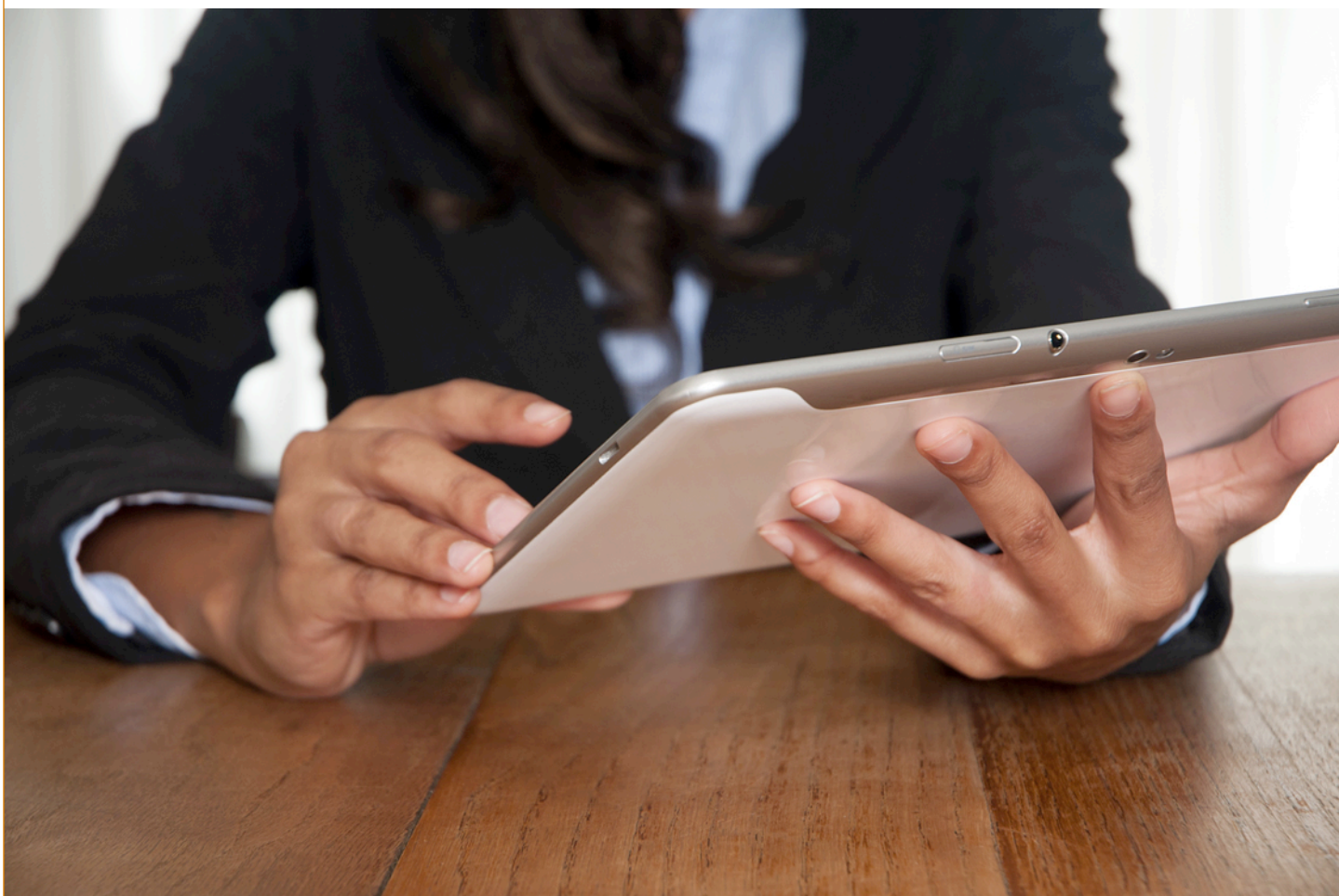


MOBILE LEARNING AND ASSOCIATIONS

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A CHANCE TO MOVE THE DIAL

*written by Jeff Cobb
and Celisa Steele
published by Tagoras*

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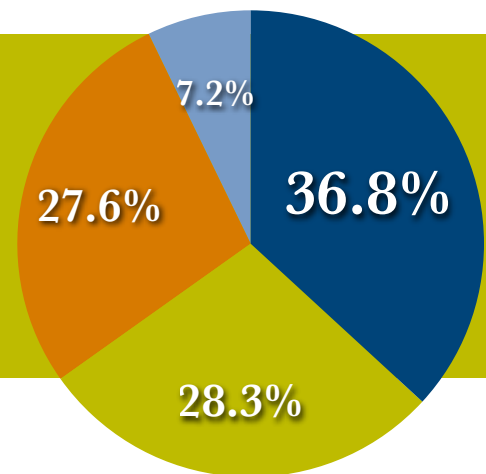
For the Tagoras *Association Learning + Technology 2014* report (<http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/association-learning-technology>), we surveyed 200 individuals about their association’s use of technology to enable and enhance learning. Of the 88.7 percent who indicated their organization currently offers technology-enabled or technology-enhanced learning, we asked if they provide a mobile version (i.e., a version specially formatted to be easily viewed and navigated on a mobile phone or tablet device) for some or all of their learning content.

Over a third (36.8 percent) said they provide a mobile version for at least some of their learning content, and another 28.3 percent said that, while they didn’t yet offer any mobile learning content, they have plans to start in the next year—which means the majority of associations surveyed are active in m-learning or on the cusp of jumping in.

But what does m-learning in the association space really look like? What impact could it have on how associations meet their members’ learning needs? We explore these questions in this white paper.

Do you provide a mobile version (i.e., a version specially formatted to be easily viewed and navigated on a mobile phone or tablet device) for some or all of your learning content?

This data comes from the Tagoras *Association Learning + Technology 2014* report (<http://www.tagoras.com/catalog/association-learning-technology>).



- Yes
- No but plan to in next 12 months
- No and don't plan to in next 12 months
- Not sure

Defining M-learning

M-learning happens when learners engage with learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies, such as smartphones and tablets as opposed to less portable, more cumbersome technologies like desktops and laptops.

This definition of m-learning is technology- or device-focused. But technology is a tool, a means rather than an end. So we—and you—must keep in mind that the most effective m-learning makes use of the technologies and devices for some purpose. Not mobility for the sake of mobility but for the sake of what the devices’ portability allows: just-in-time learning, on-the-job assistance, spaced learning, and more.

THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY AND THEIR IMPLICATION FOR LEARNING

In “Understanding the Advantages of Mobile Learning” (<http://www.allencomm.com/2012/07/understanding-the-advantages-of-mobile-learning>), instructional designer Bryan Benham points out three important characteristics of mobile technology that are key to understanding the implications for m-learning: ubiquity, multimedia, and interactivity.

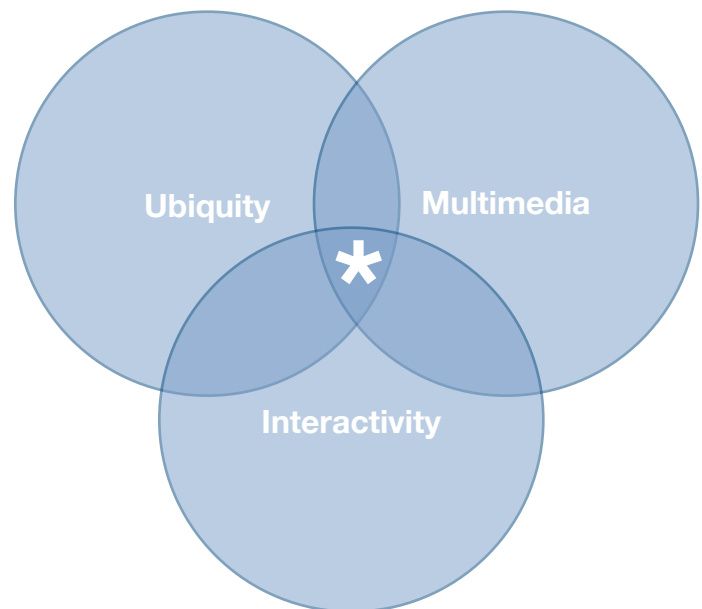
Mobile technology is widely available and widely used. Mobile devices give users anytime, anywhere access to information, applications, and learning. Commuting to work, waiting in line at the store or post office, waiting for an appointment provide us with snippets of time that can be used for learning. In today’s world, where so many people bemoan a shortage of time, the possibility for m-learning to be done in the little gaps in our schedules is very appealing. And, as Benham points out, this approach makes pedagogic sense: Mobile use can support spaced learning, where repeated exposure to content can improve retention and increase competence.

m-learning *noun*

\ 'em-,lɜrn-ɪŋ \

: acquisition of knowledge or skills that happens when a learner engages with learning opportunities offered by mobile technologies

Arguably, the most effective m-learning takes advantage of the ubiquity, multimedia, and interactivity inherent in mobile technology.



The second characteristic is multimedia. Mobile devices are “handheld multimedia studios,” capable of displaying and creating audio, video, and text—and the capabilities are only getting better. As comScore’s “2014 U.S. Digital Future in Focus” white paper reports (<https://www.comscore.com/Insights/Presentations-and-Whitepapers/2014/2014-US-Digital-Future-in-Focus>), “[M]illions of consumers have been upgrading to 4G devices with penetration reaching 50 percent by December 2013.... 4G connectivity is improving both Internet speeds and the overall usability for consumers, creating a more fertile ground for mobile content delivery and consumption to flourish.”

The third characteristic is interactivity. Mobile technology is used primarily as a communication device: texting, e-mailing, Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, YouTube, and more. We know effective learning often has a social component, and mobile devices make it easier to interact in more and varied ways.

Each of these characteristics—ubiquity, multimedia, and interaction—by itself offers opportunities for learning. But it’s the intersection of these three characteristics that offers the greatest potential for m-learning. Arguably, the most effective m-learning will take advantage of the ubiquity, multimedia, and interactivity inherent in mobile technology.

The Mobile Landscape

Knowing that m-learning is inextricably tied to mobile technology and devices, let’s look at the current state of mobile technology and mobile learning.

THE RISE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

In 2011, the number of smartphones sold surpassed the number of personal computers sold (<http://fortune.com/2011/02/07/industry-first-smartphones-pass-pcs-in-sales>). Analysts predict more tablets will be sold than PCs in 2015 (<http://www.gartner.com/newsroom/id/2791017>).

By 2018, it’s expected that over half of all traffic over Internet protocol will come from non-PC devices; PC traffic is charted to grow at a compounded annual growth rate of 10 percent, compared to 74 and 64 percent for tablets and smartphones, respectively (http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/ip-ngn-ip-next-generation-network/white_paper_c11-481360.html)

Almost 40 percent of YouTube videos are viewed on a mobile device (<https://www.youtube.com/yt/press/statistics.html>). Some 80 percent of the U.S. workforce is estimated to have a smartphone, and 49 percent a tablet (<http://www.gallup.com/poll/168794/workers-upside-staying-connected-work.aspx>).

These stats show tremendous growth in the number of mobile devices and widespread penetration of mobile devices. People are using mobile devices to get online with increasing frequency. Combine those factors with improvements in mobile technology, and you have an environment ripe for mobile learning.

THE POTENTIAL FOR MOBILE LEARNING

Given the environment is so ripe, what's happening with mobile learning in general?

Per "Mobile Learning: Delivering Learning in a Connected World" (<http://www.astd.org/Publications/Research-Reports/2012/2012-Mobile-Learning-Delivering-Learning-in-a-Connected-World>), issued by the Association for Talent Development, less than a third of organizations deliver learning content via mobile devices.

< 1 / 3
deliver
m-learning
content

But the number of eLearning Guild members who say they intend to use m-learning is rising. In 2010, 45.6 percent of Guild members said they intended to do more m-learning in the following year. In 2012, that figure jumped to 65.7 percent, according to "Mobile Learning: The Time Is Now" (<http://www.elearningguild.com/research/archives/index.cfm?id=157&action=viewonly>). And over 70 percent of the 500 companies that participated in the Towards Maturity Benchmark Study 2012 (<http://towardsmaturity.org/article/2012/11/22/towards-maturitys-2012-benchmark-study-highlights->), indicated they plan to implement m-learning in the next two years.

65.7 %
plan more
m-learning
for next
year

These statistics show the broad m-learning market as young but poised for significant growth in the next few years.

For association m-learning specifically, our sense is that very few associations have taken on m-learning in anything more than an accidental or toe-in-the-water way. The data we cited at the opening of this white paper showed 65.1 percent of associations surveyed were already active in m-learning or planning to become active in the next 12 months. The threshold for m-learning, though, was low—we simply asked if the associations offered mobile version for at least some of their learning content.

70%
plan to
implement
m-learning in
next two years

To supplement the survey data, we conducted telephone interviews with representatives from various associations, and those conversations suggest that most associations are tinkering with m-learning, maybe making use of a vendor's pre-set mobile functionality (such as the GoToMeeting app and the Articulate Mobile Player) or developing a small-scale pilot m-learning offering. Very few associations are investing heavily in mobile learning at this point, and very few have articulated a strategy for m-learning.



NACS Sees Potential for M-learning and Makes Its Entry

Tony Ellis, CAE, vice president of industry advancement at the National Association of College Stores (NACS) describes his association's use of mobile as "entry level." "Our use of mobile is not very prevalent at this point," Ellis says. "We have a mobile app for our private community that is used as a knowledge management tool for NACS. Some tools, resources, and reference materials for our online courses and many informal learning initiatives can be accessed via the mobile app. We also have a mobile app for our annual conference, through which handouts can be accessed."



While their mobile efforts so far may be nascent, Ellis says NACS sees the need. "We know that more and more people want information on the go, and we want to support informal learning on the job and in the moment via mobile access."

NACS's goals at this point are to see the greater access afforded by mobile technology lead to learners spending more time engaged with and exposed to learning tasks and content, particularly the resources that support informal learning. "For formal learning," says Ellis, "we're watching access stats and user/participant feedback regarding ease, access, and satisfaction." The association would also like to see learning program completions go up as a result.

One of the challenges NACS faces in expanding its use of mobile is the environment in which NACS learners work. "Store staff are often not allowed to have their personal devices at hand," explains Ellis, "and mobile devices are not a tool employed by many college stores for employee use. As BYOD [bring your own device] increases in popularity *and* college stores move to using real-time, mobile access of information for employee support for customer service, I think we will have more people willing and able to connect with us via mobile for both formal and informal learning."

Mobile Learning Strategy Primer

There's often a vacuum when it comes to organizations' strategy for their learning business—we've seen this over and over again in our research and experience working with associations. And we've lamented that lack of strategy in more than one prior publication.

Many struggle with strategy because they don't know how to start a strategy discussion or what to expect from it. Here we take a necessarily brief look at strategy, but this primer can still help you get unstuck if strategy is at issue.

To start, you need an organization-wide strategy that derives from your mission, vision, and values and then an education strategy consistent with the organization strategy. An m-learning strategy should derive from the organization and education strategies. An m-learning strategy without the other two layers is pointless, likely to be ignored, and might send you the wrong direction—if you don't know where you're going, it's hard to get there.

Working within an organization and education strategy, determine the driving force behind your mobile learning.* Four driving forces for are typical.

- Do you want to use mobile learning to expand or improve the products and services you offer?
- Do you want to use mobile learning to expand beyond the markets you target or improve how you serve your current markets?
- Are you focused on increasing revenue through mobile learning?
- Are you focused on growing the organization and the members you serve using mobile learning?

Choose the driver that is most important to you. While you may have two that are close, narrow it down to one primary driver. Strategy is a “framework which guides those choices that determine the nature and direction of an organization.”† If you try to mix driving forces, your mobile learning strategy won't help you make critical decisions about what to do—and what not to do.

Once you've identified your driving force for mobile learning, clearly delineate what it means for your learning business in terms of the following areas:

- The products and services you'll offer

How would m-learning create new value, value beyond what is available through existing learning experiences? Where would m-learning factor in on your Value Ramp? (M-learning might appear in multiple points along the curve. The Value Ramp plots product and service groups, not delivery formats. The same delivery format may deliver very different content depending on the content and the audience.)

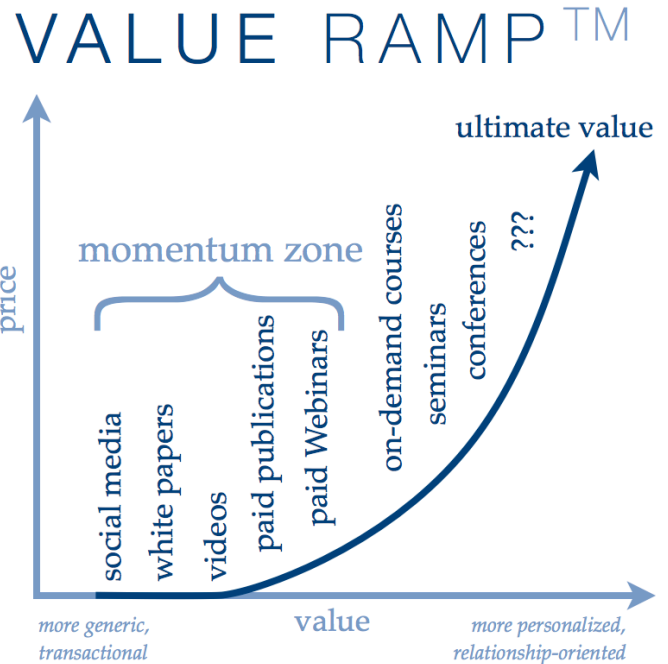
* The concept of a “driving force” comes from *Top Management Strategy* by Benjamin B. Tregoe and John W. Zimmerman (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983).

† This definition of *strategy* also comes from Tregoe and Zimmerman.

The Value Ramp depicts the relationship between price and value—provide more value in the eyes of the potential purchaser, and you can charge more. To get to higher prices, you need momentum. The initial part of the ramp, in which you provide significant increasing value at no or low cost, is the momentum zone.

Lower-value and therefore low- or no-cost options might include social media or white papers, while place-based seminars and conferences might deliver high value at a commensurate cost, as in the sample Value Ramp shown here.

Note, though, that no format is inherently of more or less value. A Webinar may appear anywhere along your Value Ramp—it's what you do with and in the format that determines its value.



- The markets to which you'll offer your products and services

What evidence (e.g., Google Analytics) do you have that current members and customers are using mobile as a channel for engaging with you? What evidence do you have that mobile could open up new prospects?

- The capabilities you'll need to offer the products and services to the target markets

Identifying the needed capabilities allows you to see gaps you'll need to fill to execute the strategy.

- Growth goals

Growth goals might include the number of overall learners served by your association, enrollments in specific offerings, or the impact on overall membership numbers or membership retention.

- Revenue goals

Be clear—and realistic—about the financial bottom line and how it will change over time.

- Responsibilities for actions

Putting together a good strategy is hard work, but it's a snap compared to the dedication needed for implementation. Hold people accountable for specific tasks so you can ensure progress is made.

With a driving force identified and a clear understanding of how mobile learning will impact the six areas above, you'll be well positioned to head into design and development—and well ahead of most organizations we've encountered.



NRECA Sees Learning Opportunity in CEOs' Time in Automobiles

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) is the service organization for more than 900 not-for-profit rural electric cooperatives and public power districts. Included in the audiences it provides educational programs for are the co-op CEOs, who have a lot of “windshield time” as they drive from site to site within their service territory, notes Diane Rhodes-Michaely, lead instructional designer at NRECA.

So the association is exploring mobile learning—specifically podcasts—to turn the time CEOs spend in their car into an educational opportunity. NRECA is pilot testing a series of podcasts repurposed from content, like keynotes, delivered at its place-based CEO conference. In addition to testing the content, Rhodes-Michaely says the organization is working to determine the best platform for delivering it: “Due to contractual provisions, having the podcasts available publicly on iTunes isn’t a viable option.”

Online courses are another avenue NRECA is taking into the mobile learning arena. Since 2006, the organization has used Articulate’s course development tools for its online courses. When Articulate Storyline (which exports to a mobile-friendly platform) became available, they used it to convert their two free courses introducing newcomers to co-ops and electricity to a format that could be viewed on iPads. Because these online courses are currently housed on a password-protected membership site rather than in an LMS, NRECA doesn’t have precise data on usage. But the assumption is that mobile usage is nascent. As of June 2014, only 4 percent of hits to the NRECA’s online course page were from an iOS device.

NRECA has also made several of its for-fee online courses mobile-accessible. When the organization upgraded from Articulate Studio to Articulate ’13, which exports to a mobile-friendly format, Rhodes-Michaely began the process of converting the courses, with the assumption that tablets will be the mobile devices learners use, rather than the tiny screens of smartphones: “The conversion is mostly a technology change, not a content change. There’s a browser sniffer, so if a mobile platform is detected, you’re prompted to download an app.”

NRECA’s remaining online courses are being prioritized for conversion based on the needs of each course’s primary audience. Rhodes-Michaely points out, “It’s not a good use of our member dues funds to convert an online course when the members who use the course aren’t likely to be accessing it via a mobile device.”


NRECA’s entry into mobile learning, Rhodes-Michaely says, resulted from seeing mobile as a convenient way for members to take advantage of their educational

programs as well as a handful of requests from members. She sees one of the biggest audiences for mobile learning as the boards of directors at the co-ops that NRECA serves. Many of the co-ops have gone paperless and given board members iPads—a move that pushed NRECA to go mobile, starting with its Web site first and now cascading down to its educational offerings.

For those getting into m-learning Rhodes-Michaely advocates researching members' needs—is mobile something they see value in?—and notes there's usually a need to raise awareness among the learners. "Mobile learning is expensive in terms of staff time, software, consultants, etc., so is it worth it? And if you decide to venture into mobile learning, take the time to plan and prioritize. It'll be a better product and learner experience in the end."



National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

The CEOs of the electrical co-ops NRECA serves have a lot of “windshield time” as they drive from site to site within their service territory. NRECA sees that time as an opportunity to offer educational content, repurposed from a place-based conference, as podcasts.

Moving from Strategy Formulation to Implementation

A decision to invest money, time, and energy in m-learning should be a strategic decision that comes from an examination of whether mobile learning makes sense for your organization and your education business. But after you've done your strategic homework, there are operational decisions to be made.

First ask what you hope to achieve with a learning event or product. Then ask if mobile learning is the right way—or part of the right way—to achieve what you have in sight.

“Look Before You Leap Into Mobile Learning” (*T+D* magazine, June 2013) enumerates four main arguments for m-learning.

- The disintermediation argument

This argument focuses on the fact that learners are increasingly accessing education via mobile devices—go mobile, or be made obsolete.

Many association representatives we interviewed see mobile as an obvious and necessary move. Sharon Bryson, chief operating officer of the North Carolina Association of CPAs, says, “We have determined m-learning and mobile consumption of information to be a prevalent strategic initiative for our organization. As we've learned through significant industry research, this is our future. We'd be doing our members a huge disservice if we didn't have mobile options available for our technologically savvy users. Our learners will go elsewhere if NCACPA doesn't deliver clean design, ease of use, and effortless access.”

Carol Hamilton, senior director of program and service development at NAFSA: Association of International Educators, similarly sees the need for m-learning as self-evident: “I watch what people have at conferences, and it's iPads. You know people are using mobile devices even if you don't have hard data—you look around, and you see what people are using.”

- The distribution argument

This argument thinks of mobile as only a delivery mechanism—one more way to get content out, not all that different from other delivery mechanisms.

Barry Novak, principal of e-learning design and development at Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada, sees m-learning as one option among others, and he would like to be able to rely on tools to automate m-learning. “I'd like the software to do the work for us, detect the learner's platform, and serve up the right version,” he says. “I'm not the kind of person who wants to read a big doc on my phone (and our courses are very content-heavy), but I want that choice to be there if someone wants it.”

- The financial argument

In the *T+D* article, this argument centers on the idea that mobile is cheaper than other ways of developing and delivering learning—based on corporate training scenarios, for example, where it’s cheaper to provide learners with mobile devices than desktops.

For market-facing education, like that offered by most associations, the financial argument for m-learning is that it brings new, untapped revenue potential by expanding the product offerings or appealing to new market segments that seek out mobile options.

- The effectiveness argument

This argument says mobile learning can make your education products better than they are now or make new products that are good because they make use of the benefits of mobile technology that we talked about—for example, taking advantage of m-learning’s ability to support *in situ* learning and spaced learning well because learners can have and use their mobile devices when and where they need to learn.

With a concrete context or application in mind, think about why you’re considering m-learning. Your reason is likely to fall into one of these four broad categories.



Mobile Is Natural for Spaced Learning

The effectiveness argument for mobile learning brings to mind spaced learning—a method that combines structured repetition with breaks to promote long-term memory of concepts and information. Given the ubiquity of mobile devices in most people’s lives, mobile is particularly well adapted to support spaced learning, allowing time spent standing in line or commuting to be used for instructionally sound learning, as spaced learning has been proven to be more effective than the one-done-approach of a single course or conference session.

In one study (<http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/health-wellness/2014/05/25/education-game-helps-doctors-manage-high-blood-pressure-more-effectively/a1eZmJ1K6E679LEDIVjcAJ/story.html>), doctors who learned about blood pressure management by playing a game on their phone for a few minutes every day were able to get their patients’ blood pressure under control more quickly than their peers who learned the material in a single sitting.

Mobile Learning Is the Next Phase in the Evolution of CE

by Neil Ashizawa, chief executive officer at InReach



In the 14+ years InReach has been providing online continuing education (CE) solutions to associations, we've seen a correlation between advancing a CE program and adopting new technology. Mobile learning is no exception and is an important layer in this rapidly evolving e-learning landscape, but let's take a look at how far we've come.

In the early days, member organizations started with in-person events that allowed participants to earn CE credits. The next stage was providing text-based courses or an early form of online, on-demand CE. This was a big step toward providing multimedia online CE. Once organizations realized the power of providing CE online, the next step proved easier—providing online live event courses, where they would broadcast live speakers and their content in real time over the Internet. By doing so, the barriers of in-person events were removed.

Many of these organizations soon realized they could capture a broadcasted live event and stream it to their members at a later time in an online on-demand fashion. This time, the content was not limited to text, but was true multimedia streaming. By providing a captured live event in an online, on-demand fashion, the organizations could increase the return on their live event investment. From there it was just a small step to creating on-demand-only content—content designed for online, on-demand consumption that ranged from simple slides with voice-overs to SCORM courses and all the bells and whistles that accompany them.

These shifts happened gradually and purposefully for many of these organizations but were critical to enhancing the learner experience and keeping members engaged. As organizations respond to new technologies and the changing needs of a new generation of learners, mobile learning is the next phase in the CE evolution but should be in conjunction with optimizing your existing online CE program—not as a standalone initiative.

Here are some key considerations as you prepare to expand into mobile learning:

- Know your members and their preferences. Survey them to find out how, or if, they are currently accessing CE content on handheld devices. Ask for specifics since that will better help inform your choices. Find out if your

Thanks to InReach for its intellectual and financial contributions to this white paper.

members are buying CE content on handheld devices or just viewing it. Also, what types of devices are they using—mobile phones, tablets, or just reading material on their Kindles or e-readers?

- **Be strategic.** This Tagoras white paper gives you a number of tips on this, so we will limit ourselves to two. Look at your budget and other internal priorities, and decide how you want to move into the m-learning space. The transition to m-learning can be gradual and ultimately should reflect how your members plan to use the technology and should fit into your plan to optimize your online CE program overall.
- **Consult your partner.** Your CE platform provider can help you map out your mobile learning strategy. They should be able to provide statistics on what your members are currently doing—for instance they could tell you what percentage of learners are accessing your CE content on a handheld device—and provide a roadmap to further enhance your program.

Good luck on your journey, and remember change is the only constant, so let's keep moving forward!

About the Author

As CEO, Neil Ashizawa is responsible for leading the InReach executive management team and positioning the company for future growth. Previously, Neil served as InReach's vice president of products and was responsible for InReach's product management and engineering teams as well as the strategy of InReach's software portfolio. Prior to joining InReach, Neil held senior-level positions at Affiniscape and HP's SaaS division, where he helped to launch many of HP's first cloud-based solutions. He holds a BS in computer science from San Jose State University.

About InReach

InReach is a leading provider of continuing education management solutions. The first and most widely used solution for bringing accredited continuing education (CE) online, InReach technology, services, and experience have helped hundreds of organizations expand their continuing professional education programs beyond in-person events.

To learn more about Continuing Education Management Systems (CEMS) and what they can do to improve your online CE program, contact InReach at Info@InReachCE.com or 888-892-7676.

Developing M-learning

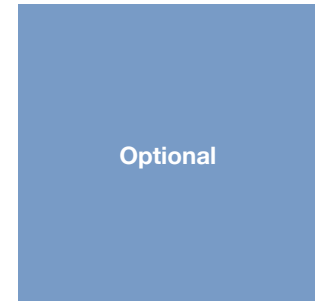
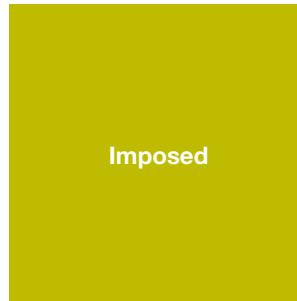
Just as there are a variety of reasons to decide to get into m-learning, there are a variety of ways to develop m-learning.

FOUR APPROACHES TO M-LEARNING

We see four main approaches to mobile learning:

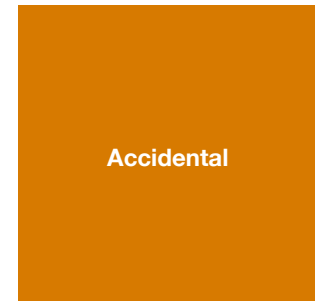
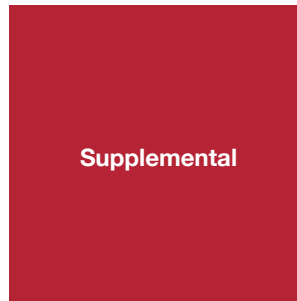
- **Imposed**

With imposed m-learning, the organization offering the m-learning decides when mobile is right for given content and given goals, and so the learning is developed and available only as mobile content.



- **Optional**

Contrast imposed m-learning with optional m-learning, where m-learning is a choice among others. Some customers might learn via more traditional e-learning on their laptop or desktop or even in classroom or at a conference, but



there's an option for customers to learn essentially the same content from a mobile device. So the content is developed for multiple delivery paths, including mobile.

There are four main approaches to mobile learning.

- **Supplemental**

The mobile content is supplemental to, or blended with, other non-mobile content. The mobile content supports the main content, which might be delivered face to face or via more traditional e-learning. Think, for example, of a face-to-face CPR course where there's an app that recaps the steps and procedures—that would be supplemental m-learning.

- **Accidental**

Organizations haven't thought about learners accessing the content from mobile devices and haven't developed the content for mobile consumption per se, but the learners are accessing it that way. If you deliver Webinars, this could be you—GoToWebinar is mobile-accessible, and even if you aren't marketing your Webinars as m-learning some of your learners may be connecting via a smartphone or tablet.

With this fourth type of m-learning, we can make the case that every organization today is dealing with m-learning—you just may not be aware that you are.

As you think about the possibilities m-learning, think about how each approach does—or could—fit into your overall strategy.

TOOLS, PLATFORMS, AND OTHER TOUGH CHOICES

Assuming you aren't dabbling in accidental m-learning and are actively thinking about m-learning development, discussions often begin with a debate about whether responsive design—meaning, the content works across a variety of devices (laptop, tablet, and smartphone)—is better than a native mobile app.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches, and neither answer will always be right. In fact, the dichotomy of native app versus responsive design is even false. They aren't mutually exclusive; you can do both—though that approach takes more time and money and therefore isn't often a popular choice.

Though there will always be exceptions, responsive design tends to be cheaper and faster approach, and native mobile apps tend to be more expensive and take longer (to develop and to get into app stores) but tend to incorporate mobile functionality (think cameras and GPS) not as readily available to desktops and laptops.

A decision to develop a native mobile app then opens up a range of follow-on choices about whether you build for a single platform (e.g., iOS) or more than one (e.g., iOS and Android). As with the decision to get into m-learning, make sure you know what you're trying to achieve upfront, and then evaluate your options—responsive design and apps, building from scratch or finding existing software, identifying a subset of your content for mobile—against those goals.

Whether you're vetting partners or already have course development tools and a learning management system in place, talk to the vendors about how they support, or plan to support, mobile and what they've learned working with other organizations on mobile projects. Many popular authoring tools now take m-learning into account, and most LMS providers are working to make their platforms more m-friendly. Vendors can be valuable resources and partners as you undertake the planning, development, and delivery of mobile learning.

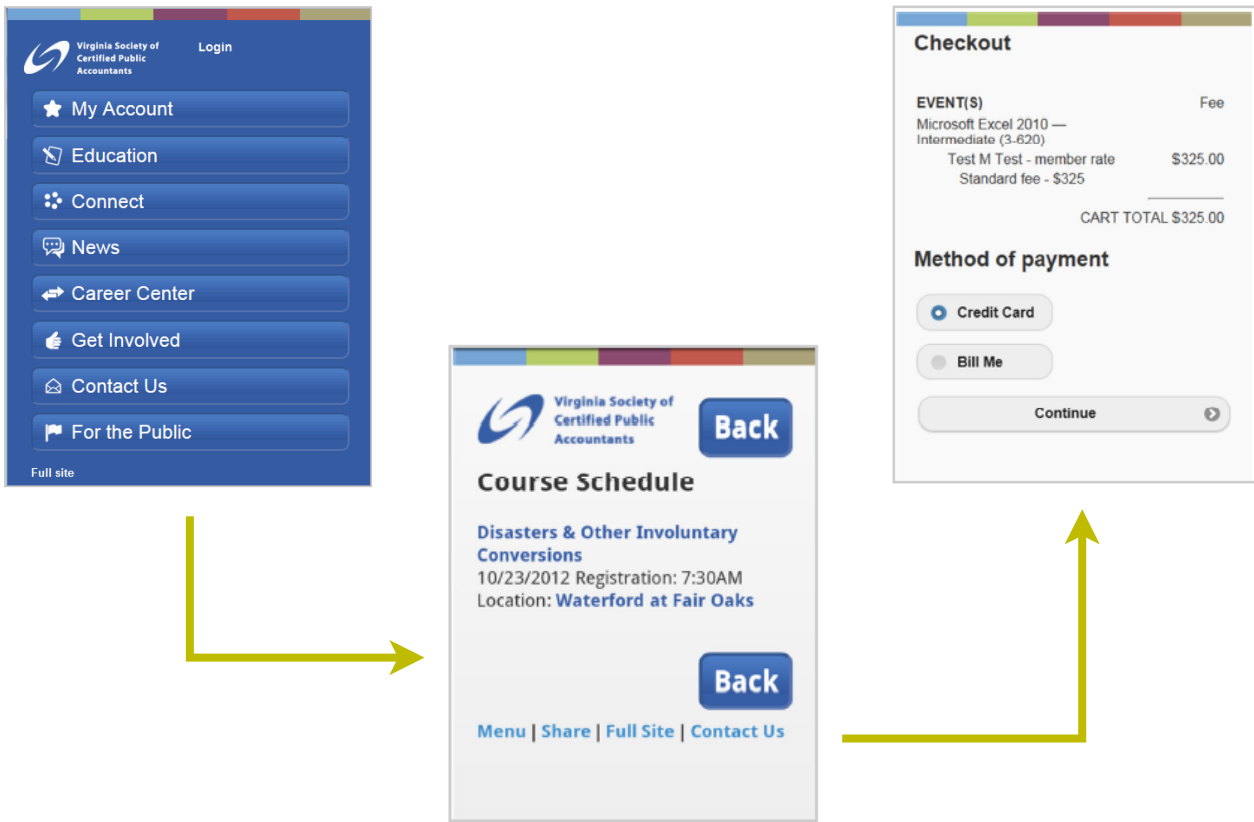
DON'T FORGET THE “M” IN SELLING WHEN DEVELOPING

Mobile technology changes more than how your learners access your content; it also impacts how people find and purchase your content, whether it's available as m-learning or not.

The catalog level is where organizations may see the impact of mobile hit first. Mobile purchases are growing rapidly, largely as an ancillary to the social-marketing boom. Much social marketing is e-mail-driven or served up via native advertising options on social networks. People increasingly read their e-mail and access Facebook and other networks on a smartphone. People also increasingly search on smartphones—another big part of marketing for association education.

Be sure your education catalog is ready for mobile—that people can easily search and navigate your catalog on a mobile device and make a purchase. If you then deliver the purchase immediately via m-learning, you've created a very powerful scenario for delivering value to your education customers.

Be sure your education catalog is ready for mobile, as the Virginia Society of Certified Public Accountants has done.





MACPA Goes Nano with Mobile Learning

In October 2014, the Maryland Board of Public Accountancy approved 10-minute increments of CPE (continuing professional education) for certified public accountants (CPAs), and the change is slated to become an official regulation in early 2015. In the meantime, the Maryland Association of CPAs (MACPA) is already at work on nano—or “just when you need it”—programs for the new 10-minute format.

Tom Hood III, a CPA and CEO and executive director of MACPA, explains, “We are working on an innovative learning platform using Twitter, which will track nano, or micro, learning from Twitter and LinkedIn.” For MACPA, the connection between mobile and just-in-time learning is a no-brainer—short-form learning on the go is ideal for keeping professionals up to date on late-breaking changes and dealing with discrete bits of content. The number of minutes doesn’t equate directly to the value of training.

MACPA’s nano learning isn’t its only use of mobile technologies for learning. MACPA is working on learning initiatives in a five areas: nano, social, cloud, collaborative, and competency-based. Hood says the social and cloud initiatives are also tied to mobile. “We have been using Twitter hashtags for several years successfully to supplement learning at conferences (before that it was Second Life and CPA Island). We are now exploring some more formal ways of capturing and documenting this learning.” Knowing that many Twitter users are on mobile devices—the 140-character limit of tweets, that defining characteristic, was based on text messaging constraints originally—MACPA’s social efforts are clearly also mobile.

As for the cloud initiatives, “In what we call the 4 Cs of talent development,” says Hood, “the AICPA Navigator allows us to offer competencies, career path, and a curriculum on a cloud-based learning platform that allows firms and companies to move their talent development to a strategic and systematic approach.” Again, mobile makes sense—MACPA knows that some learners will want access to resources and education via their smartphone or tablet.

In short, mobile plays a big—and small—role in MACPA’s vision for the future of learning.



Conclusion

We increasingly rely on mobile technology. Studies even suggest that our memories work differently now that technology is ubiquitous and we can resort to Google rather than storing that information in our brains.

“Mobile Learning Meets E-memory” (<http://elearningindustry.com/mobile-learning-meets-e-memory>) argues that m-learning may be a critical component in the age of e-memory: “Mobile learning can serve as the bridge between e-memory and true memory. It houses the valuable training information for learners until it is reinforced enough to become second nature.”

Given that mobile technology is here to stay, associations will need to move beyond thinking about m-learning and dabbling to determining how m-learning fits with their strategy and how it can help them move the dial in their professions and industries.

About Tagoras and the Authors

Through a combination of independent research and strategic consulting, Tagoras helps organizations in the business of lifelong learning maximize the reach, revenue, and impact of their offerings. We provide our clients with a unique blend of experience in marketing, technology, and education and back it up with years of successful projects with clients like the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA), the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), the Healthcare Financial Management Association (HFMA), the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), and the College Board.

Tagoras reports include *Association Learning + Technology*, *Association Learning Management Systems*, *Association Virtual Events*, and *The Speaker Report: The Use of Professional and Industry Speakers in the Meetings Market*. White papers include “Social Learning: Trends in the Association Space,” “Exploring the Fringe: Flipping, Microcredentials, and MOOCs,” and “Four Keys to Profitable Learning Products for Your Association.”

Jeff Cobb and Celisa Steele cofounded Tagoras.

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