

DESIGN AND DEVELOP WEB-BASED TRAINING: AN INTERNET COURSE

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ABSTRACT

The process followed to develop a Web-Based Training course has a tremendous impact on the trainees and work performance. This paper describes a Web-Based Course on how to design and develop Web-Based Training courses.

Web Based Training is adopted by international organizations to provide more economic training. Instructor-based courses requiring expensive traveling are replaced by courses on the organization's Intranet.

However, many organizations have discovered that after a few tries, employees are not completing the alleged Web based courses. One of the main causes of these unexpected results is the approach used to prepare and submit the course content into the Web. Most "Intranet courses" are none other than the same materials previously used in the classroom, converted from a word-processor to HTML.

This presentation provides pointers on how to adapt existing materials to become effective Web-Based Training courses. The method emphasizes the importance of Instructional Design.

MORE THAN ACADEMIC PUBLISHING

The hypermedia format used by the WWW receives wide approval in academic and industry training environments. Its potential as a learning tool derives from the nature of the learning that it supports. Hypermedia supports and encourages browsing and exploration, learner behaviors that are frequently associated with higher-order learning

The World Wide Web compares with how the brain works. The core analogy is between hypertext and associative memory. Links between hyper-documents or nodes are similar to associations between concepts as they are stored in the brain. The analogy goes much further, including the processes of thought and learning.

Electronic text and especially hypertext, is not just print text displayed on the computer screen. Web authors and writers argue "it is a new form of communication that poses substantial challenges for those who would create texts that are well suited to this new medium."¹

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One main difference with printed text is that all documents on the web must carry their contexts and explanatory information carefully embedded within them to ensure that readers find them useful.

WEB PUBLISHING AND WEB BASED TRAINING

Many academic institutions, as well as international organizations, proclaim they are currently using the advantages of Web publishing without considering the differences between paper and Web publishing. Web publishing is not just print text displayed on the computer screen.

Many institutions are using the Web to train students and/or personnel to provide more economic training. Instructor-based courses requiring expensive traveling are replaced by courses on the organization's Intranet.

Sadly, in most cases, these so called Web Based Training (WBT) courses are none other than the same materials previously used in the classroom, converted from a word-processor to HTML.²

Web publishing and Web Based training requires a complete new approach to writing academic papers and course materials.

DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF A WBT COURSE

To prove the point, a WBT Course based on Instructional Design Models and Learning Styles theories was developed and implemented. The course encourages potential Web instructors to professionally assess the needs, design, develop and implement Web-Based Training.

http://www.ubs-translations.org/itedu/web_training/internet_training.htm

The course is instructor-based to support the learners at their own pace through email and IRC (Chat). To complete the entire course takes from 48 to 72 hours.

The course gives especial emphasis to instructional design for the web and includes suggestions on what are considered to be good and bad practices for web-based instruction. People taking the course obtain notions of pedagogy and andragogy (adult education), learning styles theories and cultural diversity awareness.

The course takes the trainees through the phases of Instructional design as described on the Hannafin Peck Design Model. (See Figure 1) In the first phase, a needs assessment is performed. This phase is followed by a design phase. In the third phase, instruction is developed and implemented. In this model, all of the phases involve a process of evaluation and revision.

Hannafin Peck Design Model

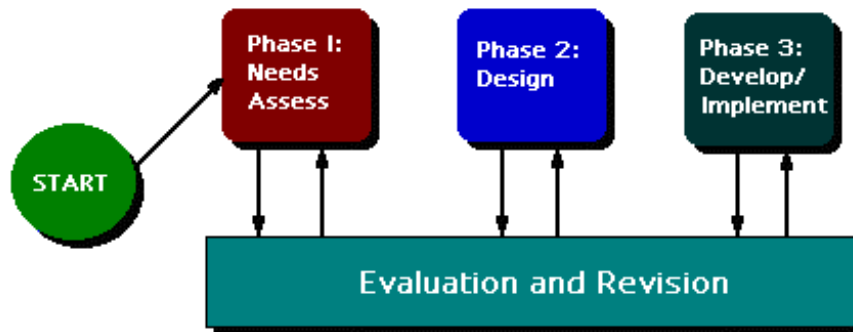


Figure 1

During the design phase, existing training materials are analyzed to check if they cover the determined needs. If they do, then they need to be reorganized and sometimes rewritten during the development phase.

ADAPTING EXISTING WRITTEN MATERIALS FOR THE WEB

To adapt existing materials for the web each piece of information needs to be “break apart” and rewritten by people trained in technical writing. The break apart, or “chunking” procedure, is necessary to extract from each piece just the absolutely necessary and meaningful information.³

Concepts:	Facts:	Procedures:	Process:	Principles:
Group of objects, symbols, ideas or events that are designated by a single word, share common features and vary on irrelevant features.	A unique specific, one-of-a-kind information	A sequential series of steps to be followed by a single individual to accomplish a task or make a decision.	Flow of events that describe how something works.	Statements of a cause and effect relationship that provide learners with general guidelines for action.

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