

# Book Summaries from www.e-LearningGuru.com

## Book Facts

- © 2001 by the American Society for Training and Development
- ISBN: 1-56286-298-7
- # Pages: 147

## How to Buy It

- Call ASTD at 800-628-2783
- [www.astd.org](http://www.astd.org)
- [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

## Leading e-Learning

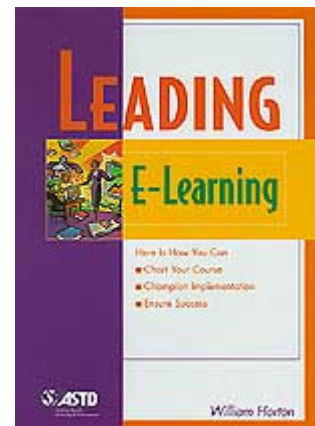
By William Horton

### Overview

*Leading E-Learning* is a very detailed and easy-to-read guide for those whose mission is to champion e-learning in their organization. Many will find value in this guide including training managers, e-learning professionals, and HR executives.

*Leading E-Learning's* 14 chapters provide guidance for creating a strategy, gathering support, leading implementation, and launching new programs.

This book is the first title in ASTD's series focused on bringing e-learning to life in large organizations. Other titles in the series include *Selling E-Learning*, *Evaluating E-Learning*, *Designing E-Learning*, and *Marketing E-Learning*.



### Considering E-Learning

An open and flexible definition for e-learning is “the use of Internet and digital technologies to create experiences that educate our fellow human beings.”

For the last 500 years or so learning has largely consisted of physically bringing together students who are provided knowledge on a “just-in-case” basis.

However, the digital age is changing both how training is delivered, as well as how we view the

roles of learners and teachers. Learning no longer has to be a scheduled, defined event. Learners can now obtain training and support on a just-in-time and just-enough basis, which means learning becomes potentially a daily occurrence, tied tightly to on the job performance.

This new model is gaining rapid acceptance. One study conducted in 2000 found that over half of surveyed companies were already using e-learning to teach technical skills and

that 94 percent of training professionals believe it is effective for professional development.

When considering e-learning for your own organization consider these proven benefits:

- E-learning teaches faster
- E-learning can teach better, with increases in comprehension and retention
- E-learning saves money, with reduction in travel and time away from the job

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*“You must convince the buyer that your product meets their financial, intellectual, and emotional needs.”*  
-- William Horton

## Selling E-Learning

In order to gain commitment and investment for your e-learning you must sell your plan to a wide range of individuals. When communicating to each audience, remember to focus on their unspoken question “what’s in it for me” (WIIFM).

The first sale is always to you. Remain objective and don’t be taken with the hype. Even e-learning’s firmest evangelists don’t think it is right for all training situations.

Next you must sell those who create and deploy training solutions. The benefits to this group include cost savings, reduced travel, ease of materials updating, and enhanced reputation.

When selling to consumers of training (i.e., the students) focus on these advantages: more convenience, they control their own pace, no travel away from family, multimedia will ensure a match to their preferred learning modality, learning is less

stressful.

When selling to business executives, remember to use their language, and speak in terms of business benefits. Their interests will be in cost savings, higher sales, improved customer service, and faster execution (e.g. more rapid product launches due to faster sales force training).

As the internal consultant and champion of e-learning, remember to also clarify misconceptions and e-learning hype. Here are several techniques that you can use to create an educated and aligned audience:

- Present objective data from white papers or studies
- Conduct an analysis that lays out risks and reward, benefits and costs
- Put forth a pilot project that will demonstrate and measure actual results from e-learning

## Types of E-Learning

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*“E-learning is more than electronic mimicry of classroom courses... consider what forms of e-learning best meet your goals.”*  
-- William Horton

There are many different types of e-learning you can create and deploy.

Self-directed web-based training (WBT) consists of using web technologies to deliver web pages, multimedia and interactivity to individual learners. The experience is similar to that of CD-ROM based learning, but the Internet enables easy student tracking and administration.

Facilitated WBT puts a human trainer/facilitator in a key role. Learners communicate with the trainer via chat, bulletin-board, e-mail or other technology.

Web-conducted classroom courses typically use videoconferencing technologies to provide live classroom activities and real-time communication among students and facilitators.

Email correspondence courses enable

instructors to send assignments to students, who in turn send back homework assignments.

Discussion group seminars enable teachers to post questions or assignments to an electronic bulletin board, and students can work in a group communicating via the BBS.

Guided tours and onscreen workbooks provide a step-by-step walk through of critical information.

Educational games engage learners as they explore content and answer questions leading to a reward or solution.

E-coaching and e-mentoring are becoming more popular as Internet technologies match mentors and mentees and provide a communication avenue for remote mentoring.

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## Developing E-Learning

Developing e-learning is different from creating traditional training programs in that it involves both learning and software. Software characteristics that have been adopted by e-learning include rapid prototyping, modularity and standards.

Modular components include:

- Curriculum – a library of courses
- Course – a complete body of study devoted to a single topic/theme
- Lesson – organized cluster of related topics (i.e. a chapter)
- Topic – unit that teaches a single concept
- Content module – media component that doesn't stand alone

Many standards are emerging for e-learning with the intent to improve their quality and reusability. Standards include AICC, SCORM, and IMS Global Consortium. If

your courses are for a specific learning management system, compliance will be an important issue. If you are creating a pilot project or stand alone programs, standards become less important.

Among the tools you may need to develop and deliver e-learning programs are:

- Web server
- Learning management system (e.g. Docent, Saba, or Aspen)
- Collaboration software (e.g. Centra)
- Media servers (e.g. RealSystem)
- Authoring system (e.g. DreamWeaver)

The development team members vary by project but typically include a project leader, instructional designers, subject matter experts, writers, graphic artists, web and multimedia developers, programmers, administrator and online instructor.

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*“Claims that you can ‘immediately transform your existing courses to e-learning’ deserve the same skepticism as advertisements for miracle stain removers and fad diets”*  
-- William Horton

## Launching Your e-Learning Effort

To move your organization toward successful e-learning will require a detailed plan.

- 1) **Get high level buy-in** – call a meeting of stakeholders and gain agreement on the need and benefits of e-learning
- 2) **Tactics that introduce e-learning** – identify audience, goals and potential road blocks
- 3) **Get budget** – Find funding from various departments and stakeholders who stand to gain from your efforts
- 4) **Provide training** – setup needed technology infrastructure, build or buy courses, promote your new offerings
- 5) **Roll out training** – Prep the roll out team, provide clear instructions and telephone support
- 6) **Evaluate the results** – monitor learner access, completion and satisfaction. How could results be improved in the next round?

Don't lose momentum after your initial efforts. Celebrate your successes and learn from your short comings. Using an iterative approach continuously revise and redesign your e-learning efforts to move closer to the ideal outcome.

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*“Training is no longer seen as a form of publishing; it is now considered an organizational catalyst.”*  
-- William Horton

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## About the Author: William Horton

William Horton has been designing technology-based training since 1971. He created [www.DesigningWBT.com](http://www.DesigningWBT.com), wrote e-learning courses on electronic media, designed a network-based knowledge management system, and has served as a member of ASTD's commission on e-learning certification.

William Horton is an internationally sought-after speaker. He is a registered Professional Engineer, an MIT graduate and fellow of the Society for Technical Communication.

William is also a prolific writer author. His books include *Evaluating E-Learning*, *Designing Web-based Training*, *Designing and Writing Online Documentation*, and *Secrets of User-Seductive Documents*. He is co-author of *Getting Started in Online Learning* and *The Web Page Design Cookbook*.

William and his wife, Kit, the half of William Horton Consulting, live in downtown Boulder, Colorado, just five blocks east of the Rocky Mountains, in a 100-year old house, which they are lovingly restoring.

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