



Trends in E-learning for Library Staff: A Summary of Research Findings



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The full report titled *Trends in E-Learning for Library Staff: A Summary of Research Findings* is available at:
webjunction.org/learningcenter

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Introduction

WebJunction began offering online courses to the library community in 2003. Over the past three years, we have had many conversations with our partners, members and others in the field about the use of e-learning by library organizations. During these conversations we regularly hear the following comments and questions:

- What are the benefits of e-learning?
- How can e-learning be integrated into an organization's existing training program?
- Expanding e-learning offerings is dependent upon reducing the costs and time required to develop and deliver e-learning.
- Library trainers need more training in how to develop and deliver higher quality e-learning.
- How can an organization demonstrate the positive impact of e-learning to obtain stakeholder support?
- Library training budgets are small. Can e-learning really lower training costs?
- There are so many organizations providing online courses—how should a library organization select providers, assess quality, manage contracts and track overall staff usage?
- Even with current e-learning opportunities available to staff and members, participation rates are low. What are the most effective ways to improve participation rates and increase value for staff/members?

While some people have told us how their organizations are responding to these issues, we recognize that there is little data from the field as a whole. In 2005, WebJunction commissioned an independent contractor to investigate the use of e-learning for staff training and education in library organizations. While this research did not address all of the above questions and comments, it was an attempt to understand several aspects of library organizations' e-learning experiences and needs. Through this report, we hope to provide a baseline to which we can compare changes and growth in e-learning in the library field over time.

Report Structure

We start the report with a discussion of our [Key Findings](#), then present the supporting data in a longer section entitled [Research Findings](#). The research findings are not presented in the order in which survey questions were asked; rather, the data has been compiled to show the reader:

- The current e-learning environment
- Characteristics of e-learning developers and purchasers
- When e-learning is an effective training method and topics of interest
- Perceived benefits and barriers to e-learning
- Delivery formats pursued by e-learning developers
- The outlook for potential e-learning adopters

E-learning Glossary

We refer to the following terms throughout this report. For this study, we have defined them as:

E-learning. A term used to describe electronically delivered learning methods such as CD-ROM, Web-based learning, online assessments, Web-based reinforcement tools and online coaching.

Developer. Creator of training materials or courses, i.e., content development or e-learning development.

Purchaser. Individual or organization that purchases online training materials or courses created by others.

Potential e-learning adopters. Organizations that indicated they do not plan to pursue e-learning in the next 12 months, but may within the next three years.

Synchronous e-learning. Instruction that is led by a facilitator in real time. Examples of synchronous interactions include conference calls, instant-messaging, video conferences, whiteboard sessions and sessions in online classrooms.

Facilitator-led, asynchronous e-learning. "Asynchronous" refers to instruction that is not constrained by geography or time. Everyone involved in an asynchronous activity performs his or her part on his or her own time.

Self-paced e-learning. Online courses taken at a time, pace and place chosen by the participant, with no trainer interaction.

Methodology

The research performed included focus groups, interviews and an online survey. This report summarizes the information gathered through the extensive online survey, which compiled data from 651 respondents across the United States.

The survey was sent to:

- WebJunction members
- The American Library Association Continuing Library Education Network & Exchange (CLENE) Roundtable listserv
- The Regional OCLC Network Directors Advisory Committee (RONDAC) listserv
- Members of the Urban Libraries Council
- Members of the California Library Association
- Members of the State Continuing Education Coordinators Forum

Recipients were asked to forward the survey to their colleagues so a formal response rate cannot be determined.

It is important to note that not all questions were asked of all respondents. The survey split to collect more detailed information about those developing e-learning opportunities within the next year, while those purchasing e-learning programs were asked a different set of questions. As a result, some measures have small sample sizes for some subgroups of respondents.

Additionally, not all organizations planning to develop e-learning programs answered questions about specific e-learning formats.

Respondent Demographics

Throughout the report, “library organization” is used to refer to the organizations survey respondents represented: individual libraries, state library agencies, regional service providers, multilibrary systems, library associations and library consortia.

Library organizations included in the survey

- Public library 65%
- Academic library 11%
- State library 5%
- Special library 4%
- Association or consortium 4%
- Regional service provider 2%
- Other 9%

(n=651, respondents selected a single answer)

Total staff size of library organizations responding

(Note: respondents from multilibrary systems identified the total staff size for the entire system.)

- 0-49 68%
- 50-99 11%
- 100-199 8%
- 200-299 5%
- 300-499 3%
- 500 and up 5%

(n=644, respondents selected a single answer)

Number of member organizations affiliated with associations, consortia or regional service providers

- 0-49 69%
- 50-99 12%
- 100-199 5%
- 200-299 4%
- 300-499 2%
- 500 and up 8%

(n=247, respondents selected a single answer)

Total budget size of library organizations responding

(Note: respondents from multilibrary systems identified the total budget size for the entire system.)

- Under \$1 million 58%
- \$1 million-\$4,999,999 27%
- \$5 million-\$9,999,999 6%
- \$10 million-\$14,999,999 3%
- \$15 million-\$19,999,999 2%
- \$20 million and up 4%

(n=617, respondents selected a single answer)

Key Findings

The trend is toward e-learning, but the field is still young

The survey predicts significant growth in e-learning in the library field, with 70 percent of respondents indicating that their organizations have plans to pursue e-learning in the next three years.

However, only 49 percent of survey respondents indicated that their library organizations would be pursuing e-learning in the next 12 months. And, nearly a quarter of these organizations had not yet started their e-learning programs.

This confirmed what we heard during pre-survey interviews. There was a lot of interest in e-learning, but many participants were unsure about their organization's immediate plans. A few representative statements:

- We're unsure of our next steps
- We're not sure how to define the value of online learning
- I'm so new [to e-learning], I don't even know what to ask
- We're looking into distance learning, but many people have doubts about it

See the section [Current E-learning Environment](#) for additional insight into the types of library organizations most likely to pursue e-learning.

E-learning provides benefits to organizations and individuals

Survey respondents indicated that e-learning benefits both individual learners and library organizations. The most commonly cited benefits were:

- Convenience for learners
- The ability to reach more learners
- The cost effectiveness of e-learning
- The freedom e-learning provides learners to direct their own learning

The three biggest *barriers* to e-learning cited by all respondents were:

- Lack of funding
- Staff time
- Expertise

The major benefits and barriers identified are often opposite sides of the same issue: just as e-learning promises cost-effectiveness, it can be hard for organizations to find funding to get an initial program off the ground. In the same way, staff time can be a barrier to e-learning, but the e-learning format promises to free up staff time once it's implemented.

Survey respondents' indication that a lack of funding was a barrier to e-learning was not a surprise to us. This correlates well with our finding that library organizations reporting the smallest budgets were the least likely to classify themselves as e-learning purchasers or developers.

Nor was it surprising that staff time was identified as a barrier in the survey. The interviews and focus groups indicated that both trainers and learners find this to be a challenge:

- To be a successful trainer, I need more time
- We hear complaints that employees cannot get release time for courses
- When we implement e-learning, staff won't have to be off the desk for an extended period of time

Interview participants and survey respondents also indicated that expertise is an important barrier for the field to overcome. Several interview participants noted that poor online course design turns learners off e-learning altogether. In contrast, with in-person training, learners are more likely to discount the instructor or curriculum, not the face-to-face format. Other interview participants responded enthusiastically to the idea of training to use the online format:

- Training to deliver online learning (design) would be very helpful
- Currently, I'm figuring it out as I go; learning by trial & error
- I would welcome formal training to help deliver online courses
- We've had trouble finding resources for creating online learning
- We would need a significant amount of training and support to move to an e-format

Read the section titled [Perceived Benefits and Barriers to E-learning](#) for an in-depth look at the benefits and barriers identified by survey respondents.

Software features and cost are important considerations for e-learning developers

Of those who planned to pursue e-learning in the next 12 months, 55 percent planned to develop their own e-learning materials and 45 percent planned to purchase e-learning programs. After *e-learning developers* identified themselves, they were asked specific questions about their considerations when choosing software.

Survey responses showed varying viewpoints among e-learning developers regarding their considerations when choosing software. E-learning developers ranked *cost* slightly higher in importance than *features offered* or *support services* when they were asked to choose among all three. In contrast, when developers were asked whether they preferred all their *software features* vs. a *lower cost*, they ranked features first, with cost close behind. Not surprisingly, organizations with annual budgets under \$1 million, ranked *cost* as the most important consideration in all cases.

We also found it interesting that e-learning developers responding to the survey ranked *support services* last. This may change over time as library organizations gain more experience developing e-learning. Interviews and focus groups showed that organizations with a high level of e-learning experience considered support services very important, specifically technical support, instructional design and instructor training.

For additional insight into e-learning developers' choices regarding software providers, read the [Delivery Formats Pursued by E-Learning Developers](#) section of this report.

Potential e-learning adopters

While the group we identified as *potential e-learning adopters* have no plans to pursue e-learning in the next 12 months, 42 percent of them do have plans to pursue e-learning in the next three years. And, many respondents in the remaining 58 percent commented that they are

interested in e-learning, but have not had time to make a formal plan. Read the [Outlook for Potential E-learning Adopters](#) section of this report for more information.

This favorable response to e-learning indicates, to us, that the use of e-learning for staff training will continue to grow over the next few years. Visit webjunction.org/learningcenter to join the conversation about these findings and look for future reports from WebJunction as we continue to examine the use of e-learning by library organizations.

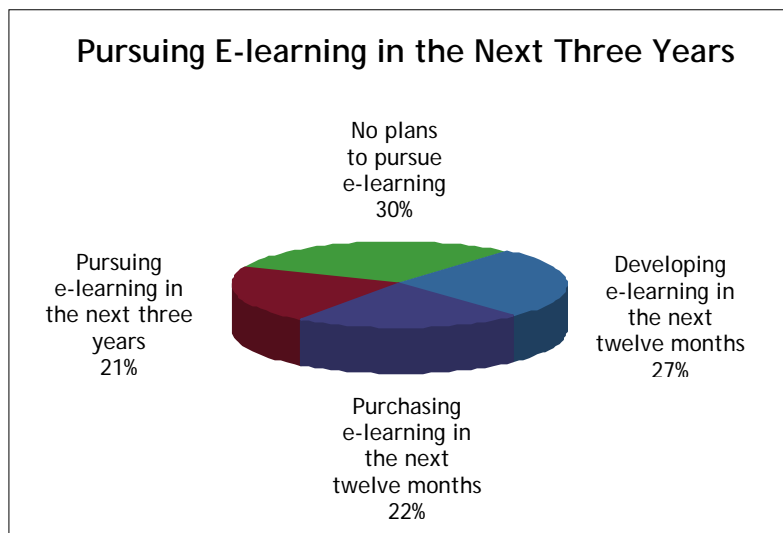
Research Findings

Current E-learning Environment

Overall, 70 percent of library organizations that responded to the survey plan to pursue e-learning *in the next three years*.

When asked about their plans for *the next 12 months*, 49 percent of all respondents indicated that they would be purchasing or developing e-learning. Of those who plan to pursue e-learning in the next 12 months, 55 percent plan to develop their own and 45 percent expect to purchase e-learning.

Fifty-one percent of all respondents have no plans to pursue e-learning in the next 12 months. Of this group, 42 percent do plan to pursue e-learning within the next three years, while 58 percent have no plans to pursue e-learning at this time.



(n=651, respondents selected one answer)

The library organizations *most likely to pursue e-learning*, either as purchasers or developers, are:

- Associations or consortia
- Regional service providers
- State libraries
- Library organizations reporting budgets over \$20 million

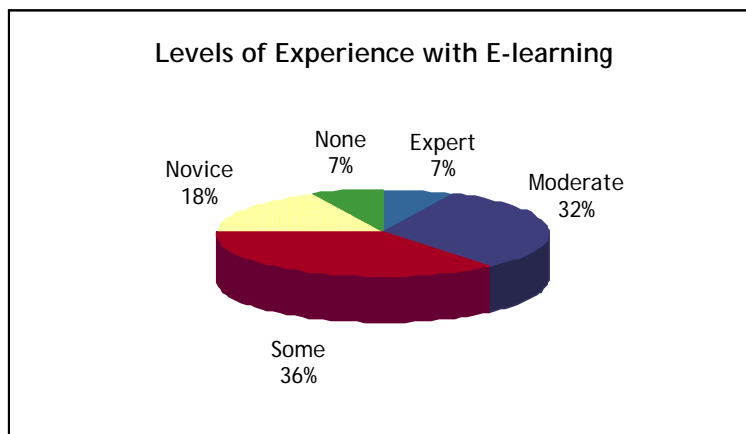
E-learning Development by Library Organization Type

| Type | Overall n=651 | Public n=416 | Academic n=73 | State n=33 | Special n=26 | Associations or consortia n=25 | Regional service provider n=14 |
|-----------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Developer | 27% | 16% | 47% | 46% | 31% | 48% | 36% |
| Purchaser | 22% | 26% | 12% | 18% | 15% | 24% | 29% |
| Potential adopters | 51% | 58% | 41% | 36% | 54% | 28% | 36% |

E-learning Development by Library Organization Budget Size

| Type | Under \$5 million n=515 | \$5-10 million n=39 | \$10-15 million n=17 | \$15-20 million n=16 | \$20 million and up n=22 | Public library over \$20 million n=15 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Developer | 22% | 28% | 29% | 56% | 68% | 53% |
| Purchaser | 22% | 36% | 18% | 13% | 23% | 33% |
| Potential adopters | 56% | 36% | 53% | 31% | 9% | 13% |

While most library organizations are just beginning to pursue e-learning, e-learning has reached the library community in some form. Ninety-three percent of the survey respondents indicated that they personally have *some experience with e-learning*. But, again, the field is still young—only 7 percent consider themselves to be at the “expert” level.



(n=646, respondents selected a single answer)

E-learning Developers and Purchasers

Initially, the survey asked respondents if their organizations currently offer or plan to offer e-learning in the next 12 months.

- If respondents answered that “yes, they plan to develop e-learning programs in the next 12 months,” they were characterized as *developers* for the purpose of this study.
- If they said “no, we do not develop our own courses, but we do purchase or plan to purchase e-learning courses to offer,” they were classified as *purchasers*.

Of those pursuing e-learning in the next year, 55 percent of respondents indicated they would be *developing* e-learning and 45 percent indicated they would be *purchasing* e-learning programs. However, not all of these respondents had implemented e-learning: 28 percent of developers and 23 percent of purchasers had not yet started their programs.

Characteristics of E-learning Developers

Overall, library organizations most likely to develop e-learning are those with one of the following characteristics:

- Budgets of more than \$10 million
- Over 200 staff members
- Over 300 member organizations

Specifically, *e-learning developers* are most likely to be:

- Library associations or consortia
- Academic libraries
- State libraries
- Library organizations with budgets over \$15 million

E-learning by Library Type

| Type | Overall n=651 | Public n=416 | Academic n=73 | State n=33 | Special n=26 | Association or Consortia n=25 | Regional Service Provider n=14 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Developer | 27% | 16% | 47% | 46% | 31% | 48% | 36% |
| <i>Synchronous</i> | 48% | 33% | 36% | 62% | 68% | 80% | 80% |
| <i>Facilitator-led asynchronous</i> | 52% | 26% | 67% | 70% | 50% | 88% | 25% |
| <i>Self-paced</i> | 67% | 67% | 82% | 46% | 40% | 50% | 100% |

E-learning by Budget Size of Organization

| Type | Under \$5 million n=515 | \$5-10 million n=39 | \$10-15 million n=17 | \$15-20 million n=16 | \$20 million and up n=22 | Public library over \$20 million n=15 |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Developer | 22% | 28% | 29% | 56% | 68% | 53% |
| <i>Synchronous</i> | 46% | 40% | 33% | 40% | 67% | 75% |
| <i>Facilitator-led asynchronous</i> | 51% | 50% | 33% | 42% | 62% | 57% |
| <i>Self-paced</i> | 70% | 25% | 66% | 66% | 73% | 80% |

Why develop?

When asked why an organization chose to develop e-learning, respondents gave many and varied reasons:

- Training consistency. Just-in-time training. Remote access to training.
- Access to education for paraprofessionals, especially in rural area; also to save staff time and travel expenses.
- Inexpensive way to promote continuous education for librarians.
- Limited staff, limited resources, large geographic service area.
- We upgraded our software and this was the best way to train staff on the changes.
- The size of our state and locations of libraries/towns can be very spread out.
- Distance education is about the only way we can reach many of our learners.
- To open up opportunities for our staff and the patrons we serve.
- Rising transportation costs, low budgets and no time for travel to more traditional learning events.
- Can be done at staff members' convenience.
- Part of a blended approach for our students both local and international.
- ...because some of our staff only work evenings and weekends and they find it difficult to attend...We also use it as a refresher for all staff when they choose to access it.

Developers' sources of guidance

For e-learning developers, the top three most valued sources of guidance on e-learning development were:

- WebJunction 46%
- ALA 31%
- Peers 26%

(n=140, respondents selected multiple answers)

Other valuable sources listed by respondents:

- ALISE
- ASTD
- BIG6
- Blackboard/WEBCT
- Brandon-Hall
- British Columbia Library Association
- CLA and LAA
- CLENE
- Educause
- E-learning America Latina
- Journals or browsing others' Web sites
- Local computer experts
- Masie Center
- National Network of Libraries
- SOLINET and state library association
- State educators that are already offering online classes
- Sunsite, other tutorials
- TILT
- UNT
- Vendor sites such as Macromedia

Developers' satisfaction with current e-learning programs

- Very satisfied 19%
- Somewhat satisfied 43%
- Somewhat dissatisfied 7%
- Very dissatisfied 3%
- N/A, have not yet begun program 28%

(n=152, respondents selected one answer)

E-learning Purchaser Characteristics

Overall, 22 percent of survey respondents indicated that they will not be developing, but will be *purchasing* e-learning within the next 12 months. Most likely, the percentage of libraries purchasing e-learning is much higher, however as the survey focused on development, it did not capture how many library organizations will both develop and purchase e-learning.

Of the types of library organizations planning to pursue e-learning, these are the organizations most likely to purchase programs:

- Library organizations reporting budgets between \$10-15 million
- Public libraries with budgets over \$20 million
- Regional service providers

While library organizations with annual budgets of under \$5 million report that they are equally as likely to purchase or develop e-learning, library organizations with annual budgets less than \$1 million that pursue e-learning are more likely to purchase e-learning programs than develop their own.

E-learning Development by Type of Organization

| Type | Overall | Public | Academic | State | Special | Association or consortia | Regional service provider |
|--------------------|---------|--------|----------|-------|---------|--------------------------|---------------------------|
| Developer | 27% | 16% | 47% | 46% | 31% | 48% | 36% |
| Purchaser | 22% | 25% | 12% | 18% | 15% | 24% | 29% |
| Potential adopters | 51% | 58% | 41% | 36% | 54% | 28% | 36% |

E-learning Development by Budget Size

| Type | Under \$5 million n=515 | \$5-10 Million n=39 | \$10-15 million n=17 | \$15-20 million n=16 | \$20 million and up n=22 | Public library over \$20 million n=15 |
|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| Developer | 22% | 28% | 29% | 56% | 68% | 53% |
| Purchaser | 22% | 36% | 17% | 13% | 23% | 33% |
| Potential adopters | 56% | 36% | 53% | 31% | 9% | 13% |

Why purchase?

Those respondents choosing to purchase rather than develop their own e-learning programs offered the following reasons:

- We are too small to develop our own.
- Because of no experience with e-learning.
- It is much more cost- and time-effective to buy.
- People can use it at various times and we don't have to develop curriculum, etc.
- Time and budget constraints.

Purchasers' current e-learning providers

When asked to name their current source for purchasing e-learning content, respondents offered the following:

- ALA
- Amigos
- Automation vendor
- BCR
- BOCES
- Computer Insight Learning (Element K reseller)
- Database vendors
- Drexel
- DupAGE
- Dynix
- eLibrary
- Element K
- Gateway
- IBO
- InfoPeople
- INCOLSA
- LE@D at University of North Texas
- LearningExpress
- LibraryEducation @Desktop
- LibraryU
- literacycampus.org
- Lynda.com
- Master Teacher
- Microsoft
- MindLeaders
- MOREnet
- N.E. Colorado
- OCLC
- New Horizons
- Ontario Library Association
- Our consortium
- ProQuest
- Rosetta Stone
- Simmons College
- SOLINET
- University of North Texas
- University of Wisconsin-Madison
- Washington State Library
- WebJunction

Purchasers' satisfaction with current e-learning programs

- Very satisfied 20%
- Somewhat satisfied 50%
- Somewhat dissatisfied 5%
- Very dissatisfied 2%
- N/A, have not yet begun program 23%

(n=111, respondents selected one answer)

Situations When E-learning is Effective and Topics of Interest

The majority of e-learning *developers* considered e-learning most effective in the following situations:

| E-learning situation | Effective | Possibly effective | Not effective |
|--|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Short training events of less than two hours | 72% | 24% | 4% |
| Training focused on technology skills development | 60% | 35% | 4% |
| Ensure all staff persons or members understand basic policies | 60% | 36% | 4% |
| Training that is primarily focused on providing new information to e-learners (as opposed to skills development or problem-solving skills) | 59% | 39% | 4% |
| Ensure all staff or members can use new software or hardware upgrade | 52% | 43% | 4% |

(n=142, respondents selected multiple answers)

There was some ambivalence about the effectiveness of e-learning in other training situations:

| E-learning situation | Effective | Possibly effective | Not effective |
|--|-----------|--------------------|---------------|
| Training focused on problem-solving skills | 37% | 51% | 12% |
| Training to develop leadership skills | 22% | 53% | 26% |
| Training focused on interpersonal skills development | 21% | 49% | 30% |

(n=142, respondents selected multiple answers)

Topics of interest

Library organizations pursuing e-learning as purchasers or developers were asked to rank specific topics for future e-learning content development. Content areas ranked as “must haves” by both groups were:

- Staff reference skills
- Library service
- Information literacy
- How to perform a library user needs analysis/community assessment

Interestingly, these topic areas tend to develop problem-solving, leadership and interpersonal skills, which, as noted above, most developers considered only “possibly effective” e-learning situations.

| E-learning topic | Must have | Nice to have | Not important |
|---|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| Reference skills | 64% | 33% | 3% |
| Library service (helping users, dealing with difficult users) | 58% | 39% | 4% |
| Information literacy | 51% | 44% | 5% |
| How to do library user needs analysis and community assessments | 51% | 41% | 8% |
| Confidentiality | 46% | 44% | 10% |
| Collection development | 43% | 50% | 7% |
| How to market the library | 42% | 50% | 9% |
| Leadership | 39% | 51% | 9% |
| How to write and implement technology plans | 36% | 56% | 7% |
| Library/community partnerships | 35% | 56% | 9% |

(n=225, respondents selected multiple answers)

In addition to responding to the specific e-learning topics above, respondents were also asked for suggestions regarding additional content areas of interest:

- **Technology:** New technologies training, technology courses, basic computer troubleshooting, software skills, Web site development, developing and using Web-based tools, and technology planning
- **Skills training:** Basic research methods, presentation skills, grant writing, statistical analysis, organization skills and time management, working with non-English speaking users and reaching out to new immigrants
- **Library management:** Trustee training, budget planning for the librarian, working with a diverse staff, training literacy volunteers, foundations of librarianship, supervision, effective meetings, planning for building or renovating, disaster preparedness, dealing with problem users and library security

Perceived Benefits and Barriers to E-learning

Benefits of e-learning

Fifty-four percent of developers and 58 percent of purchasers surveyed chose *convenience for learners* as the most important benefit of e-learning for their organizations. Potential e-learning adopters also listed convenience as a major benefit of the e-learning format.

Developers and purchasers diverged in their secondary reasons for pursuing e-learning, but the benefits articulated by both groups showed a desire for *increased efficiency in staff training*.

- E-learning developers placed importance on *the ability to reach more learners* (54%) and the *cost-effectiveness of e-learning* (47%).
- Purchasers noted the freedom e-learning provides learners to *direct their own learning* (41%) as well as the *cost-effectiveness of e-learning* (38%).

It is interesting to note that of the 7 percent of purchasers who chose "other," almost every explanatory comment emphasized the *reduced travel time* associated with e-learning as a benefit of the training format.

Potential e-learning adopters were not asked to rank specific benefits of e-learning, but even so, the benefits of e-learning they cited match the highest ranking benefits cited by e-learning purchasers and developers.

| Developers (n=143, respondents selected multiple answers) | Purchasers (n=108, respondents selected multiple answers) | Potential adopters |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience for learner (54%) • Ability to reach more learners (54%) • Cost-effective vs. other modes of training or education (47%) • Provides learners the opportunity to direct their own learning (31%) • Instructional effectiveness vs. other modes of training or education (26%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convenience for learners (58%) • Provides learners the opportunity to direct their own learning (41%) • Cost-effectiveness (38%) • Ability to reach more learners (32%) • Instructional effectiveness vs. other modes of training and education (10%) • Other (7%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic reach • Cost-effectiveness • Convenience for learner • Meets a need • Keeps the organization competitive, helps the organization keep up |

Barriers to pursuing e-learning

Respondents were also asked about the barriers to e-learning for their organizations. The survey allowed for two budget-related answers, "too expensive" and "worth it, but need funding." We have combined these two into one category, *lack of funding*, which, along with *staff time* and *expertise* are the biggest barriers to e-learning cited by all three groups surveyed.

- For developers and potential adopters, the *lack of funding* for e-learning is the biggest barrier overall. Some respondents reported that e-learning is worth it, but funding is tight.
- *Staff time* is a primary or secondary consideration for all three groups. However, it is unclear whether respondents consider staff time to mean the time to develop an e-learning program or time for staff to take a course.
- *Expertise* is another important barrier. E-learning developers reported that they are limited in their design and development of new online courses by staff capacity and skills.

Somewhat surprisingly, very few respondents felt that end users' technology, management buy-in or resistance from trainers or current training program are major barriers to e-learning.

| Developers (n=141, respondents selected multiple answers) | Purchasers (n=108, respondents selected multiple answers) | Potential adopters (n=297, respondents selected multiple answers) |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding (76%) • Staff time (56%) • Expertise (42%) • Fear that it will not be used (26%) • Concern about end users' technology (25%) • Concern for effectiveness (21%) • Need for management buy-in (11%) • Resistance from trainers or current training program (8%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff time (82%) • Expertise (45%) • Lack of funding (67%) • Concern for effectiveness (19%) • Fear that it will not be used (13%) • Concern about end users' technology (11%) • Other (6%) • Need for management buy-in (2%) • Resistance from trainers or current training program (0%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of funding (73%) • Staff time (71%) • Expertise 41% • Fear that it will not be used (33%) • Concern for effectiveness (18%) • Concern about end users' technology (16%) • Need for management buy-in (11%) • Other (8%) • Resistance from trainers or current training program (3%) |

Delivery Formats Pursued by E-learning Developers

The following data pertain specifically to *e-learning developer's* considerations when choosing software to deliver training using one of the following formats:

- synchronous
- facilitator-led asynchronous
- self-paced

The survey allowed respondents who are pursuing more than one e-learning delivery format to answer questions about each of the formats they use. In analyzing the data, we found that the majority of organizations that are developing e-learning use only one, or at most two, of the three e-learning delivery forms listed.

Of the 27 percent of respondents who are developing e-learning, *self-paced e-learning is the most popular delivery format* pursued, with some exceptions:

- *Facilitator-led asynchronous e-learning* is being developed by the majority of respondents from these groups: state libraries, associations or consortia and libraries with budgets in the \$5-10 million range.
- *Synchronous e-learning* is being pursued by a majority of respondents from special libraries.

Overall, nearly 67 percent of libraries that are developing e-learning have plans to develop *self-paced* programs within the next 12 months. They are primarily:

- Regional service providers
- Academic libraries
- Library organizations with budgets over \$20 million
- Library organizations with budgets under \$5 million

The survey responses showed that 52 percent of library organizations developing e-learning plan to pursue *facilitator-led asynchronous* programs within the next 12 months. Organizations most likely to develop e-learning using this format include:

- Associations or consortia
- State libraries

Forty-eight percent of e-learning developers plan to create *synchronous* e-learning programs in the next 12 months. The following are the most likely library organizations to pursue this format:

- Associations or consortia
- Regional service providers
- Public libraries with annual budgets over \$20 million

E-learning Development by Library Type

| Type | Overall n=651 | Public n=416 | Academic n=73 | State n=33 | Special n=26 | Association or consortia n=25 | Regional service provider n=14 |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|--|---|
| Developer | 27% | 16% | 47% | 46% | 31% | 48% | 36% |
| <i>Synchronous</i> | 48% | 33% | 36% | 62% | 67% | 80% | 80% |
| <i>Facilitator-led asynchronous</i> | 52% | 26% | 67% | 70% | 50% | 88% | 25% |
| <i>Self-paced</i> | 67% | 67% | 82% | 46% | 40% | 50% | 100% |

(respondents selected multiple answers)

E-learning Development by Budget Size

| Type | Under \$5 million (n=515) | \$5-10 million (n=39) | \$10-15 million (n=17) | \$15-20 million (n=16) | \$20 million and up (n=22) | Public library over \$20 million (n=15) |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------|---|
| Developer | 22% | 28% | 29% | 56% | 68% | 53% |
| <i>Synchronous</i> | 46% | 40% | 33% | 40% | 67% | 75% |
| <i>Facilitator-led asynchronous</i> | 51% | 50% | 33% | 43% | 62% | 57% |
| <i>Self-paced</i> | 70% | 25% | 67% | 67% | 73% | 80% |

(respondents selected multiple answers)

Considerations When Choosing a Software Provider

After identifying which format(s) they pursue when developing e-learning, respondents were asked specific questions about their considerations when choosing a software provider.

Features vs. cost

When asked to rank cost, features offered and support services, developers ranked *cost* first, with *features* close behind. *Support services* trailed the other two considerations.

| Synchronous (n=66, respondents selected a single answer) | Facilitator-led asynchronous (n=68, respondents selected a single answer) | Self-paced (n=68, respondents selected a single answer) |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost (41%) • Features offered (41%) • Support services (18%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost (38%) • Features offered (37%) • Support services (25%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cost (45%) • Features offered (40%) • Support services (15%) |

Later in the survey, synchronous and facilitator-led asynchronous developers were asked whether they'd rather have their "must have" software features or a lower cost. In this case, respondents contradicted the earlier rankings, *emphasizing features over cost*.

| Synchronous (n=65, respondents selected a single answer) | Facilitator-led asynchronous (n=68, respondents selected a single answer) |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features (55%) • Cost (45%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Features (57%) • Cost (43%) |

A notable exception to this ambivalence over features vs. cost appears when budget size is taken into consideration. Library organizations with budgets under \$1 million place more importance on cost no matter what delivery format is used and regardless of the number of factors under consideration.

Support services

When asked specifically about support services from software providers, respondents ranked *technical support* as most critical, with *training for instructors to use the software* and *instructional design* trailing behind.

| Synchronous (n=57, respondents selected multiple answers) | Facilitator-led asynchronous (n=61, respondents selected multiple answers) | Self-paced (n=79, respondents selected multiple answers) |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support (89%) • Training for instructors to use the software tools (75%) • Training for instructors to teach online [instructional design] (46%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support (87%) • Training for instructors to use the software tools (78%) • Training for instructors to teach online [instructional design] (44%) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for instructors to use the software tools (69%) • Technical support (64%) • Training for instructors to teach online [instructional design] (55%) |

Software requirements

Synchronous e-learning software requirements

When asked which software features for *synchronous* e-learning their organizations would require, respondents ranked their "must-have" choices:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Ease of use for learners | 97% |
| • Ease of use for instructors and facilitators | 80% |
| • Show Web pages | 75% |
| • Ability to archive and replay presentations | 70% |
| • Screen casting | 66% |
| • Show PowerPoint slides | 58% |
| • Application sharing | 52% |
| • Voice over Internet audio | 45% |
| • Live video broadcasting via a webcam | 43% |
| • Integrated telephone conferencing | 34% |
| • Live surveys or polling | 31% |
| • Provide a whiteboard for drawing | 25% |
| • Branding | 24% |

(n=60, respondents selected multiple answers)

Additional synchronous learning features, services or recommendations suggested by survey respondents include:

- Virtual breakout rooms
- Student participation tools well-integrated into the interface
- The ability to show Flash
- The ability to divide into small groups
- Integration of VoIP with telephone
- Closed captioning for audio
- Minimal network drain
- Archive of presentations hosted remotely AND ability to burn to DVD for circulation to users without high-speed connections
- Text messaging for questions
- Ability for the instructor to take control of a participant's computer and show the others what is being done on it

Facilitator-led asynchronous e-learning software requirements

When asked which software features their organizations would require for *facilitator-led asynchronous* e-learning, respondents ranked the following:

- Ease of use for learners 94%
- Ease of use for instructors and facilitators 77%
- Orientation help 67%
- Discussion forums 58%
- File exchange 54%
- Online grading tools 52%
- Automated testing and scoring 48%
- Searching within a course 46%
- Real-time chat 43%
- Self-assessment 40%
- Calendar/progress review 39%
- Internal e-mail 37%
- Student portfolios 34%
- Video services 33%
- Whiteboard 30%
- Branding (customized look and feel for your organization) 28%
- Online journal/notes 25%

(n=63, respondents selected multiple answers)

Additional asynchronous learning features, services or recommendations that were suggested by survey respondents include:

- VOIP
- Front-page notification of important dates/deadlines/changes/etc.
- RSS
- Personalized learning paths
- Ability to load audiovisual feeds
- Ability to use the grade book formulas that will accommodate different scores for graduate vs. undergraduate students
- Audio drop box

Current providers used by self-paced e-learning developers

When asked to name the *self-paced* e-learning authoring tools and/or learning management systems currently used by their library organizations, respondents gave the following names:

- Archive of Examination
- Blackboard
- Camtasia
- Captivate
- Cherry Hill Company
- Dreamweaver
- Ed 2 Go
- Florida Virtual School
- InfoSource Inc.
- Isoph Blue
- LearnerWeb
- Learning Management Systems
- Library U
- Netscape Composer
- PageOut
- PowerPoint
- Screen Corder
- Sharepoint
- WebJunction (Note: Isoph Blue)

Outlook for Potential E-learning Adopters

Fifty-one percent of all survey respondents had *no plans* to develop or purchase e-learning programs within the next 12 months. We refer to this group as *potential e-learning adopters* because 42 percent of these respondents are considering developing or offering e-learning in the next three years. Additionally, many of the respondents making up the remaining 58 percent of this group commented that they are interested in e-learning, but hadn't yet made a formal plan.

E-learning Development by Type of Organization

| Type | Overall n=651 | Public n=416 | Academic n=73 | State n=33 | Special n=26 | Association or consortia n=25 | Regional service provider n=14 |
|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Developer | 27% | 16% | 47% | 46% | 31% | 48% | 36% |
| Purchaser | 22% | 26% | 12% | 18% | 15% | 24% | 29% |
| Potential adopters | 51% | 58% | 41% | 36% | 54% | 28% | 36% |

E-learning Development by Budget Size of Organization

| Type | Under \$5 million n=515 | \$5-10 million n=39 | \$10-15 million n=17 | \$15-20 million n=16 | \$20 million and up n=22 | Public library over \$20 million n=15 |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Developer | 22% | 28% | 29% | 56% | 68% | 53% |
| Purchaser | 22% | 36% | 18% | 13% | 23% | 33% |
| Potential adopters | 56% | 36% | 53% | 31% | 9% | 13% |

Potential adopters plans to pursue e-learning in the next three years

- Yes 42%
- No 58%

(n=295, respondents selected one answer)

The following are responses from potential adopters about why they are or are not planning to pursue e-learning in the next three years:

- Actually the answer is maybe. Depends on economics/budget.
- Good way for people to learn with the travel/expense time issues.
- E-learning is very feasible for a consortium.
- Virtual high school will start in two years.
- To educate our member libraries and their patrons on technology use.
- The “method” is part of the “message”—the process of e-learning is itself a valuable skill/familiarity for staff to possess.
- Our space and time is so limited that e-learning will be considered as a way of meeting needs in the community.
- We have very limited staff who work varied shifts. It is very difficult to get everyone together without closing the library. I am most interested in looking at e-learning as I feel ongoing training is very important.

While this group has no immediate plans to pursue e-learning, their favorable response toward the training format indicates that their adoption of e-learning is likely a matter of time.

We predict that the use of e-learning for staff training will continue to grow over the next few years. With this growth, new trends and best practices will emerge. For insight into how library organizations are currently pursuing e-learning, please see the [Key Findings](#) section of this report. To join the conversation about this report, visit webjunction.org/learningcenter. And, look for future reports from WebJunction as we continue to examine the use of e-learning by library organizations.

For updates and more information about the
“Trends in E-learning for Library Staff” please visit the WebJunction Learning Center at
webjunction.org/learningcenter or contact WebJunction at info@WebJunction.org.

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