

Mobile Learning Pulse Survey (Nov 12)

Fall 2012

Conducted by The MASIE Center – Led by Elliott Masie, Bob Baker and Videhi Bhamidi

While mobile devices increasingly play roles in our daily lives, the opportunity to leverage their potential affordances for learning is also growing. We at The MASIE Center were curious about how far along organizations are in using mobile devices for learning. In particular, we wanted to explore the current state of - and aspirations for - mobile learning, ask where the interest in mobile learning is coming from, and determine the key challenges and opportunities organizations associate with delivering mobile learning.

We launched a pulse survey to find some answers and received 823 responses from a range of organizations. These included small (less than 100 employees), mid-sized and large organizations (over 250,000 employees) that provide learning to their internal employees, external learning service providers and educational institutions. A variety of industries are represented with the largest response rates coming from the Finance, Banking, Insurance, Healthcare and Education sectors.

Summary of Findings

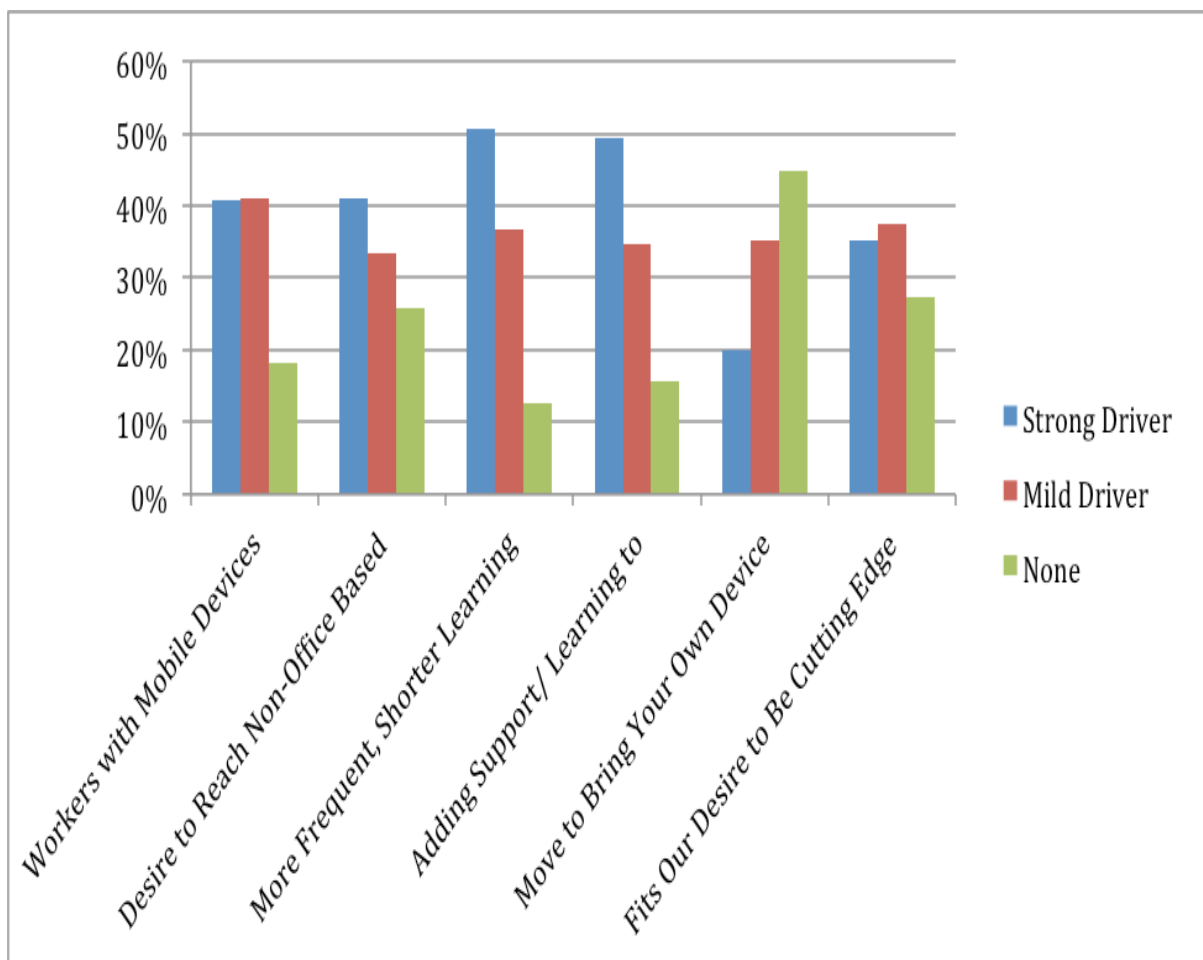
- Interest in delivering learning on mobile devices is high but implementation is in the very early stages of development. Approximately 80% of organizations reported at least a moderate interest in mobile learning. So far that interest has primarily translated into projects to explore and test mobile learning and developing some content designed for mobile devices. At the same time, less than 30% of organizations have an enterprise strategy for mobile learning.
- The responding organizations collectively conveyed a wide range of learning elements they would like to deliver on mobile devices. While there was no single stand out element, 5 had the highest percentage of “strong interest”: access to eLearning modules, access to corporate internet content, access to video and audio content, and access to checklists. Second to those areas, organizational aspirations for mobile learning include making greater use of social media. Overall, these responses demonstrate the interest in many responding organizations to be more effective in providing on-the-job performance support and shorter, more focused learning activities.
- Pressure to provide learning on mobile platforms is coming mostly from employees, including increasingly mobile workforces. Approximately 50% of survey responders reported that at least 50% of their employees already use their own smartphones/devices to access work-related sites or information - and this number is growing. The notion of “bring your own device” is on the rise and organizations may leverage it for their implementation strategies. At the same time, nearly a quarter of responding organizations indicated that feel no pressure to deliver mobile learning. IT departments in responding organizations also show little interest in driving mobile learning. Factors that may be constraining the growth of mobile learning include a variety of technology and security concerns, the availability of organization-owned devices and issues related to the appropriateness of using personal devices.
- Surveyed organizations acknowledge that leveraging mobile devices for learning provides some important affordances, but also have critical and constraining concerns. Key

affordances include: the ability to provide learners with access to learning that is “anytime and anywhere”; reinforcement and updating of previous learning; maintaining proficiency and using otherwise unproductive time for learning activities. Chief among the concerns are the lack of sound designs for mobile learning (which can frustrate learners), technical issues that negatively impact the brand, the hype that leads learning organizations into adopting technologies that do not prove fruitful, and the potential that mobile learning will devalue in-depth knowledge and learning.

- To move forward in developing sound mobile learning strategies, organizations still have some fundamental questions that need to be resolved. Five questions in particular emerged from our survey results:
 - How can we measure the impact?
 - What do pedagogically sound mobile learning strategies look like?
 - How can we evaluate the right technology route to take?
 - What are the real costs associated with mobile learning?
 - How should we treat resistance to mobile learning, which can come from a variety of sources?
 Much work must be done to address those questions, move beyond mobile learning hype and develop sound approaches that yield clear learning impact.

Current State of and Aspirations for Mobile Learning

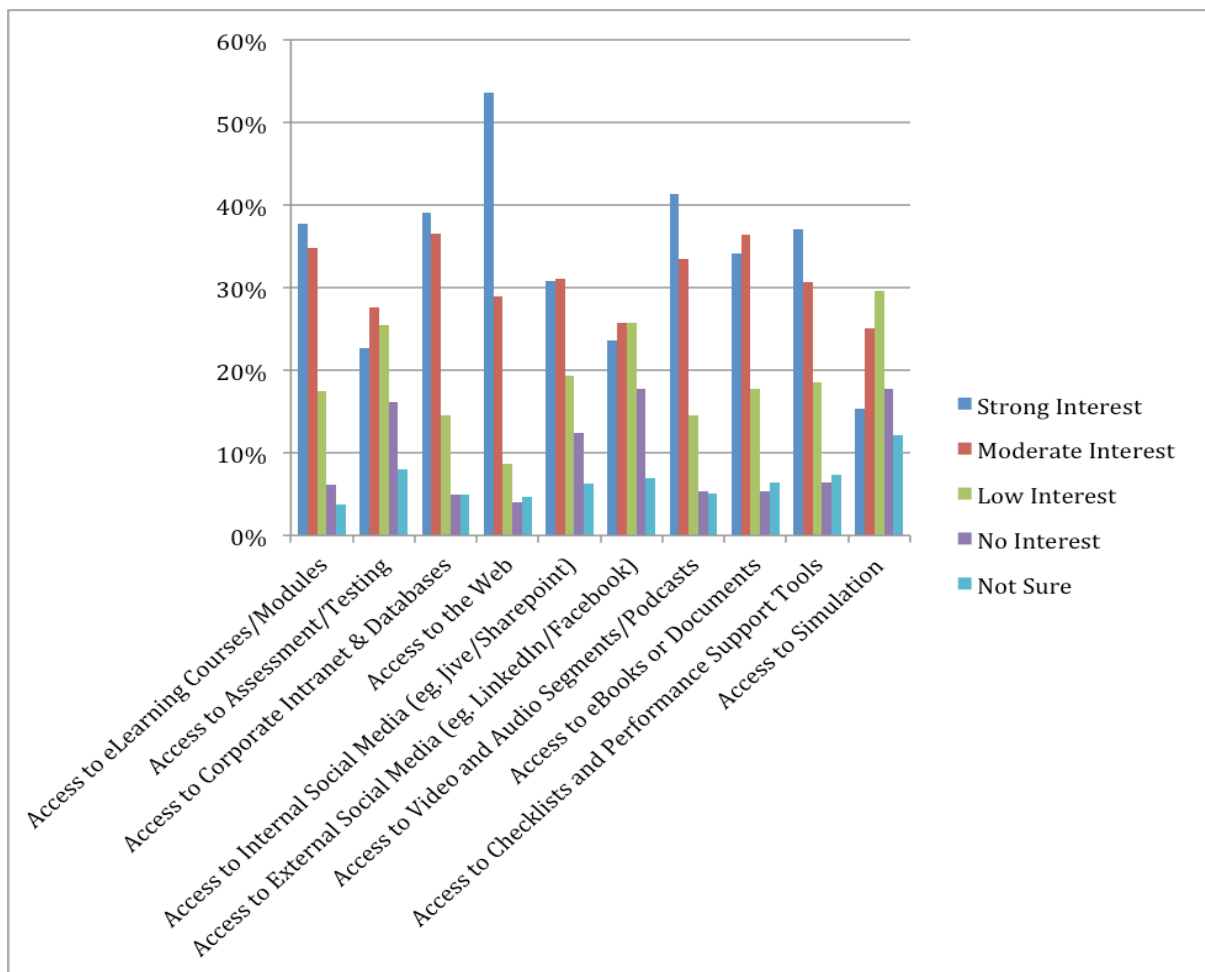
Drivers for organizations’ interest in Mobile Learning:



Additional Comments:

- Customer demands
- Access to everyone, convenience, time, access in nomadic places, access in non-wifi locations and outside of the classroom
- Digital natives in the workforce (generational demands)
- Leverage mobility, blended learning solutions
- Competition

Current level of interest in providing the following learning elements on mobile devices:

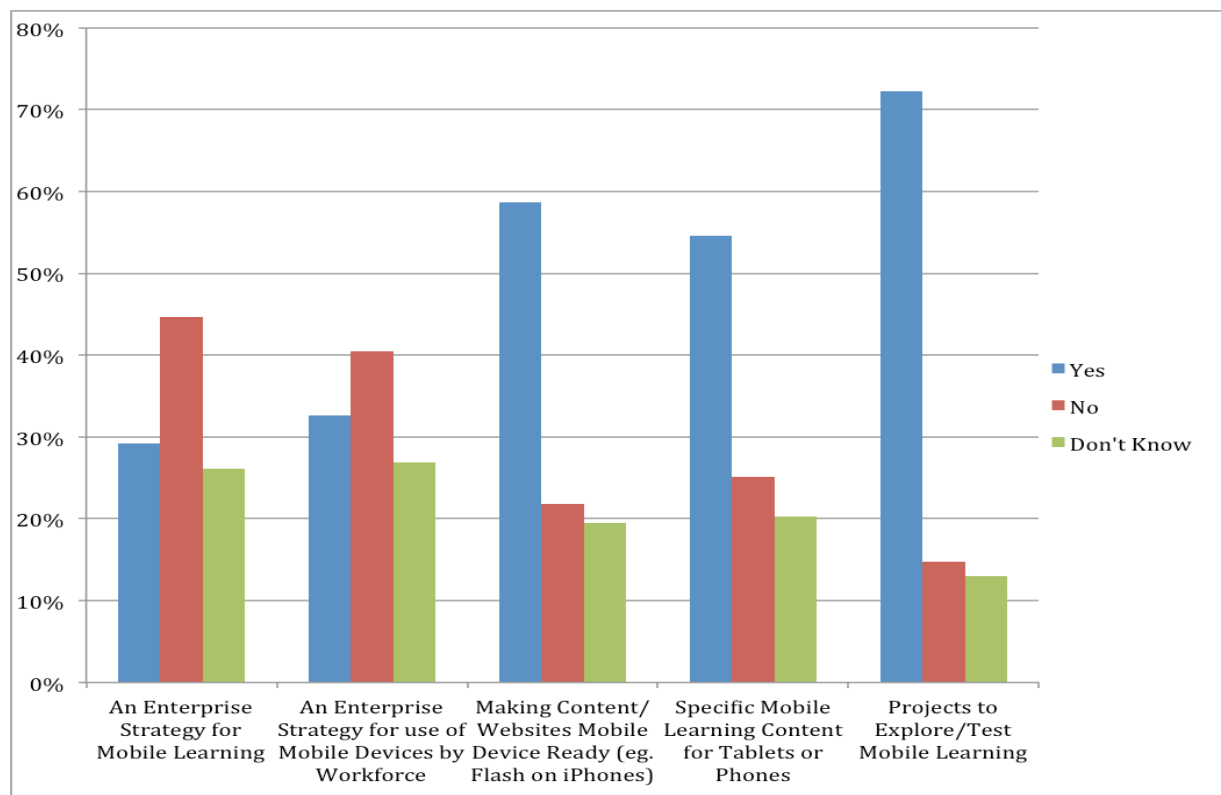


Additional Comments:

- Access to context-sensitive, location-aware and task-intelligent services
- Access to learning support systems via communication or collaboration
- Micro learning strategy like job aids and reference materials outside of performance support
- Access to learning reinforcement tools
- Access to updates, news, announcements, schedules, learning events

Future Interest in Mobile Learning

In October 2013, the level of current implementation of Mobile Learning in your organization:



Frequently Mentioned Reasons for how Mobile Learning might INCREASE the performance of workplace learners:

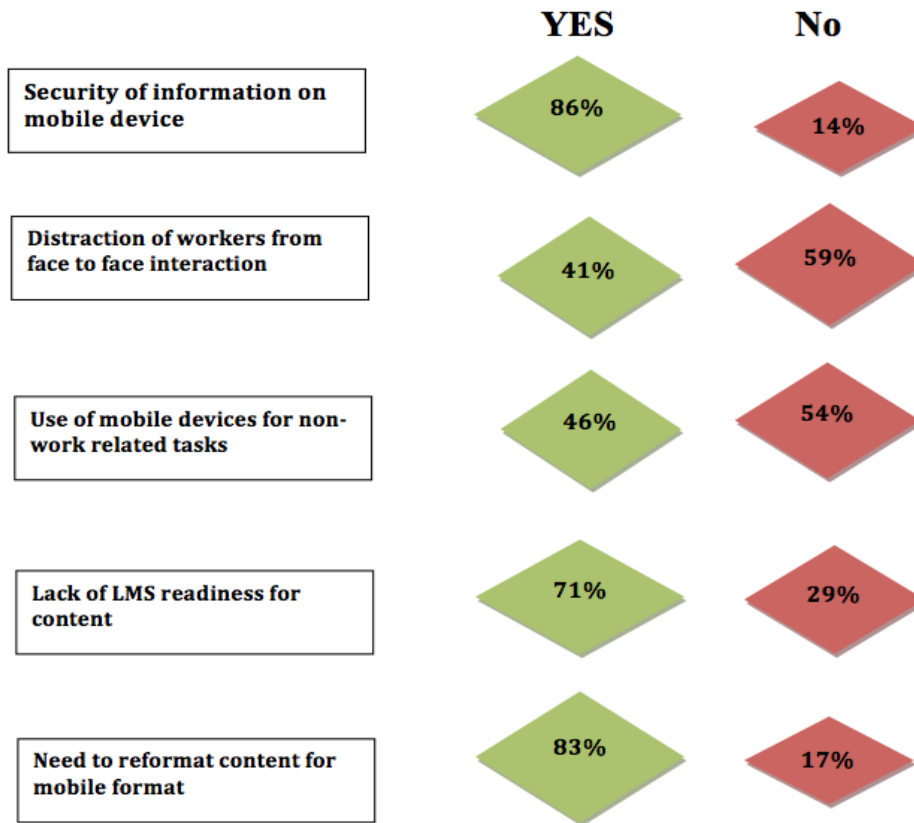
- Enables access to learning at point of performance
- 24/7/365: Anywhere, anytime and all-the-time access to learning content
- Promotes communication, collaboration and discussion
- Effective use of unproductive “down time”
- Better reinforcement, repetition and revision
- Quicker decision making
- Maintains same level of learning throughout the organization
- Better engagement through polling and participation
- Living up to expectations of Gen Y and “fad factor”
- Mobile doing (accessing applications)

Frequently Mentioned Reasons why Mobile Learning might DECREASE the performance of workplace learners:

- Major source of distraction (like social media) and poor security
- Weak learning designs and interventions can frustrate learners
- Technical issues like intermittent connectivity or incompatible multiple platforms can cause learner disengagement
- Inapplicable to all forms of training

- Shallow training approach leading to low holistic learning
- Hype of new technology
- Intrudes on privacy
- “Technological determinism”, or too much reliance on device for critical thinking or decision making skills
- Surface skaters and devalued in-depth knowledge
- Increases distance between learners

Factors causing concern about Mobile Learning:



Perspectives and Opinions

This survey was conducted by Elliott Masie, Chair of the Learning CONSORTIUM, Bob Baker, CLO of the Learning CONSORTIUM, and Videhi Bhamidi, Research Intern at the MASIE Center. Here are their perspectives on the future of mobile learning and the findings of this report:

Elliott Masie:

The responses of our learning colleagues from around the globe add interesting perspectives to the current and future states of mobile devices and learning. Clearly, many of our workers are using cell phones, tablets and other devices as part of their everyday lives. And, that includes the desire to

access work content and systems. Organizations realize that performance can be enhanced with mobile learning and support, but there are not many fully realized solutions – yet! Employers will be addressing security, content formatting and the development of mobile performance support solutions in the months and years ahead. Let’s honor the promise of mobile learning but not add hype to the current state of real implementation. In fact, our workers will be out in front of our organizations on this approach.

Videhi Bhamidi:

As a graduate student in the learning field, I have ambitiously explored the potential affordances of mobile learning; however, these survey findings reveal that, although several organizations are strongly interested in adopting mobile learning, most are still just testing its feasibility. This is indicative of broader organizational apprehension about mobile learning’s potential. At this juncture, my hope is that pedagogy is considered before technology and that the L&D industry investigates appropriate mobile learning frameworks from the learner’s perspective, ultimately contributing to effective social and informal learning.

Bob Baker:

As learning leaders, we weigh our options and make decisions about our organizations’ learning strategies. We commit to experiments that help validate potential new directions, developing partnerships and business cases necessary to move forward. These survey results tell me that most organizations are still in this sort of mobile learning “vetting” process. Delivering learning on mobile devices may not be for all organizations—at least not in the near term—especially since substantial design and implementation decisions still need to be addressed. Nonetheless, one area I am particularly intrigued by is the opportunity to leverage smartphones and tablets more broadly for performance support.

APPENDIX: Interesting Comments from Respondents

“Companies that produce Mobile Learning need to understand that the smartphone is more than just a new delivery vehicle for training. They need to rethink how users want to personalize their learning to align with their professional objectives.”

“Business case examples please!! I would love to be able to develop for a mobile employee base but we are having trouble engaging in meaningful discussion that doesn't start with cost...and then moves directly to security.”

“Is it really worth it? How many people truly want to do work-related tasks on a smartphone? Tablets are way better but still, most people use smart devices to look stuff up or entertain themselves. Is this truly an arena learning can successfully enter?”

“I actually see the greatest opportunity from mobile learning not in “carrying over” learning from traditional e-learning channels, but finally a way to make performance support easily accessible [and] just-in-time without waiting for computers to boot and scrambling for passwords.”

“Some IT professionals are hesitant to support mLearning because they have concerns with security, the Cloud, legalities, and manpower required to manage multiple devices (they lack a standard).”

“Our plan is to distribute learning via tablet devices for the new retail employees only. Although, there is a potential in the rest of the organization, which introduces a number of variables, such as different tablet models, different browsers, operating systems etc.”

“Meet the learners where they are in the field rather than take time away to come to training (i.e. it allows our maintenance employees to be able to review how to repair equipment [right where] where it's located.”

“Snack learning is more effective - 3 day courses no longer realistic.”

Surveys

- [Mobile Pulse Survey 2012](#)
- [Refreshing the Classroom](#)
- [Summer 2011 Reading](#)
- [Social Learning Survey Results](#)
- [Learning Systems Survey Results](#)
- [Learning Barometer July 2009](#)
- [Learning Barometer](#)

The MASIE Center is located at 95 Washington Street, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

© 2012 MASIE Events