

Bite Sized Learning the Future Of eLearning

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Abstract

In this study discussed what the bite sized learning is and it's role in eLearning. The article highlights the important factors that have contributed to the phenomenal growth of bite sized learning. It is revealed benefits of bite sized learning and how bite sized learning can help deliver better training and enhance the performance of employees in an organization. While bite sized courses help impart training of high quality and improve performance, they cannot be designed in a similar manner as that of traditional lengthy stand-alone eLearning courses. There are some modifications that we need to make when creating such bite sized eLearning courses or modules.

Keywords: bite sized learning, mobile learning, eLearning, training, courses.

Introduction

Traditional eLearning courses usually are 30 minutes to 1 hour in duration. These courses are highly interactive in nature and were developed using Flash. The development time of these courses is usually between 3 and 6 months. The traditional method of eLearning development was used when there was no need for frequent updates of the course content. These courses were also designed for desktops and laptops. However, this traditional scenario has changed and given way to the development of new bite sized learning modules. Bite sized learning is an eLearning paradigm that has taken the corporate training world by storm. In a recent survey conducted by the Rapid Learning Institute, 94% of Learning and Development professionals stated that bite sized online learning modules were preferred by their learners.

Research results

Let us look at the three important factors that have contributed to the phenomenal growth of bite sized learning.

1. Burgeoning demand for mobile learning.

The rapid growth of mobile learning has resulted in a huge increase in the number of firms using bite sized learning programs. Lessons delivered on mobile devices need to be concise and short for creating best learner experiences. This is because people often access learning content using their mobile phones while they are travelling and find it hard to focus on lengthy online modules.

2. Increasing share of Gen Y in the workforce.

Various studies have shown that most learners belonging to Gen Y multitask and have short attention spans. Bite sized learning is perfectly suited to such people, and many firms are catering to this segment by delivering training content in the form of information nuggets.

3. Constant pressure to develop courses quickly and economically.

Training budgets are shrinking and the demands for quick rollout of online courses are on the rise. Many Learning and Development managers are adopting bite sized courses to meet this need, as short eLearning modules can be developed much faster and in a cost-effective manner than lengthy online courses [2].

While bite sized courses help impart training of high quality and improve performance, they cannot be designed in a similar manner as that of traditional lengthy stand-alone eLearning courses. There are some modifications that we need to make when creating such bite sized eLearning courses or modules. Let's see what these changes can be:

- Changes in presentation patterns of learning content.

Michael Kerres in his whitepaper *Micro Learning As A Challenge For Instructional Design* points out that most eLearning designers follow temporal dramaturgies while creating online courses. For instance, a vast majority of "traditional" eLearning courses have a fixed structure with a beginning, description of the

subject-matter, a few exercises, and an ending. Prof. Kerres states that these lesson dramaturgies are absent in bite sized learning modules; instead these short modules convey the information “directly.”

- One learning objective is addressed by one bite sized module.

eLearning courses of longer duration (say 30 minutes and more) are often intended to achieve multiple learning objectives. But, micro learning facilitated by bite sized modules can be effective only when one learning objective is addressed in a single module, as these modules do not exceed 15 minutes.

- More flexibility to deliver personalized learning.

When the learning content is divided into several bite sized modules, learners can access the parts of the content that are relevant to their work and skip the ones that they do not need. This makes learning more “individual”. For example, a finance professional may only opt for a module that explains the creation of a discounted cash flow model; he may not show interest in going through the modules that deal with other models.

- eLearning developers can repurpose and reuse bite sized modules.

Related bite sized modules can be combined to create eLearning curricula. For instance, bite sized modules on various aspects of the Lean manufacturing process can be combined to create a comprehensive curriculum on the manufacturing process. Similarly, a bite sized module can be used in multiple online courses. For example, a short module explaining the basics of Sarbanes-Oxley (Sox) Act can be used in eLearning courses on compliance as well as accounting processes.

- Growth in the use of videos.

The advent of bite sized learning has resulted in many eLearning designers using videos in online courses. Research shows that videos are ideal to convey the intended message very effectively in a short span of time. Furthermore, videos can be shot easily; we can create a video in a few seconds using the smartphone. Unlike earlier, with such advancements in the field of technology, a short video can be created easily without the need for sophisticated equipment or without depending on professional videographers [1].

Conclusion

The adoption of bite sized learning has received a fillip with the advent of mobile learning and increase in the number of Gen Y workers. It has transformed the way eLearning content is developed and used. Learning nuggets can be developed quickly, at low costs and go a long way in delivering highly effective learning and in improving the performance of workplace personnel. Undoubtedly, the future of eLearning is bite sized learning.

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