

Mobile Technology and the LMS

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How to raise learning adoption, compliance and productivity with mobile innovations

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Introduction

Whether you already offer mobile learning, but want to scale its functionality or you're just now contemplating how to add it to your LMS... this white paper provides helpful tips, insights and strategies for implementing the latest mobile tech into your learning programs.

The Shift to Mobile Learning: Why You Can't Afford to Wait!

There's nothing hotter in the tech realm today than mobile – its technology is growing by leaps and bounds! However, when it comes to enterprise learning, mobile has been over-hyped and under-delivered... until now.

In 2014, learners, managers and admins alike were demanding more remote accessibility to their LMS. People live/work/play on-the-go. And to keep them engaged and productive in their learning, L&D leaders must respond with a solid mobile solution.

“Mobile First” and the LMS

As a category, enterprise software – including learning management systems – is famously difficult to learn and use. For much of the last decade, usability was an afterthought compared to sheer quantity of features.

While most learning tech providers offer a mobile app as part of their cloud offerings, many do little more than mimic the browser interface in their existing application. “Mobile First”, however, goes beyond this basic functionality and combines mobile and LMS capabilities to create a new, elevated user experience:

- For learners, this means they can take classes on their tablet – on or offline
- For instructors, it means automated class attendance and completion reporting
- For managers, it means they can track compliance, in real-time, on-the-go

Mobile First for Learning: Transforming the Experience

Want to learn more about Mobile First and learning? Watch this on-demand webinar hosted by Aragon Research's Jim Lundy. It covers:

- **Best practices** for applying Mobile First to learning
- **Key mobility trends** that impact learning
- **New technologies** enabling advanced mobile learning
- **Proven strategies** for handling legacy content

> [Watch webinar now](#)

Overcoming Legacy Content Issues

Often, the #1 reason why L&D departments have not yet adopted mobile learning is that some of their legacy content is based on Adobe Flash. And this means that it won't play on a tablet, such as an iPad. The good news is, there now are easy ways to solve this problem – which is another reason why learning orgs are finally going mobile.

Really the bigger issue is waiting. If your learning department doesn't offer quality mobile learning (i.e. similar in design and functionality to popular consumer apps), you risk a dramatic decline in training adoption, compliance and performance.

If you don't offer training in the way people want to learn (on-the-go), then you may miss them entirely. So now is the time to move!



Web vs. Native Apps: What's the Difference and Why It Matters

If your organization is one of the many looking for a better LMS, there's a good chance mobile learning tops your "must-have" list. Knowing this, every vendor will say their LMS works on any mobile device. But before you sign a contract, be sure you understand the true value and capabilities behind their mobile learning "solution".

A Bad "Wrap"

By now, most LMSs have some sort of mobile learning functionality. The most simplistic being a web app (or an "app wrapper") – basically a website interface to the LMS. The problem with these apps is that they're incredibly frustrating to use. Case in point...

Have you ever tried to navigate a full-size webpage on a smartphone? It's just plain painful:

Pan left... pan right... scroll down... go left again... zoom... right... down... wait – too far!

So how can this kind of learning experience engage anyone – much less customers and business partners who voluntarily choose to take (and pay for!) your training?

The Truth About Mobile Limitations

While many vendors are telling the truth when they say they have a mobile LMS... oftentimes, they're omitting the truth about their platform's mobile limitations. For example:

- You can gain access to LMS content through a browser on any device, but you must pan awkwardly or the text is too small to read
- Mobile access is available for learners, but not managers and administrators
- Tablets are supported, but not smartphones – and the tablet version is really designed for the desktop
- The LMS detects mobile users and serves content in a bare-bones interface with limited functionality

The Dawn of “Total Mobile”

Recognizing the inherent problems and limitations with web apps, a few cloud LMS providers began to apply a native, responsive design to their mobile apps – thus, the dawn of “total mobile” learning.

At Expertus, we believe an LMS is mobile only if all functionality is available to all users – internal and external learners, instructors, managers and admins. We term this “total mobile”.

Clearly, all LMS providers want to offer a total mobile learning experience. But vendors who developed their platform before modern smartphones and tablets must now double back and mobilize. And this is both an expensive and challenging task.

Enter Mobile First

The easiest way to get to a total mobile experience is by using a Mobile First strategy, which includes both a responsive design and native mobile apps:

- 1 Responsive Design** – This is the most popular way to provide a full mobile experience. A responsive LMS, like [ExpertusONE](#), senses and automatically adjusts the display, menus and content for each user's device and browser window size.
- 2 Native Mobile Apps** – These downloadable apps are specifically designed for Android and Apple iOS mobile platforms. And ExpertusONE was the first LMS to offer them.

Native mobile apps take responsive design to the next level by enhancing or adding conveniences to existing functionality. For example, they leverage touch and swiping technology, as well as inherent device capabilities like location awareness, phone, camera and texting.



Total Mobile: A Complete Functionality Checklist for Learners, Managers and Instructors

Following is the kind of robust functionality you should expect from a total mobile LMS like ExpertusONE:

For Learners	For Managers	For Instructors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Search and access all learning content • Switch devices (smartphone > tablet > desktop) without disrupting content, bookmarks or progress tracking • Download content to a device for offline use and sync results back to the LMS • Search and browse social learning content, people and discussions for just-in-time performance support • Access multiple content types (eLearning, virtual classrooms, Word docs, pdfs, video, audio and webinars) • Access profile and transcripts • Receive and send notifications, registration approvals, private messages and other actionable requests • Exchange contact info with others by tapping phones with the same app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-the-job training checklists • Mobile dashboards, tools and reporting to streamline tasks, boost team compliance and review team progress in real-time • Customized alerts and notifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate mobile with instructor-led training (ILT) via classroom polls, surveys and social learning features • Deliver evaluations during class with integrated reporting • Digitally sense/recognize class-based learners and automatically log registration and completion data

Breaking Down LMS and Learning Boundaries: The New Mobile Tech Frontier

The great thing about the mobile realm is that it's constantly, rapidly evolving. So why aren't we leveraging its new technology to push past LMS functionality boundaries – and reap new learning rewards?

Does the task seem too daunting? Too much work? Maybe unnecessary? (Why fix it if it's not broke?)

As I mentioned earlier, people now live and learn differently. So if you don't give them the mobile functionality they're accustomed to (and will soon demand), your learning adoption and performance will suffer.

“...the focus of new (mobile) applications should now be ‘mobile first.’ Mobile learning tools will likely evolve into learning ‘apps’ which look more like on-the-job performance support. Learning embedded in work – learning events which pop up based on an employee’s activities – will likely start to become common.”

– *Josh Bersin, Bersin by Deloitte*

Leveraging Unique Mobile Technology

When we developed ExpertusONE Mobile, we thought about how we could use the unique functionality of a mobile device to enhance the learning experience and learning operations. So instead of just duplicating our LMS, we were able to do and offer things that our, or any other LMS, couldn't do.

Some of these ground-breaking capabilities include Presence Sensing, mobile evaluations, instant contact share and actionable mobile analytics – all of which significantly improve learning adoption, compliance and productivity for learners, managers and instructors.

ExpertusONE Mobile: Your On-the-go LMS

Do you want to offer a complete mobile learning experience with full LMS access and extended, engaging functionality... anywhere, anytime it's needed? ExpertusONE Mobile makes it possible!

As the first LMS app to deliver modern mobile functionality to learning, users can finally:

- 1 **Learn on-the-go**, on or offline, via native Apple iOS and Android apps
- 2 **Launch all ExpertusONE LMS features** (courses/videos/reporting/social tools) via an intuitive, user friendly interface
- 3 **Elevate the classroom experience** with Presence Sensing, in-class mobile evaluations and automated attendance/completion reporting

> [Learn more](#)

“Many LMSs offer anywhere, anytime learning through mobile apps, but stop there,” Ramesh Ramani, Expertus’ CEO, said.

“With ExpertusONE, we’ve actually leveraged the latest mobile technology to expand on what you can do with the LMS – instead of just extending its reach. That’s why ExpertusONE is known as the ‘modern’ LMS. It continually launches new learning features and capabilities that revolutionize learning’s delivery, use and performance.”

Named the #1 learning system for 2014, ExpertusONE is an enterprise LMS with a highly sophisticated, yet incredibly simple to use design. ExpertusONE was the first LMS to offer native mobile apps for all Android and Apple iOS devices. And ExpertusONE is one of the few learning platforms to support on/off synch.

“ExpertusONE’s simplified architecture leverages the intuitive design principles that we’ve come to expect from everyday modern technology, making our LMS well suited for mobility,” Ramani explained. “What you get as a result is a superior user experience from your desktop to your mobile device and, ultimately, a more productive learning ecosystem.”

Innovative LMS Functionality

Following are details on ExpertusONE's five innovative mobile technology applications and how they can transform your organization's learning adoption and productivity:

- 1 Presence Sensing** – Using a mobile device's GPS, ExpertusONE automatically captures all classroom-based attendance and completion data, saving instructors time and eliminating manual paperwork. This is also something that a typical LMS simply cannot do.
- 2 Mobile Evaluations** – Instructors can use ExpertusONE Mobile to launch evaluations and surveys in the classroom without the need for computers, printed forms and tedious data entry, which increases learner participation and cuts admin costs.
- 3 Contact Share & Social Tools** – ExpertusONE's mobile technology detects each learner's classmates and facilitates fast contact exchanges. The platform's collaboration and social tools encourage interactions both in and outside of the classroom (aka 'continuous learning') to grow learning adoption and results.
- 4 Actionable Mobile Analytics** – Using ExpertusONE's modern design, managers and admins have real-time, on-the-go access to learning reports, compliance dashboards and customizable alerts. They use the same streamlined workflows ExpertusONE is known for and they're able to instantly call, text or email non-compliant learners.

"I foresee an increase in instructor (on-site) mobile functionality, and manager (on-site/on-the-floor) feature sets. Also you will see more admin mobile functionality, which is extremely rare now. Lastly, I expect to see more learner mobile functionality, including social and gamification with a touch of video."

– Craig Weiss, E-Learning 24/7

It's a faster, easier, more productive solution that typical LMSs can't provide. And this results in better compliance rates and control over performance.

- 5 Remote Dashboards** – When a learner logs into ExpertusONE Mobile, they're first taken to their 'My Learning' page – a personal dashboard that shows them what training they need to take, what they've completed, other highly rated courses, links to relevant SMEs/ discussions... even their and their peers' gamification badges.

By having this info accessible whenever/wherever, learners know precisely what they need to learn, where to find it and how to take it (whether that's from an airport terminal or right at their desk). The result is higher training consumption and improved compliance.

Other areas of trending technology that ExpertusONE Mobile already offers include: voice-based search, location mapping, built-in eCommerce and one-click class registration/launch.

“ExpertusONE employs a Mobile First design to give users a full LMS experience with the robust features and optimized functionality of top consumer mobile apps. This results in a second to none user experience – which can radically boost learning engagement and adoption,” Ramani concluded.

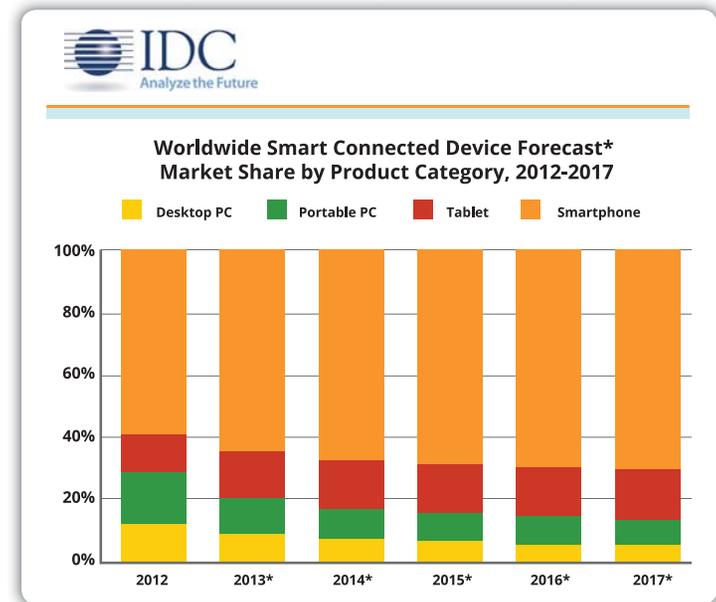


Making Your Move: The Right Questions to Ask for the Best Mobile LMS Solution

Did you know that many companies have already stopped issuing laptop and desktop computers to some workers? (Maybe you're one of them!) They're opting, instead, for tablets or smartphones to lower costs and increase productivity.

Consider this...

- By year-end 2015, tablets are expected to outship PCs (Gartner)
- By 2017, 87% of connected device sales will be tablets and smartphones (IDC)



- Today, combined tablet and smartphone shipments surpass those of desktops and notebooks
- By 2017, 20% of all tablets will be owned by enterprise organizations (Forrester)

Making Your Move

Now's the perfect time to take your organization mobile since your workforce, partners, customers and training admins increasingly expect remote, device-agnostic access to LMS content and capabilities.

So how do you ensure you get a robust solution that optimally serves users now and into the future? Ask potential LMS providers these eight telling questions...

Eight Critical Questions to Ask LMS Vendors

- 1 What are your current mobile LMS capabilities?
- 2 Does your LMS offer full-featured native mobile apps – or are they web apps (aka app wrappers)?
- 3 Do you support all Android and Apple iOS devices?
- 4 Do you use responsive design? Can you access the LMS and all functions without panning?
- 5 Are there any LMS functions that aren't accessible via mobile?
- 6 What mobile learning features does your LMS support for learners/managers/instructors/admins?
- 7 What mobile functionality is on your product roadmap? What's the timeline?
- 8 How have you advanced LMS functionality with mobile technology?

Where Do You Want Mobile Learning to Take You?

Bottom line: Don't be misled into believing that the best solutions simply replicate familiar LMS features on mobile devices. True mobile learning has the potential to be much more powerful.

Consider the capabilities that are unique to mobile devices. Imagine how you can take advantage of those capabilities to accomplish what traditional LMS platforms and web applications cannot do.

Vendors who help you think about mobility in that light are committed to innovation that will solve your company's larger business challenges.

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Joy has more than 20 years of experience covering key and trending issues within the software and technology industries.

If you'd like to further discuss how your learning organization can make a bigger impact with mobile technology, please contact Joy directly at joyc@expertus.com or request a demo at www.expertus.com/demo.