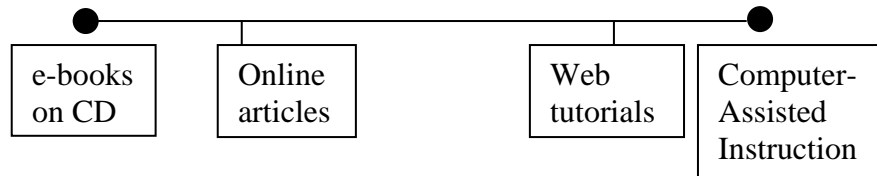


e-Learning

E-learning is the shortened version of *electronic learning* so it includes any learning which is facilitated by electronic means. That means that e-learning includes everything from reading books stored on CDs to computer-assisted instruction which has a learner interacting with instruction completely under the control of a computer. That means e-learning includes a continuum of different kinds of learning.



However, e-learning is normally considered to be instruction which is closer to the computer-assisted instruction end than it is to reading e-books off CDs.

A number of companies have offered products which they believe will make creating e-learning easier for trainers. These products help to integrate different media into an instructional package allowing developers to include text materials as well as images, animations, sounds and movies. Included among such e-learning development companies are **Macromedia** and **Trainersonline** and many others. The intention of these programs is to simplify very complicated projects so that the developers of instruction do not need to be computer programmers to produce instructional programming.

James R. Davis in *Managing Your Own Learning* (2000) divides learning up into seven categories:

1. Learning new skills—behavioral learning
2. Learning from presentations—cognitive learning
3. Learning to think—inquiry learning
4. Learning to solve problems—modeling
5. Learning to make decisions—collaborative learning
6. Learning through virtual reality—virtual reality
7. Learning from experience—holistic learning

E-learning is having a large impact on educational structure in every country. In the U.S. it is predicted that the e-learning market will move from \$2.2 billion in year 2000 to \$18.5 billion in 2005. That is a growth of 800% in 5 years which is an almost explosive growth rate. Why is e-learning expected to be so popular? A look at the characteristics and the general nature of e-learning may help to understand why developers consider it to have such promise in meeting learning needs—especially in business.

Characteristics of e-Learning

1. Learning can be anyplace or anywhere
2. Learning is self-paced
3. Learning is hands-on
4. Learning can be very rich in quality of experience

Four Kinds of e-Learning

1. Knowledge databases
 - a. Collections of information which can be searched
 - b. An electronic version of a reference encyclopedia
 - c. Example is software help file
2. Online support
 - a. People talking to each other electronically
 - b. Asking questions and answering questions
 - c. List serves
3. Synchronous training
 - a. Done at any time the person, computer, and e-ware is available
4. Asynchronous training
 - a. Live interaction
 - b. Like a classroom but all interactions between students and instructor are electronic

Benefits of e-learning

1. less expensive
2. self-paced
3. moves faster (50%) than conventional training
4. consistent message
5. delivery convenience
6. easily updated
7. easily managed for large numbers of people

Planning for e-learning materials involves instructional design and development which incorporates a thoroughness greater than that involved in conventional learning. The instructional design procedure often builds in careful analysis of content as well as testing and revision to provide some degree of quality assurance. However, despite the careful planning of many e-learning products much research needs to be done in determining its overall effectiveness and to understand its appropriate role with other instructional activities.