standards bodies, acronyms and jargon has held back both understanding and implementation of e-learning solutions. These include Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM), the Aviation Industry CBT Committee (AICC) and the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers (IEEE). The result is that buyers are bewildered by the terminology and unsure what they require. Some vendors exaggerate the benefits of standards and push buyers towards them, often without justification. This White Paper demystifies, clarifies and explains the whole area of e-learning standards . It looks at the definition of standards and whether or not they matter. It then explores which organisations are creating these standards and defines, in simple terms, what they mean, together with their potential application.
Accessibility and e-learning	For those of us with disabilities, conventional methods of learning have their limitations. Fortunately, the universal accessibility and acceptance of internet technologies, and the accessibility of content mean e-learning can deliver universal access for all. This White Paper examines the benefits and drawbacks of e-learning for people with visual, physical, cognitive and aural disabilities, arguing for a pragmatic approach to accessibility in e-learning . It examines the future of assistive technologies and how they might assist learners, and provides an overview of WAI version 2, US Section 508, UK DDA and SENDA, QAA, RNIB, UK government guidelines and IMS. It also explores how to design e-learning to meet accessibility requirements.