

E-Learning Market Update (May 14)



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The Next Big Thing? 4 Learning Ideas for Generation C

I recently spent three days in Washington DC at the ASTD discussing mobile, social and online learning. When I wasn't working the Kineo booth I was wandering the floor and attending sessions.

Too often, tradeshow and conferences serve as a depressing reminder of how little changes in the training world. But actually, I came away energized and excited because I can't remember a time over my fifteen years in the industry when there was more opportunity for innovation.

Is Social the Secret Sauce?

YouTube, Google, Twitter, LinkedIn (not to mention hundreds of other websites and apps), and the ease by which they're accessed, have changed the way we learn, share and connect. A billion visitors to YouTube each month tells us there's more to this than cat videos. This is a content creation and sharing platform like no other.

So, what does this mean for learning and development? Are we meeting learners where they are and taking advantage of all the opportunities available to design and implement engaging solutions that make a difference?

The foundation for effective learning will always be grounded in outcomes, they will include authentic contexts to engage the learner and provide the opportunity to practice and fail. But can we go beyond that for generation C (content, of course)?

Here are four ideas to give your learning a next generation vitamin C boost.

1. Think Beginning, Not an End

If we've designed an effective learning experience, we have a learner who is engaged and eager to learn more. Too often, at this point of heightened interest, we abandon our learner and move on to the next thing. Content curation – the act of finding relevant content and sharing it with learners – can give your learning solution that “long tail” to make a real impact and drive long-term change.

Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+ are all great platforms for sharing what you know and have discovered. Check out [Smartifico](#) for a cool tool that helps you find the most relevant content on the web. And don't forget something as simple as Google Alerts to get regular updates on the latest posts for a topic.

2. Share It in Pictures

Gen C loves to share picture and videos. Sometimes too much...but let's focus on the positives. Most of the time we create training because we want our learners to do something – merchandise shelves a certain way, deliver customer service to delight our customers, coach an employee to achieve better results.

99% percent of us are walking around with a camera and camcorder in our pocket, so why not invite people to share their success with pictures & videos? Check out [Kaltura](#) for a cool video upload activity that integrates with Moodle, Totara, SharePoint and Drupal.

This type of sharing will keep the goals and outcomes of your training top-of-mind and promote models of success for others to emulate. If you're building evidence and assessment tools, this is relevant.

3. Recognize Success and Accomplishments

Generation X had it tough. Their parents pushed and pushed, so they knew how to work hard and accept what crumbs of acknowledgement they received (speaking for myself of course)...Generation C is the opposite. They've received trophies and ribbons from day one (yes, sometimes Photoshopped) and expect and crave positive reinforcement.

Now, as their employer we need to do the same, ideally in a very public way. [Mozilla Open Badges](#) are a great tool to provide recognition in a way that allows the employee to share them on Twitter, WordPress, Moodle, Totara and other applications. LinkedIn announced their own effort in this area at ATD, enabling easier display of awards and certifications on your profile.

4. Unleash your Inner Expert

I didn't (and still don't) know Jim Tiner, expert wallpaper hanger, but thanks to YouTube Jim was my personal coach when I re-did my bedroom. Expertise lives across all of our organizations, and exposing this expertise is one of the great missed opportunities of learning and development.

The Army recognized the value of connecting people a long time ago and launched [Company Command](#), an online community designed to connect field commanders to share their stories and expertise. I recommend reading the book *Company Command: Unleashing the Power of the Army Profession*, which details the challenges and lessons learned from starting a community. We have the tools to enable experts to share content and build communities. The great news? They don't cost much, if anything, to set up.

These ideas go way beyond the tyranny of the course trapped inside the LMS. It was exciting to see buzz around all of them at ATD.