

# Evaluating eLearning Software

Once you have chosen the type(s) of elearning software that will best suit your organization's needs—authoring tool, LMS, CMS or LCMS—you will need to look at some key components in choosing your software.

Cool elearning software won't do you any good if it or the company that sells it can't provide the critical solutions you need. As you research your software options, consider these attributes:

## Accessibility

Your elearning courses must be accessible by all of your end users. Your learners may be using a variety of equipment—some old, some new. They may not have Internet access in some locations or be able to run DVD's from their machines. When reviewing elearning software, find out if it can publish to HTML, CD-ROM, DVD or single file executable. You may need some or all of these publishing capabilities for your learners.

## Compatibility

The elearning software you choose must be compatible with any software you may use in conjunction with your elearning courses. For example, if you use an LMS, you must make sure that your authoring tool provides seamless integration with that LMS. If it doesn't, you may run into technical issues and not be able to host or track your courses on your LMS.

## Maintainability

Your elearning software must be easy to maintain throughout a long period of time. Look at the reputation of your prospective elearning software vendors. Do they publish service packs and offer renewals? Vendors that engage in these activities typically provide maintainable software—software that you'll be able to use long term. Service packs are a great way for an elearning vendor to update their software between releases so that you don't miss any critical updates.

## Usability

Ease of use should be a top priority when choosing elearning software. If it will take weeks or months for your developers, instructors and employees to learn the software, they will not want to use it for their courses. Your courses should be easy for your designers to create and easy for your learners to use. When selecting an LMS, your staff needs to understand how

content is tracked and submitted or they may have difficulties interpreting the data. As with any software purchase, you'll want to select a tool that is intuitive for your staff and learners.

## **Next Steps**

Utilize the above criteria as you begin evaluating elearning vendors and software. With this information, you will be able to make an informed decision and select the best software and elearning vendor for your elearning program.