



# Driving Business Benefits

Towards Maturity Learning Technologies Benchmark Report | February 09





# Driving Business Benefits

This is one of a suite of Delivering Business Benefits publications to report on a comprehensive survey conducted during autumn 2008 which investigated e-learning usage across 300 organisations.

Full details of this research are published in a suite of reports:

- **Driving Business Benefits: Report Summary** (January 2009)
- **Driving Business Benefits Report:** (February 2009)
- **Driving Business Benefits: Sector perspectives** (March 2009)
- **Driving Business Benefits Appendix – Methodology and Analysis** (February 2009)

The full reports and further information regarding the research findings and implications can be found at [www.towardsmaturity.org](http://www.towardsmaturity.org)

The work is supported by Becta as part of Next Generation Learning @ Work.



For further information please contact:

**Towards Maturity**

t: +44 (0)20 8542 2331

e: [elearning@towardsmaturity.org](mailto:elearning@towardsmaturity.org)

w: [www.towardsmaturity.org](http://www.towardsmaturity.org)

© Copyright Towards Maturity CIC 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this material protected by this copyright may be reproduced or utilised in any form, or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system without prior authorisation.



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

<b>Chapter 1 - Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
Research themes and methodology .....	7
Participant profile .....	7
Report structure and contents .....	9
<b>Chapter 2 - Building the Business Case</b> .....	<b>10</b>
Investment drivers.....	10
Business drivers .....	11
Learner drivers.....	11
Learning and development drivers.....	12
What benefits are we actually achieving?.....	12
Are we achieving what we plan for?.....	13
Changes with maturity .....	14
Budgets .....	14
Shifts in budget and learning technology allocation.....	16
Summary .....	17
<b>Chapter 3 - Trends in Technologies and Services</b> .....	<b>18</b>
Tools for generating and delivering content.....	18
Tools for supporting learners and encouraging reflection.....	19
Supporting collaborative learning .....	20
Tools for managing and administration .....	20
Changes with maturity .....	21
A comment on the future.....	22
Summary .....	22
<b>Chapter 4 - Implementation</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Programmes .....	23
Changes with maturity .....	25
Qualifications .....	26
Audiences and locations.....	26
Informal learning.....	28



# CONTENTS

---

How much informal learning is taking place? .....	28
Supporting informal learning with technology .....	29
Summary .....	30
<b>Chapter 5 - Barriers to success .....</b>	<b>31</b>
Understanding the challenges.....	31
People issues .....	31
Technology issues .....	33
Barriers for large and small organisations .....	33
What is improving?.....	33
Changes with maturity .....	33
Summary .....	34
<b>Chapter 6 - Improving the Impact .....</b>	<b>35</b>
The Towards Maturity Model .....	35
Do these strands still influence success? .....	36
How can the Towards Maturity Model help to improve results in the workplace? .....	36
Understanding the business environment.....	37
Building capability for learning and development staff .....	38
Engaging the business .....	39
Personalised benchmarking and resources for improvement.....	40
What single action areas have the biggest impact in the workplace? .....	40
Growing in maturity .....	41
Summary .....	42
<b>Appendix 1 – What topics are e-enabled? .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Appendix 2 – Benchmark comparison .....</b>	<b>44</b>



## INDEX OF FIGURES:

Figure 1 – Respondents by sector .....	7
Figure 2 – Respondents by location .....	8
Figure 3 – Respondents by maturity .....	8
Figure 4 – Drivers for investing in learning technologies .....	10
Figure 5 – Changes in drivers 2006 to 2008 .....	11
Figure 6 – Benefits delivered to business, staff & learning & development ...	13
Figure 7 – Organisation budget allocation .....	15
Figure 8 – Percentage of total budget spent on learning technologies .....	15
Figure 9 – Spending expectations over next 2 years .....	16
Figure 10 – Tools to support content delivery .....	18
Figure 11 – Tools for supporting learners and encouraging reflection .....	19
Figure 12 – Tools to support management and administration .....	20
Figure 13 – Programmes delivered by maturity .....	25
Figure 14 – Audience influence on business benefit .....	27
Figure 15 – Barriers to implementing learning technologies .....	31
Figure 16 – Towards Maturity Model .....	35
Figure 17 – Average strand rating by business benefit .....	36
Figure 18 – Understanding the business environment .....	37
Figure 19 – Building learning and development capability .....	38
Figure 20 – Engaging the business .....	39

## INDEX OF TABLES:

Table 1 – Are we achieving what we plan for? .....	14
Table 2 – Technologies and services that change with maturity .....	21
Table 3 – Top 10 topics offered .....	23
Table 4 – Top 10 topics that are e-enabled .....	23
Table 5 – Top 10 topics with highest skills e-rating .....	24
Table 6 – Where are we e-learning? .....	27
Table 7 – Supporting informal learning with technology .....	29
Table 8 – Individual actions that influence results .....	40
Table 9 – Growing in Maturity .....	41
Table 10 – Appendix 1 What topics are e-enabled? .....	43
Table 12 – Appendix 2 Benchmark Comparison .....	44



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

**This study looks at the experiences of those who are already investing in learning technologies in the workplace. What are organisations doing? Why are they doing it? What contributes to their success?**

## Definitions

For the purpose of this study we define the term e-learning and /or learning technologies as: “The use of any technology across the learning process, including skills diagnostics, learning delivery, support, management (of learners and content), informal and formal learning”.

The aim of this Benchmark Research programme of work is:

- To provide a snapshot of UK e-learning activity in the workplace at the end of a tumultuous year for employers.
- To provide an opportunity for individual participants in the programme to benchmark their own activity.
- To provide those new to learning technologies evidence to support their business case and inform their implementation planning.
- To provide providers and policy makers with increasing awareness of employer needs in this area, highlighting potential interventions that will maximise skills and productivity gains.

The research draws on established models of maturity and technology adoption. As learning technologies become increasingly embedded within organisations, we aim to identify effective practices emerging which in turn can inform planning, development and implementation.

The benchmark research was conducted by Howard Hills and Laura Overton from the Towards Maturity team and expands on previous work in this area<sup>1</sup>.

To ensure currency, the research questions were also reviewed by a range of industry experts and specialists. We would like to thank the following organisations for their comment and contribution:

- e-Learning Network
- Learning and Skills Group
- The British Institute of Learning and Development
- e-skills UK
- Ufi
- Skillsoft
- Becta

We would also like to thank the user organisations who took part in the pilot review of the survey and Nige Howarth, from Towards Maturity for help in editing and review.

<sup>1</sup>Towards Maturity - 07 Overton, Hills, Dixon published by e-skills UK, Linking Learning to Business – 04 – Overton (published by e-learning age), Embedding e-Learning in large Organisations 04 – Hills (published by Ufi)



## Research themes and methodology

As in previous studies, we are particularly interested in 2 challenges facing organisations as they increasingly adopt new ways of learning:

- The impact of the new approaches on both businesses and individuals.
- Staff engagement and take-up.

We are also looking at emerging trends and changing patterns over time.

Individuals with responsibility for implementing learning technologies in their own workplace were invited to participate in an online review between October and November 2008. (See participant profile below).

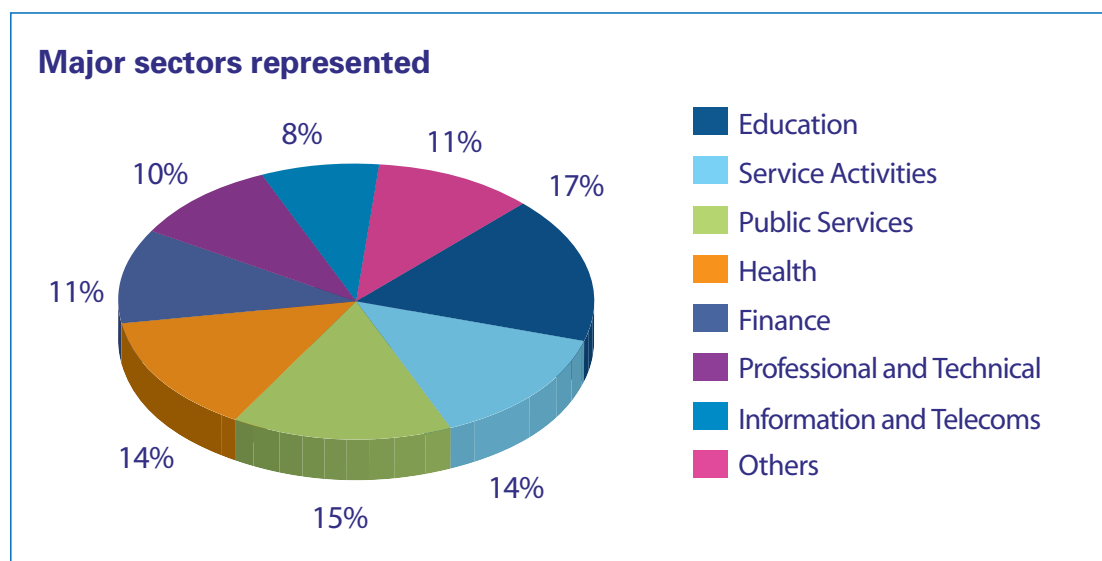
The online review was designed in two sections – a Survey element asking factual questions and a Benchmark Review investigating opinion. The Benchmark Review consisted of 112 statements which respondents were asked to agree or disagree with on a nine-point scale.

The on-line review was distributed widely through a number of channels and partners. The methods used to disseminate the survey deliberately limit the respondents to those already with an interest in e-learning. An assumption is that all respondents would already be started on the “e-learning journey”.<sup>4</sup>

## Participant profile

Over 300 organisations participated in the research from a wide range of private and public sector organisations including health, finance, public services, education, information and communications.

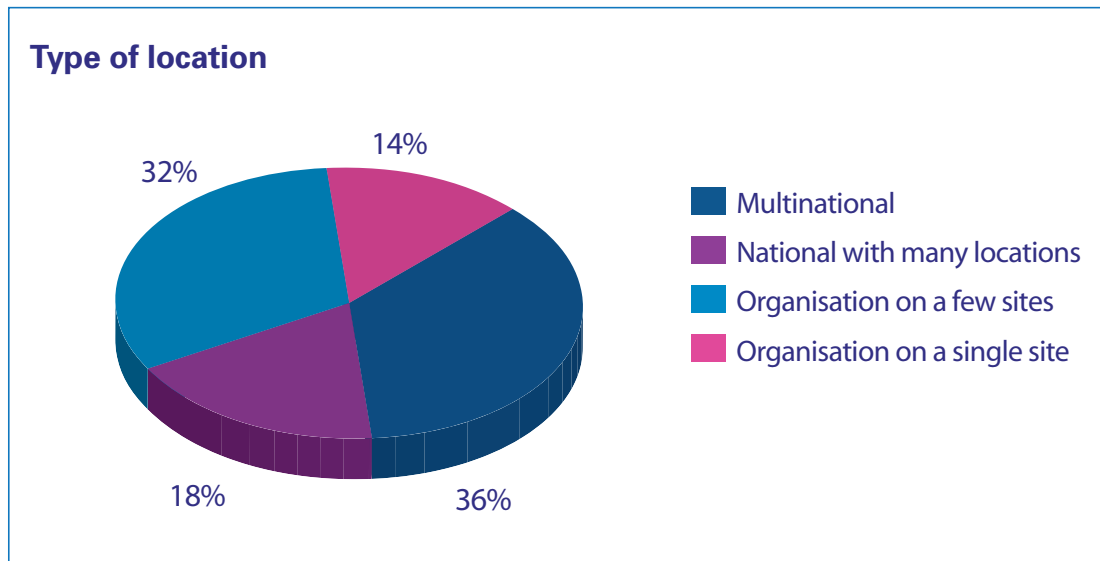
**Figure 1 Respondents by sector**



<sup>4</sup>Further information about the research methodology is available to download with this report.



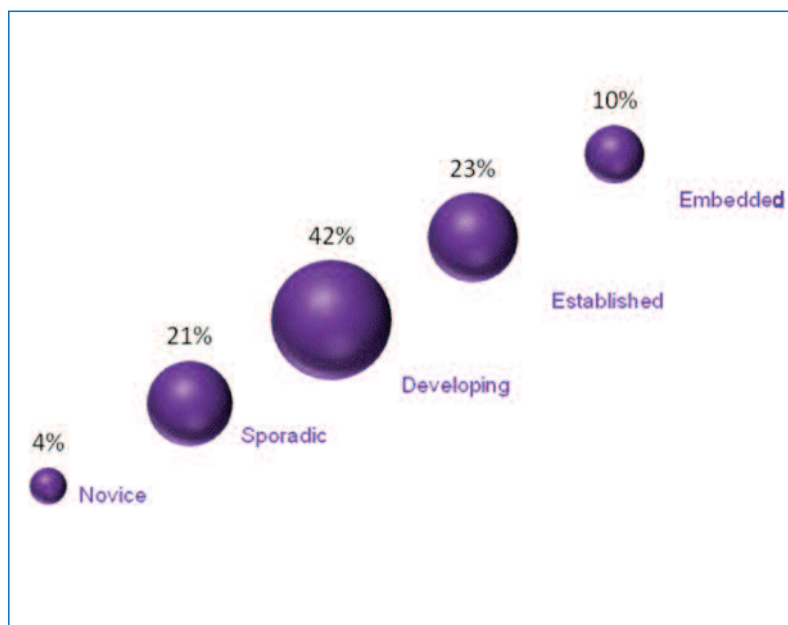
Figure 2 Respondents by location



In the main, larger organisations participated in this programme (62% had over 1,000 staff) and most had audiences spread over multiple locations either nationally or internationally.

Respondents described their differing experience with learning technologies at the time of participating according to a maturity scale first used with employers in the original Towards Maturity research. Participating employers were asked to note agreement with one of the statements in Figure 3.

Figure 3 Respondents by maturity



**Novice** know very little about learning technologies, occasional users only

**Sporadic** our usage is localised in some locations or departments

**Developing** our usage is established across the company and transforming management of Learning & Development

**Established** our usage is established across the company and transforming management of Learning & Development

**Embedded** learning technologies are thoroughly embedded across our organisation & we have a learning culture that influences everyday work.





## Report structure and contents

This report draws upon the research findings to highlight insights for employers and training providers. The analysis looks at implementation practices that influence three indicators of success: business benefit, staff impact, and take-up.

These 3 indicators are calculated from the respondent's assessment of a combination of measures within the survey:

**Business Benefit** – calculated from measures that reflect the range of business benefits reported, responsiveness to business requirement and performance improvement.

**Staff Impact** – calculated from measures that reflect the range of staff benefits reported, the variety of extended learning opportunities for learners; programme completion and the ability of learners to put what they have learned into practice on the job.

**Take-up** – calculated from measures that reflect the extent to which e-learning is used across the organisation including the range of audiences catered for, the choice of topics available and the extent of voluntary usage.

The report presents the findings in the following areas:

- Building the business case
- Trends in technologies and services
- Implementation
- Barriers to success
- Improving the impact

For an Executive Summary of the report findings, please refer to “**Driving Business Benefit: Summary Report**” available from [www.towardsmaturity.org](http://www.towardsmaturity.org).



## CHAPTER 2: BUILDING THE BUSINESS CASE

**This chapter reviews the evidence that will help organisations build better business cases for learning technologies in 2009 by examining the drivers behind investment and the actual benefits that are being delivered. It also provides a benchmark for ongoing investment.**

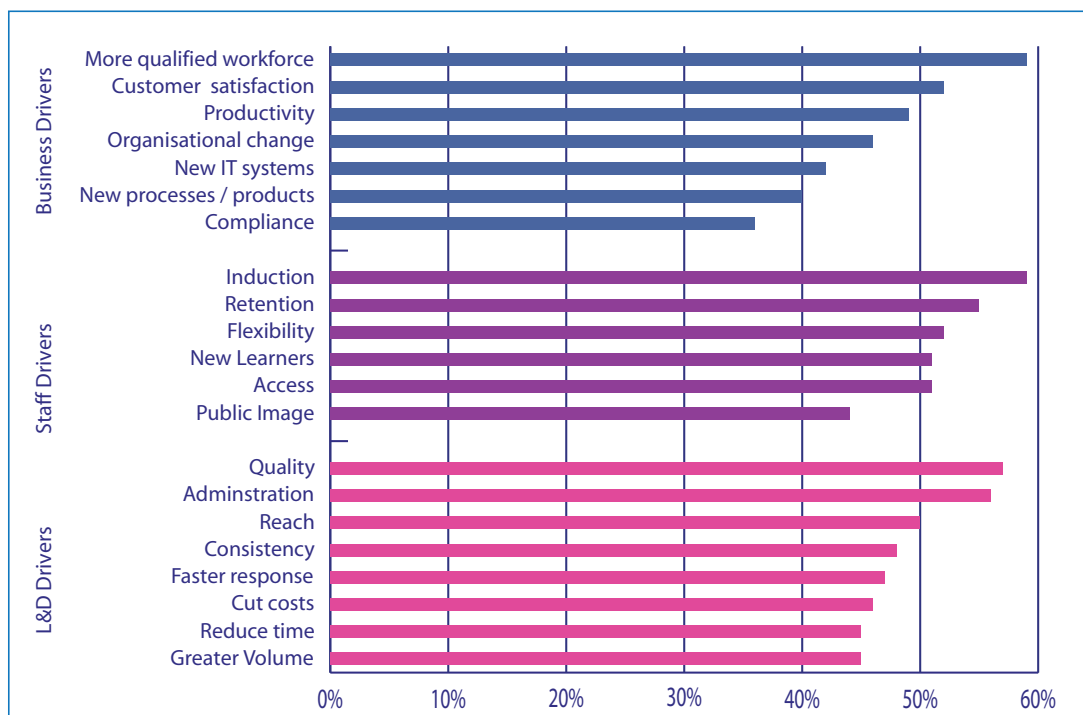
### Investment drivers

Over the past 2 years, we have looked at what is driving organisations to invest in learning technologies. In 2007 the top drivers for investment were primarily linked to improving the delivery of learning and development, improving flexibility and access to learning (reported by just under 80% of the group), reducing cost and improving administration (by about 50% of the group).

What is driving investment in learning technologies at the moment? Expectations in the current economic climate are considerably higher. Respondents were offered a list of drivers from which they selected their major reasons for investing in e-learning.

Figure 4 highlights how more organisations are demanding more from their investment – they are not just looking for improvements for learning and development but are looking to add value to their business and to the individuals within the business as well. In 2009 benefits to business and learners are more likely to be selected than benefits to learning and development.

**Figure 4 Drivers for investing in learning technologies**





## Business drivers

Leading the list for Business Drivers is the need for better qualified staff and improved induction. This year, many are looking for more than compliance with industry regulation. It is encouraging to see that the desire to improve the skills that improve customer satisfaction, productivity, the roll-out of new products and systems is more significant than achieving compliance alone.

46% are looking to improve organizational change processes, illustrated by the comment from one respondent looking for:

*'Speedier integration when we have mergers and acquisition activity'*

## Learner drivers

The increased list of learner benefits is also a sign that organisations are looking for innovative ways to address retention and talent management, adjusting to the demands of staff for a more responsive solution.

**Figure 5 - Changes in drivers 2006 to 2008**

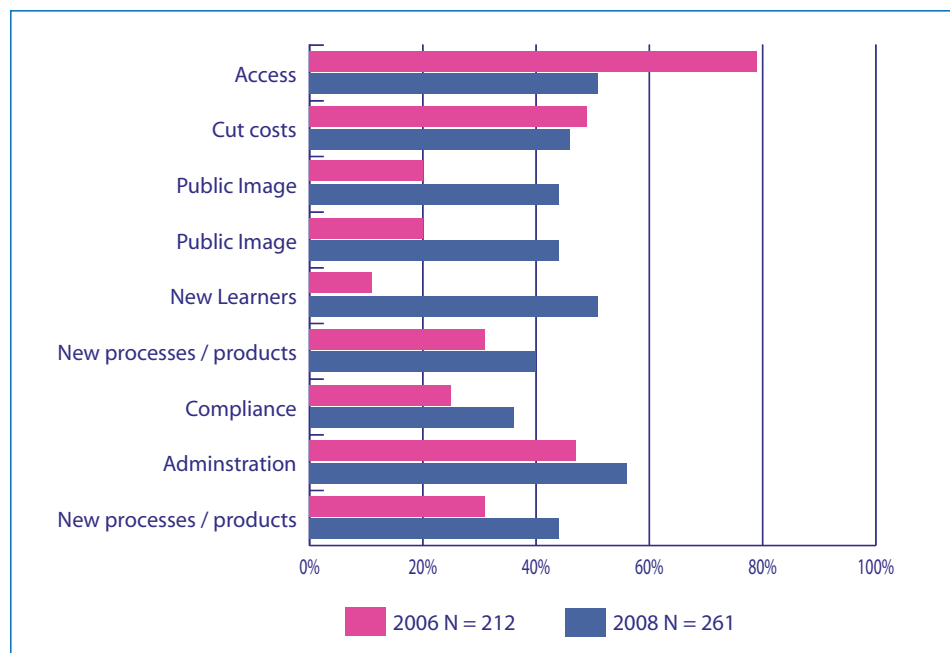


Figure 5 highlights that one of the biggest changes in focus since 2006 is the demand for learning solutions that will engage new learners – this was only a driver for 11% but in 2008, it is a driver for 51% of respondents. Generation Y learners<sup>5</sup> are likely to be more comfortable with accessing knowledge, information and interaction with others through on-line media and organisations now want technology to help. Another area that has become more important over the last 2 years is the role that learning technologies have in portraying a progressive public image of the company.

<sup>5</sup>Whilst definitions of Generation Y vary, they are typically considered as a cohort of individuals born between 1976 and 2003 who are voracious consumers of electronic media.



### Learning and development drivers

Historically, flexibility, access and cost have been the primary reasons for investment in learning technologies - they are still important but are no longer the sole focus. In 2008 the top driver for learning and development is to improve quality of the learning experience (growth of 25%). Extending the reach of learning and improving consistency are the 2 drivers that have increased the most since 2006 when they were only considered by under 3% of the participants.

Other drivers highlighted by the group included:

- Improving confidence - eg *'We use e-learning to familiarise staff with environments in preparation for future e-process changes in the business'*
- Interdepartmental collaboration - eg *'We are also looking for marketing and PR benefits (on the back of our podcasts and video casts)'*

<b>Top 10 drivers</b>	In the top 10 list of drivers selected by 50% or more of the respondents, only four are related to specific attributes of the technologies themselves - flexibility, access, reach and meeting the needs of new learners.
Induction	
More qualified workforce	
Quality	Six of the top 10 drivers may be achieved from learning irrespective of media and are related to output rather than the comparative advantages of e-learning over other methods of learning.
Administration	
Retention	
Flexibility	This indicates that e-learning is being seen as another option for delivering support to learners rather than an activity in its own right.
Customer Satisfaction	
Access	
New Learners	This places it appropriately as just one of the methods learning & development functions can use to deliver learning.
Reach	

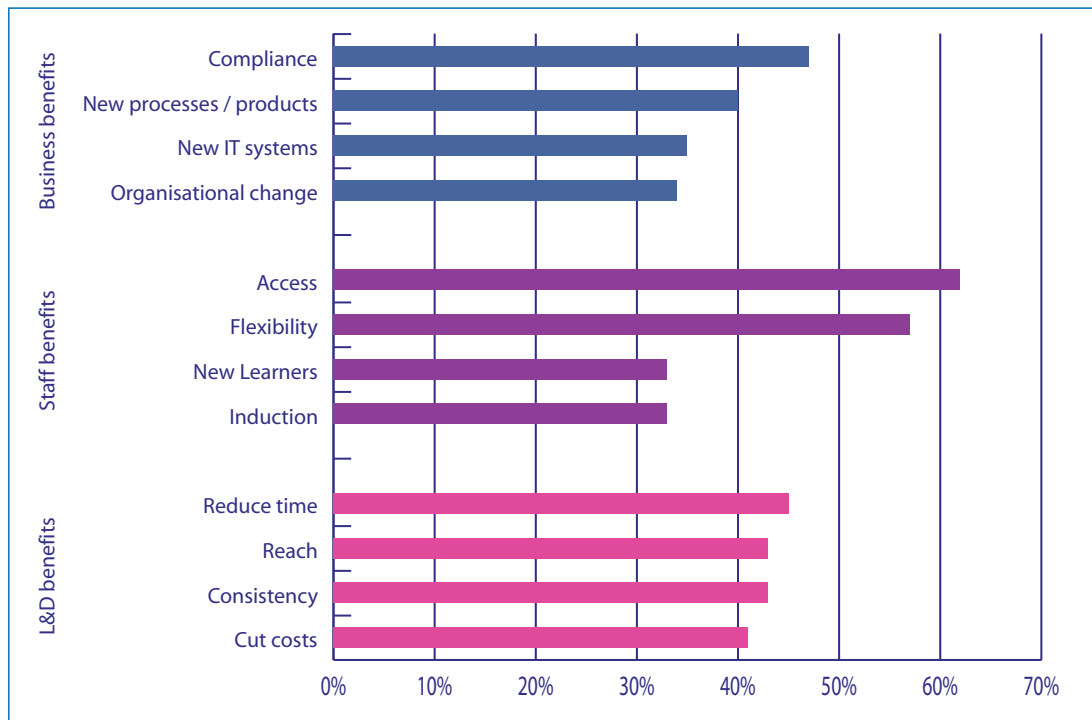
### What benefits are we actually achieving?

Respondents were asked to select the major benefits **actually** achieved from e-learning from the same list as above.

Flexibility and access were most likely to be selected (by 62% and 57% respectively) and the only benefits selected by more than half of respondents. This is perhaps unsurprising given that they were the primary drivers 2 years ago! Improving reach and improving consistency are also starting to be reported. This highlights that learning technologies are starting to add real value to the business of running a learning and development department but what about other business benefits?



**Figure 6 - Benefits delivered to business, staff and learning & development**



The review also shows that learning technologies are starting to add some strong value in areas that are becoming increasingly important to organisations in a downturn when efficiency and competitiveness are key. Feedback shows that learning technologies are pulling their weight in helping organisations:

- Save time (for 45% of 261 respondents)
- Reduce cost (for 41%)
- Implement organisational change (for 35%)
- Improve the rollout of new products and IT systems (for 40% and 35% respectively)

We found that as organisations increased in maturity, they consistently reported an increase in real benefits. When comparing established and sporadic users we see that established users are:

- 6 times more likely to report improvements in quality of learning provision
- 5 times more likely to report improvements in induction
- 3 times more likely to report improvements in customer satisfaction
- 3 times more likely to report that they are able to respond faster to business needs as a result of their use of learning technologies

### Are we achieving what we plan for?

We compared the drivers that the organisations selected vs the benefits that they had actually realised to date in order to find out the extent to which we are achieving our goals. Table 1 highlights the results:

**Table 1 - Are we achieving what we plan for?**

Top 10 Drivers	% stating this as a driver in 2008	% achieving what they planned for	Total % achieving Benefit
Induction	59%	19%	33%
Better Qualified Staff	59%	14%	33%
Training Quality	57%	17%	34%
Administration	56%	20%	38%
Staff retention	55%	9%	20%
Flexibility	52%	32%	57%
Customer satisfaction	52%	13%	24%
Access	51%	36%	62%
New Learners	51%	14%	33%
Researchers	50%	20%	43%

From this table there are 2 benefits that stand out; flexibility and access - a greater proportion of respondents got these benefits than planned for them. (This is also true of compliance).

However there is a longer list of drivers that have not yet materialised into actual benefits. The top 5 include - better qualified staff, better induction, improved training quality, improved customer satisfaction and improved productivity.

The timing of this question may influence these results (we did not ask when they started to plan these benefits), it may be that they are harder to measure or take longer to materialise than others.

### Changes with Maturity

We see that mature users are achieving 40 to 50% of the benefits that they plan for and sporadic users are much less likely to get the benefits that they set out to achieve (realising only 20% of them). The good news for sporadic users is that they are more likely to report benefits that they did not plan for!

### Budgets

Respondents were asked three questions on budgets:

- What proportion of their total learning budget was invested in e-learning?
- Did they expect this proportion to increase, decrease or stay the same over the next two years?
- Did they expect their overall training budget to increase, stay the same or decrease?

How much are we allocating to learning technologies? (see Figure 7)



Twenty nine percent spent less than 5% of their overall training budget on e-learning. Thirteen percent of respondents spent more than 30%.

In 2006 we asked for total value of spend and several respondents declined to answer. This year the new style of question focused on trends which provided more responses. However we can draw some comparisons. In 2006 22% spent more than 30% of their overall budget on e-learning. We suspect that this change is due to a greater variety of respondents, also evidenced by a drop in proportion of the most mature.

Figure 7 - Organisation budget allocation

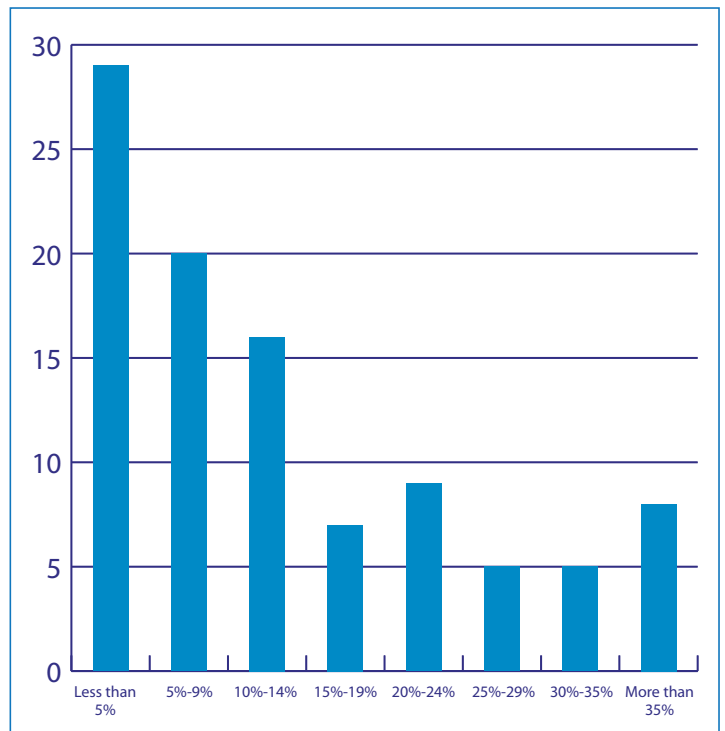
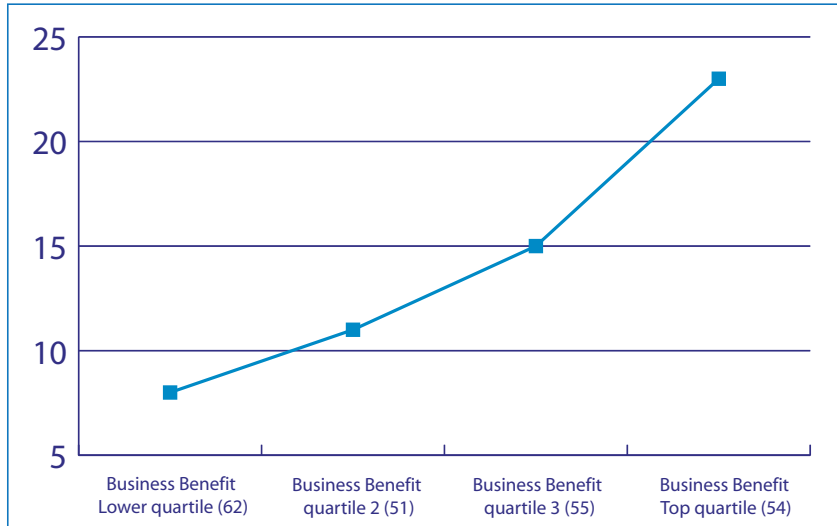


Figure 8 - Percentage of total budget spent on learning technologies



Not surprisingly more mature users spend a greater proportion of their training budget on e-learning, with 50% of embedded users spending more than 30% and only 6% spending 10% or less. The majority (56%) of sporadic users spend less than 5% of their budgets on e-learning.

Figure 8 shows the relationship between business benefit achieved and proportion of training budgets that are spent on e-learning. The average for those in the bottom quartile for business benefit spends less than 8% of their overall budget on e-learning. This proportion rises to 23% for the top performing 25%. This demonstrates a clear link between e-learning investment and the resulting probability of business benefit.



## Shifts in budget and learning technology allocation

**Figure 9 Spending Expectations over next 2 years**

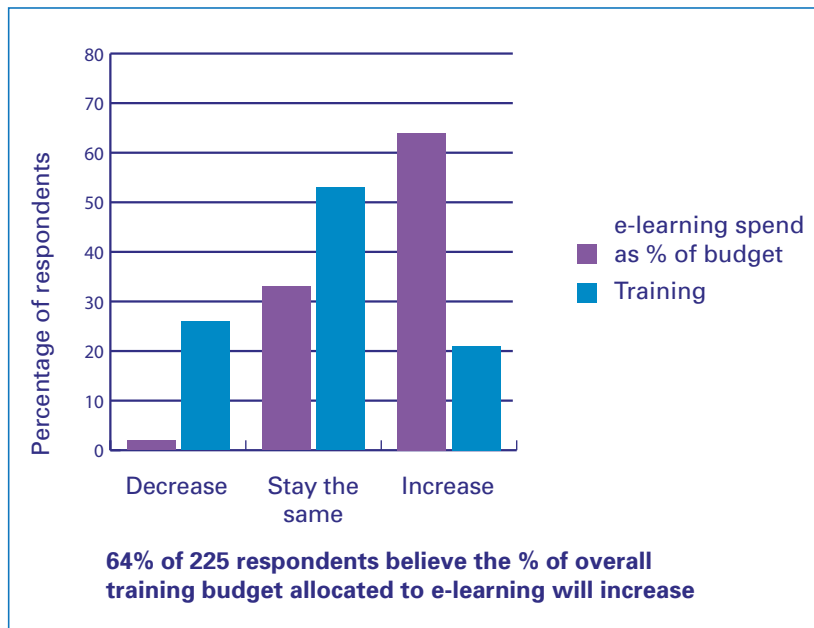


Figure 9 shows the expected change in the proportion of overall budget spent on e-learning and the change in the overall training budget. Using data collected during September, October and November 2008 approximately 50% of respondents expected their training budget to stay more or less the same, a quarter expected it to decrease and a quarter expected it to increase. However 64% expected the proportion spent on e-learning to increase.

In 2006 56% of respondents said that their e-learning spend would increase in absolute terms. In 2008 we can calculate that 68% of respondents expect to increase their overall e-learning spend (based on data collected up to November 2008).

Because of the nature of the economic turmoil that is being experienced globally this question was repeated in December 2008 using the same respondents and 108 responded. From these responses the overall view of e-learning spend as a proportion of training budgets remains positive with 50% of respondents expecting the proportion of their budget spent on e-learning to increase and only 12% expecting it to decrease. This compares to 40% who expect their overall training budget to decrease and 15% who expect it to increase.

Using the same estimating process<sup>6</sup> only 37% would agree that their overall e-learning budgets will increase. Although this is a significant reduction it is mainly due to the greater number of organisations who expect a decrease in their training budgets.

Is the credit crunch an opportunity or a threat? 56% regarded it as an opportunity as they will do more with what they have. Only 6% felt it was a threat and that investment would reduce.

<sup>6</sup>We estimate the number of organisations by adding:

- (1) those whose e-learning percentage would increase but overall budget would stay the same; and
- (2) those whose proportion of e-learning spend would stay the same but overall budget would increase; and
- (3) those whose overall budget will increase and proportion of e-learning spend will increase.

In 2006 56% of 113 respondents agreed that their e-learning spend would increase in absolute terms. From this we can state that up to November 2008 respondents had a more positive view of the future of e-learning spend than was held in 2006.





It is clear that we cannot use this data to predict trends in spend given the dramatic economic shifts we are currently experiencing - this data however does highlight the increased focus on learning technologies over traditional methods in a volatile economic climate.

### *Summary*

- Organisations are more likely to recognise that learning technologies can help deliver actual business benefits than in previous years.
- Those organisations that manage e-learning in a more mature way are much more likely to achieve what they plan to achieve and more likely to get greater benefit from their investment.
- In 2008 organisations are more likely to be interested in learning outputs of technology rather than the features of the technology itself as a driver for investing in e-learning.
- Although overall there is a more pessimistic view of training spend at the end of 2008 the majority view remains that the proportion of training budgets spent on e-learning will increase.
- The majority spend no more than 5% of current budgets on e-learning although this increases with maturity.
- Those that spend a greater proportion of budgets on e-learning do get a greater business benefit than those that spend a smaller proportion.



## CHAPTER 3: TRENDS IN TECHNOLOGIES AND SERVICES

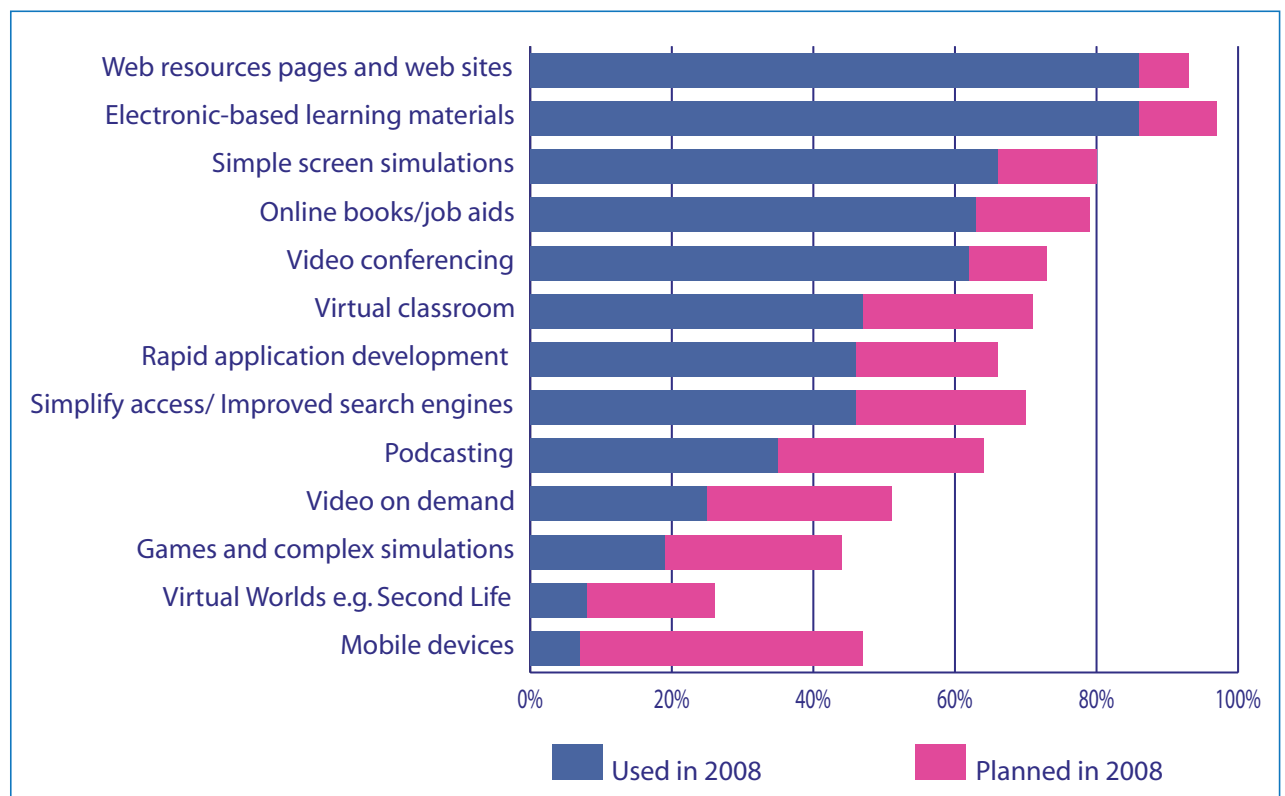
**This chapter investigates the trends in the way that learning technologies are being used in the workplace. It considers how technology is used to support learners through the learning process and back at work.**

We asked the respondents 2 questions in this area - what learning services are supported by technology in your organisation and what specific learning technologies are you using? We were interested in the full range of tools used within both the formal and informal learning context although we did not ask respondents to specifically identify where and when those technologies were used. Where possible we were also interested in looking at trends over the past years comparing data for actual and planned use for many of the tools from 2006.

### Tools for generating and delivering content

How is technology helping to deliver content both within formal and informal learning environments? Figure 10 highlights the tools being implemented now (used in 2008) and planned over the next 2 years.

**Figure 10 - Tools to support content delivery**





The tools that have experienced the most growth in the last 2 years (ahead of predicted growth rates back in 2006) are those that help provide a faster response time to business needs:

- Podcasting has nearly doubled and is in use by 35% of the sample.
- Rapid development tools have also grown by 43% and are in use by 46%.
- Virtual conferencing has also increased and is in use by 62% of the respondents.

Two content delivery tools that have enjoyed the growth originally predicted in 2006 are video on demand (grown from 15% to 25%) and the virtual classroom (grown from 39% to 47%).

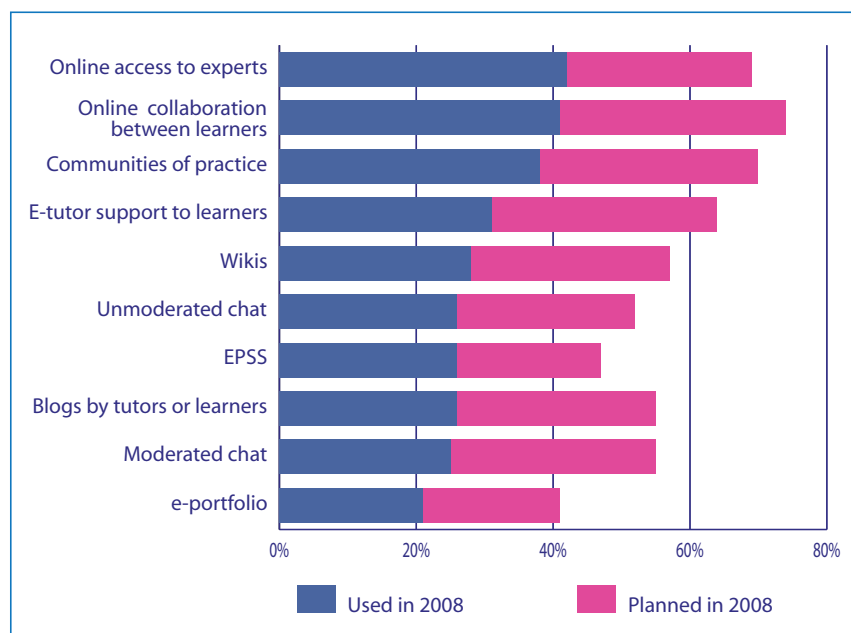
Electronic based learning, simple simulations and online books and job aids still top the list as the most popular methods of content delivery. Out of these we only asked about electronic based learning materials and online books in 2006 (both of which were also at the top of the list then).

Interestingly whilst growth was expected for both in 2006, online book usage has remained static over the last 2 years but usage for electronic based learning has actually decreased by 9% which may be due to some of the 'new kids on the block' mentioned above. It may be that these tools have hit a plateau of penetration.

### A comment on mobile learning

The patterns on mobile learning (learning using hand held devices) are more complicated. In 2006, 21% said that they were using mobile devices (including PC tablets) but in 2008 we asked the question slightly differently (excluding PC tablets) and actual usage has dropped to 7%. However, mobile learning has the highest growth prediction of all the content delivery tools (expected growth of 20% per annum). Given the changes in video quality we have seen on these devices in the last 6 months alone - this could be one to watch!

**Figure 11 - Tools for supporting learners and encouraging reflection**



### Tools for supporting learners and encouraging reflection

In this area we looked at some of the opportunities for collaboration and on the job application and reflection. Figure 11 highlights the areas of existing usage and planned growth.

These tools do not have the level of usage enjoyed by content delivery tools.



### Supporting collaborative learning

Blogs by learners and tutors and wiki's have enjoyed the most growth over the last 2 years - whilst only in use by about a quarter of the sample, they have grown by 33% and 42% respectively.

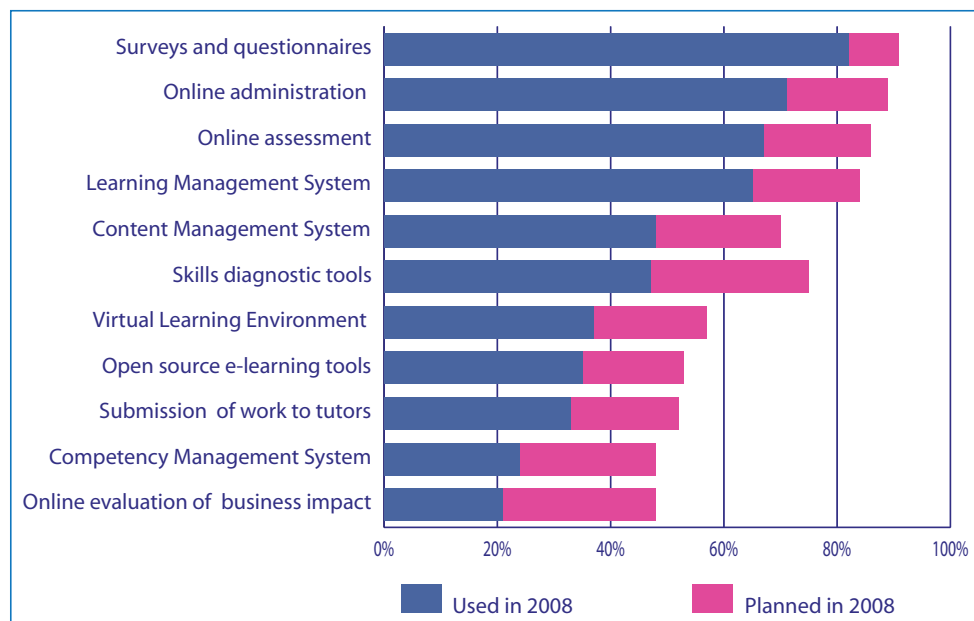
The rest of these tools have actually decreased in usage over the last 2 years - with e-tutor support and moderated /unmoderated chat facilities declining the most by approximately 25% despite strong predictions for growth 2 years ago.

It looks like some organisations may have been experimenting 2 years ago and have since dropped them. In fact 48% of our respondents are clear that their trainers do not support collaborative e-learning (either through virtual classrooms or discussion forums) and only 25% agree that staff work collaboratively through technology to solve business problems. If we follow the Gartner hype curve<sup>7</sup> these technologies appeared to be enjoying the peaks of inflated expectations a few years ago and now respondents are more disillusioned. It will be interesting to look for the patterns of growth over the next few years - meeting the needs of new generation learners may be the stimulus for us to see predicted growths achieved as their true potential is explored.

### On the job support and e-portfolio

Electronic Performance Support Systems (EPSS) have also enjoyed growth this year (grown by 29% and in use by just under a quarter of the participants.) However e-portfolio has seen a decline (despite predictions that growth would increase by a third back in 2006). Respondents are still expecting to see strong growth here in the next 2 years. Given the role of e-portfolio in some work based qualifications, the drive to improve the qualified workforce might help to realise some of this expected potential.

### Tools for managing and administration



**Figure 12 - Tools to support management and administration**

Figure 12 looks at the tools and services that we are using to improve efficiencies in the administration of learning delivery.

<sup>7</sup>The Gartner Hype Cycle – www.gartner.com



The tools that have enjoyed the most growth in the last 2 years are competency management systems (10%), content management systems (by 7 %) and open source tools (by 5%). Levels of adoption of learning management systems and skills diagnostic tools remain static and there has been a decline in the usage of online measurement of business impact (by 35%) and online assessment (by 14%.)

Online surveys and questionnaires are new this year and unsurprisingly at the top of the list as many of these are used not only in courses but also in gathering feedback from learners (66% routinely collect feedback from the users of each course).

However online assessment has decreased by 14% - only 38% of the respondents agreed that they used technology to simplify the administration of the assessment process. Also new is the submission of work to tutors and focus on VLE's (such as Moodle), both of which were in use by about one third of the respondents.

### Changes with maturity

Table 2 highlights those technologies and services more likely to be adopted early on the e-learning journey and those more likely to be adopted by the more mature:

**Table 2 - Technologies and services that change with maturity**

	Early adopter tools	Late adoption tools
Content	Web pages, electronic based learning, simple simulations, rapid development tools are also a good place to start  (in use by over 70% of sporadic users)	Online resources and books, podcasting, environments for user generated content (such as wiki's) and virtual worlds
Support and reflection	None!	Blogs, moderated chat, discussion, e-portfolio, communities of practice (and /or learning), e-tutor support
Management and administration	Learning management systems, surveys and online assessment	Virtual learning environments

It is not just the tools but also the way that they are used that varies with organisations. Given the variety of tools available it is surprising that only 61 % of the respondents agreed that they blend their learning technologies.



The implementation differences for organisations at different stages of maturity will be explored in more detail in chapters 4 and 6 but when we compare established users with sporadic users we find that the established user is more likely to:

- **Blend learning technologies** (they are twice as likely to use several learning technologies, 3 times as likely to train trainers to create blended learning solutions).
- **Create collaborative learning opportunities** (they are nearly 10 times as likely to use opportunities such as virtual classroom to help learners interact in real time).
- **Personalise learning using assessment** (they are 6 times as likely to use assessment to tailor learning to individual needs).
- **Support learners** (they are 4 times as likely to provide e-tutor support).
- **Focus on interactivity** (they are 4 times as likely to consistently use video, audio, images and animation as well as text and 15 times as likely to use highly interactive methods such as games in their solutions).

### A comment on the future

Figures 10, 11 and 12 highlight that there are yet again some very strong predictions all around and it is still interesting to see that some of the tools that we associate with Generation Y (gaming, virtual worlds, blogs, wiki's and other forums) are still not on the agenda despite the strong driver to meet the needs of new learners outlined in chapter 2.

Given the volatility of the economic climate and the tendency for organisations to be over optimistic in their predictions for the future, we would not want any organisation to base their business plan on the planned use of tools and technologies outlined in this study! The data will become most valuable in 2 years time when we look back. In the meantime, it will be interesting to watch our adoption patterns given the speed of change that the business world finds itself. Free open source tools may become more attractive, tools that help responsiveness may continue to grow strongly, and the needs of new learners may drive an increase in use of technologies.

### Summary

- Technologies and services that help to provide faster response and more tailored solutions to business needs have experienced the most growth – ahead of expectations.
- Despite an increased requirement to meet the needs of new learners, the take off of web 2.0 collaborative learning media is slow.
- Mature organisations are more likely to blend technologies, focus on learning personalisation and support learners through technology.



## CHAPTER 4: IMPLEMENTATION

**This chapter examines the ways that organisations are implementing learning technologies – what programmes are supported? Who is the audience? Where is learning offered? How is technology being used to support informal learning?**

### Programmes

How is technology supporting skills delivery? We looked at the subject areas with the most significant take up of e-learning but we are also interested in the probability of a topic being delivered by e-learning as opposed to other methods.

To understand this, respondents were asked about the skills areas that they delivered in their organisations using any method (including e-learning) and which of these programmes were supported by learning technologies. (Appendix 1 provides a full list of all the programmes investigated). Tables 3 and 4 look at the top 10 programmes offered in organisations (regardless of media) and the top 10 programmes that are supported with learning technologies (e-enabled).

**Table 3 - Top 10 topics offered**

Top 10 topics delivered (regardless of media)	% of respondents
Induction	95%
Leadership & Management skills	91%
Health & safety	90%
Company specific skills	89%
Industry specific skills	85%
General IT user skills	84%
Team working	83%
Communication skills	82%
Equality and diversity	78%
Customer handling/service	77%

**Table 4 - Top 10 topics that are e-enabled**

Top 10 topics that are e-enabled	% of respondents
Induction	41%
IT professional skills	44%
Health & safety	42%
Company specific skills	49%
Industry specific skills	44%
General IT user skills	59%
Industry specific regulatory requirements	46%
Email and Web protocol	40%
Equality and diversity	40%
Office/admin skills	32%



Table 3 highlights that leadership and management, induction, health and safety are the topics most likely to be available in organisations (offered by approximately 9 out of 10 of all respondents) but they show different patterns in the extent to which their delivery is supported by learning technologies (e-enabled). Learning technologies are used in one third of leadership and management programmes and about 40% of organisations currently use learning technologies to help deliver induction and health and safety.

The pattern of the use of learning technologies varies widely. Table 4 shows that technology and company/industry specific skills are the most likely to be e-enabled by a high proportion of organisations. We see that those topics most likely to be e-enabled are either compliance related or specific to the company or job<sup>8</sup>.

We were also interested in the probability of a subject being delivered with the help of technology - we termed this the **skills e-rating**. For example if 10 organisations deliver a programme but only 3 of them use learning technologies within their delivery then the skills e-rating for a programme will be 0.3. The higher the skills e-rating, the more likely the subject will be e-enabled.

**Table 5 - Top 10 topics with highest skills e-rating**

Top 10 skills programmes with highest skills e-rating	Skills e-rating
General IT user skills	0.71
Email and Web protocol	0.59
E-commerce	0.58
IT professional skills	0.57
Company specific	0.55
Literacy	0.53
Industry specific skills	0.52
Equality and diversity	0.51
Numeracy	0.48
Health & safety	0.47

<sup>8</sup>This finding supports the comment from the City and Guilds Report *Skills in the Global Economy* "every National Employer Skills Survey since the first has carried a very clear message: generic skills are important, but the biggest cause of skills shortages is specific technical occupational skills. Employability skills are necessary, but not sufficient, for employer competitiveness."





Table 5 shows the programmes with the highest skills e-rating. Literacy, numeracy and e-commerce are not offered by many organisations but when they are, they are more likely to use an e-component in delivery than other subjects in this list.

### Changes with maturity

When we analyse the types of programmes offered, by organisations, we can see very clear patterns related to maturity levels.

**Figure 13 - Programmes delivered by maturity.**

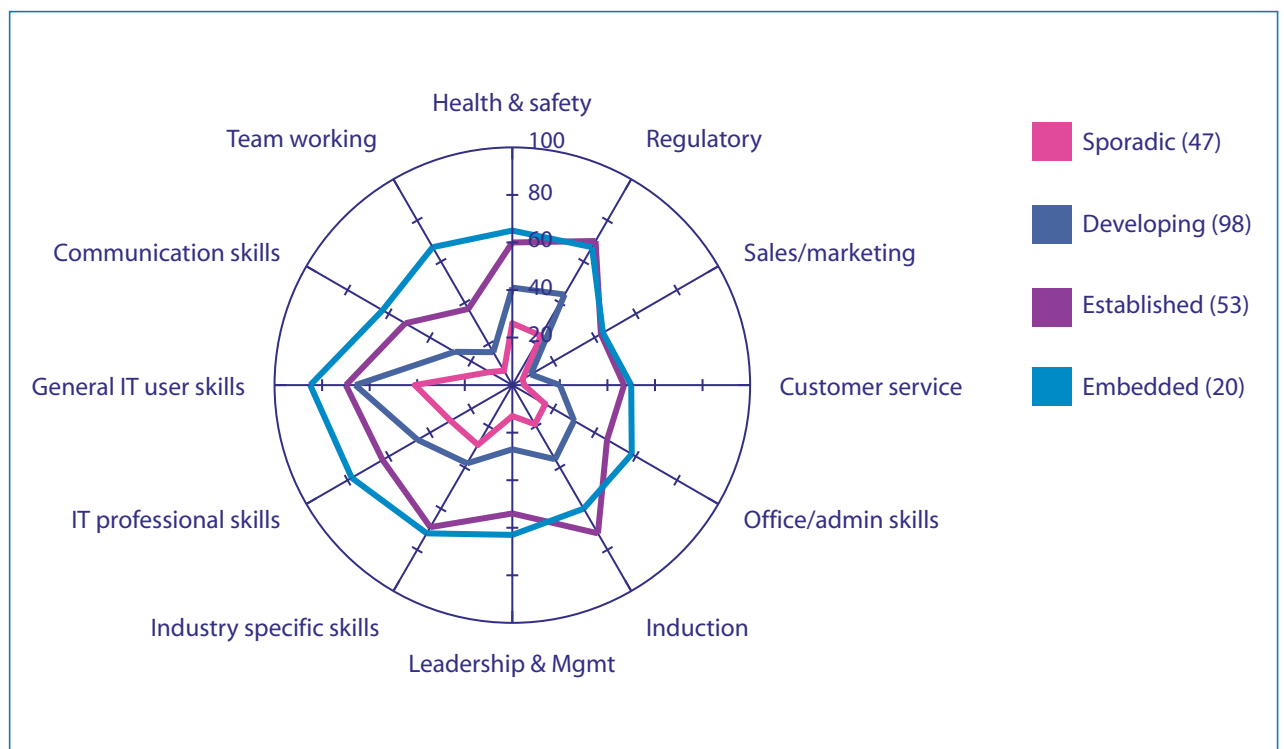


Figure 13 shows the change in topic delivery as organisations grow in maturity. In all cases more mature organisations are likely to support a wider range of topics with e-learning. The pattern of increase changes at different levels of maturity.

Sporadic users start with IT related topics and compliance topics. General IT Skills (40% of sporadic users) and email and Web protocol (30%) are most likely to be e-enabled followed by compliance topics that are directly related to the business (25%).

Developing and established users are more likely to offer e-enabled business skills and industry specific topics. Many of these are company specific.

Embedded users are much more likely to e-enable delivery of both core skills and other interpersonal skills such as communications and teambuilding.





As organisations mature, they extend the breadth of e-enabled topics they deliver moving from a range of generic offerings, compliance and IT related, onto direct business skills and industry specific skills, finally delivering a range of interpersonal skills.

### Qualifications

A key driver for organisations in this study was to create a better qualified workforce (this was important to 59% of respondents). 56% feel that their staff is interested in qualifications.

We also found that 72% offer qualifications in at least one subject area although only 30% agree e-learning leads to a qualification and only 25% use e-assessment to support that qualification.

However maturity makes a big difference; 84% of established users offer qualifications to staff (vs. 69% of sporadic users). Established users are twice as likely to use e-assessment to support qualifications compared with sporadic users.

### Audiences and locations -

Table 6 shows where we provide e-learning (88% doing so at the desk). This rises to 95% for global organisations but drops to 84% for those on a single site. There are no other significant differences in segments of organisations other than linked to maturity.

We found that more mature organisations offer a wider choice of locations (3.6 on average compared to 2.2 locations for sporadic organisations). The biggest change with maturity is supplying e-learning at home (rising from 47% of sporadic users to 79% of established users). More mature organisations are more likely to use a mobile phone or PDA (30%).

Patterns of usage have not differed that much over time - there is a slight increase in providing e-learning at home (from 60% to 72% of organisations) and a slight decrease in using Learning Centres (from 52% to 43%).



**Table 6 - Where are we e-learning?**

Location where e-learning is provided	% of respondents
At the desk	88%
At home	60%
At work in a learning centre	47%
At work in a quiet area nearby	30%
At a location away from work	22%
In the work place but not at an employee's desk (for example on a till or in the shop floor)	13%
When travelling	12%
On a mobile phone or PDA	16%

We analysed the roles that have a high probability of having e-learning supplied to them. High probability users include professional grade staff, technician grade staff, line managers and administrative staff with a PC.

Low probability users include administrative and service staff without a PC, employees who travel, supervisors, skilled workers and other manual workers.

**Figure 14 - Audience influence on business benefit**

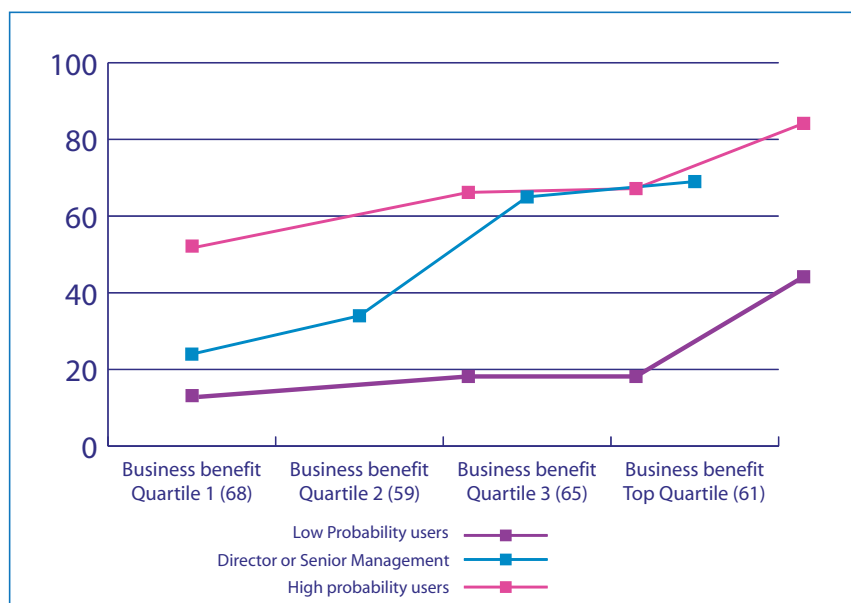


Figure 14 shows the audiences using e-learning segmented by business benefit. As in 2006 organisations that deliver e-learning to more roles also report more business benefit.



The effect on business benefit is most marked for directors and senior managers as learners; less than one quarter of those in the bottom quartile for business benefit deliver e-learning to these roles compared to 69% in the top quartile. Thus directors and senior management setting a personal example in providing this leadership from the top will make a substantial difference to the business benefit obtained from the e-learning investment.

Staff impact shows a similar relationship with the number of roles who use e-learning. Those roles that have the greatest impact on take-up by staff are directors and senior management, professional grades, line managers, administrative grades and technician grades.

Not surprisingly more mature organisations deliver learning to more roles. On average sporadic users deliver to 2.9 roles, developing users to 3.9, established users to 5.2 and embedded users to 4.9 roles.

### Informal learning

In the past, we have included learners in our research which has given a powerful indicator of the extent to which staff is use technology to learn informally (outside of structured programme delivery).

In this study, we asked those implementing learning technologies three questions about informal learning:

- To what extent informal learning happened in their organisation rated on a six-point scale.
- Whether they supported informal learning with technology.
- What methods they used.

### How much informal learning is taking place?

Two years ago learners said that 60% of the knowledge they needed to do their job they found out for themselves - other studies have indicated that up to 80% of learning is informal.

However in 2008 respondents (responsible for implementation) estimate that they believe that 40 to 45% of learning is informal (with very little variation against maturity).

A quarter was uncertain as to the amount of informal learning that took place or what it would look like if it were happening. Indeed one survey user stated *"I'm not sure if I understand what informal learning is."*

The estimated proportion of informal learning also shows little variation with the impact e-learning has on staff, business benefit or the probability of take-up of learning by staff.



### Supporting informal learning with Technology

In 2006 almost 80% of employers were planning to increase their support to informal learning. In 2008, 41% (of 279) said that they were supporting informal learning with technology and a further 25% said that they were planning to do so.

Respondents were asked to describe briefly how they did support informal learning with technology (see table 7).

**Table 7 - Supporting informal learning with technology**

	Example comments	
Social Networks and communities of practice	<i>'.. social networking sites - where we feed information without people really realising that they are learning'</i>	25%
Content at learner discretion	<i>'Access to our Learning Management System can be made via our Intranet, through anyone's PC. All reference materials including quick reference guides can be read or downloaded/printed off. All e-learning modules are available for staff to take from their desk too.'</i>	25%
Internet search	<i>'The employees are encouraged to visit different websites, to communicate with their distant colleagues in order to exchange experience, or in coordination with the supervisors to do whatever they think is necessary for the process of their informal education'</i>	17%
Wiki's	<i>Wiki's and online resources/collaboration</i>	12%
Structured online resources	<i>Open access to online library of resources</i>	10%

There were one or two isolated examples of electronic appraisal systems. Perhaps disappointingly only three of the 104 respondents mentioned any form of knowledge-sharing or knowledge-sharing tools:

*"We have a Knowledge Management system where questions can be asked and answers posted. There is also a 'lessons learned' website in various parts of the business"*



For many, informal learning was about opening up their learning management system for staff to access anytime, anywhere. Others were more sophisticated in their approach to connecting staff and experts e.g.:

*“We use on-the-job online performance support tools in place of intensive induction training building. We embed blogs and wikis to support virtual working/learning groups. We distribute 'bite-sized' videos by Subject Matter Experts and we are building and supporting collaboration networks / communities of practice.”*

Since almost 50% of those who answered this question selected either social networking or free use of learning content (and the rest neither) this indicates that there is considerable uncertainty as to what informal learning is and the best way to support it for business benefit.

## Summary

### Programmes

- Technology is being used to help deliver most subjects now but those most likely to be e-enabled are compliance topics and general IT skills.
- The number of e-enabled programmes increases with maturity, with developing users adding business skills areas and induction training as well as compliance topics.
- The most mature are more likely to deliver interpersonal skills topics.

### Audiences and locations

- More mature organisations deliver e-learning to a wider range of roles.
- Engaging top and senior management as users of e-learning is one of the greatest differentiators of both maturity and delivering business benefit.
- Making e-learning available at home is more likely to be offered by mature organisations (about 4 out of 5 of embedded users).

### Informal learning

- About 40% of total learning is regarded as informal by implementers of learning technologies – a significantly lower estimate than from learners themselves.
- Social networks and free access to content are the most popular methods of using technology to support informal learning.
- There is a lack of clarity about what informal learning is and what it is not.



## CHAPTER 5: BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

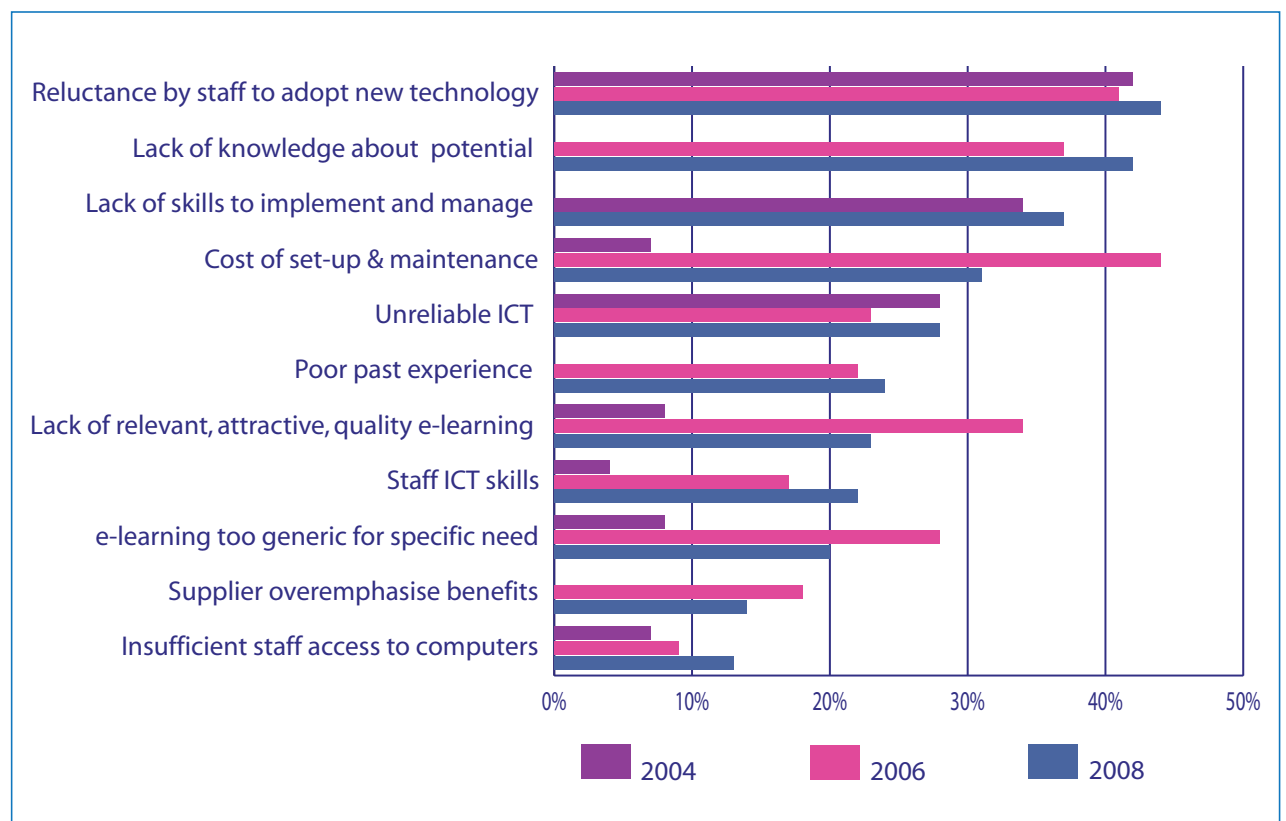
This chapter reviews the top barriers to successful implementation and how they are changing over time.

### Understanding the challenges

Much has been discussed about the opportunities for learning technologies in the workplace, but, in the current economic climate, it is also important to understand the barriers to success so that we can mitigate risks in order to improve results.

Respondents were asked to select the major barriers to implementing learning technologies from a list of 11 (there was also an option to add additional barriers and 58 organisations did so).

Figure 15 - Barriers to implementing learning technologies



### People issues

In 2004, poor infrastructure was cited as one of the top 3 barriers, in 2006 the cost of set up was at number 1 but in 2008 the top 3 barriers are all to do with people. Reluctance by staff to engage in e-learning remains the most likely barrier to be selected closely followed by a lack of knowledge and a lack of skill to implement within learning and development teams.



Since 2006, the % of organisations citing staff reluctance rose 3% (to 44%) which is hardly significant. Of more concern is the fact that this is now in first place indicating that little has been done in the last 2 years to improve the perception of what learning technologies can do for learners, organisations and training functions.

The following individual comments made by respondents help to illustrate some of the reasons behind this barrier:

#### Attitudes to e-learning

- *Staff preference for "proper" training!*
- *It is more than reluctance as a lot start but do not complete e-learning*

#### Time

- *Reluctance of senior management to support time devoted to e-learning*
- *People are too busy to learn on their own - when they have free time they prefer to sleep!*

#### Lack of buy-in from senior management and line management

- *Managers have to take more responsibility (a greater role) in the learning than they did with sending staff to a classroom*
- *Not seen as being productive when using e-learning*

#### Lack of interdepartmental co-operation

- *There are conflicting agendas within the HR function which prolong progress into new areas*
- *IT security restrictions*

#### Not delivering against objectives

- *Doesn't deliver actual benefits required*

Significantly, both **lack of knowledge about e-learning potential and lack of expertise to implement e-learning** were the next biggest barriers (selected by 42% and 37% respectively).

This lack of expertise was supported by 8 individual comments related to insufficient management experience inside organisations to take e-learning forward.

The lack of skill and awareness may have a significant impact on the reluctance of staff to take up new technologies. The study has shown that less than half of respondents can agree that their learning is relevant to staff, 1 in 5 are still providing text based learning only, less than 50% train staff in blended learning – all of these issues will influence staff acceptance of new learning media. We explore some solutions to these issues in more detail in chapter 6.





## Technology issues

Over the past 2 years, there has been a slight increase in IT related barriers:

- Unreliable ICT/low bandwidth has increased by 5% (to 28% in 2008)
- Poor staff ICT skills has increased by 5% (to 22% in 2008)
- Insufficient staff access to computers increased by 4% (to 13%)

On the face of it, it is surprising given the immense improvements that have been made on on-line services in the wider community. However it is also possible that much greater demand is placed on ICT technology infrastructure in 2008 than in 2006 with podcasts, video casts and Virtual Learning Environments more widely used for more purposes.

## Barriers for large and small organisations

Global organisations face particular problems in both language and culture, a point commented on by four respondents.

However in terms of the list of barriers, global organisations are slightly less likely to select any of them as barriers except for poor previous experiences and suppliers over-emphasising presentation and style.

Micro-organisations are more likely to find e-learning too generic, 36% as opposed to 20% of all respondents. They are less likely to have reluctant staff (30% against 44%), lack of skills to manage e-learning effectively (30% against 37%) or lack of knowledge about its potential use (36% against 42%).

*NB Some caution should be applied to these figures since only 14 micro-organisations responded to the benchmark review. Because the review was marketed electronically we may also assume that these micro-organisations consisted of highly IT literate employees. Fifty percent were IT or consulting companies.*

## What is improving?

There have been three significant improvements in the last two years. The probability of cost being a barrier has dropped from 44% to 31% of respondents, perceived lack of quality products from 34% to 23% and e-learning being too generic as a barrier down from 28% to 20%.

## Changes with maturity

More mature organisations select slightly fewer barriers (3.6 per embedded user against 4.5 per sporadic user). Most of the barriers are cited less frequently by the more mature as they find ways of overcoming them however there are two barriers that increase with maturity:

- Unreliable ICT infrastructure
- Supplier's over enthusiasm.



Mature organisations are more likely to use learning methods that place a greater demand on ICT infrastructure; such as podcasts and interactive games. Their attitude to suppliers may be explained by more mature organisations having a higher skill level in implementing e-learning and therefore a more pragmatic approach to delivery within their organisation.

The barrier that declines most with maturity is the lack of skills to manage learning, with half as many embedded organisations citing this as sporadic.

### *Summary*

- Barriers to e-learning remain formidable and frequently cited.
- The people issues are now top of the list with reluctance of staff at number 1.
- Knowledge, skills and attitude are cited at number 2 and 3 and may contribute to overall staff reluctance to engage with new technologies.
- ICT unreliability and lack of availability are still increasing and an issue for a quarter of respondents but no longer cited as top barriers.
- Cost of set up and maintenance and lack of relevant material are decreasing as barriers.
- Lack of knowledge and skills are less likely to be barriers in the most mature organisations although learner's attitudes remain the number one barrier irrespective of maturity.



## CHAPTER 6: IMPROVING THE IMPACT

**This chapter analyses the habits of the highly successful implementations and reviews the specific actions that can be taken to help overcome obstacles and encourage engagement.**

### The Towards Maturity Model

Our earlier research showed that organisations mature in the use of technology got better results. They perceived more business impact, improved staff impact and increased take-up of e-learning. Analysis of 112 statements around technology and implementation practice showed that the strongest correlations with success were not with technology but with implementation practice. This allowed us to identify 6 strands of behaviours that directly influenced results and were found to increase with maturity (Figure 16):

**Figure 16 - Towards Maturity Model**



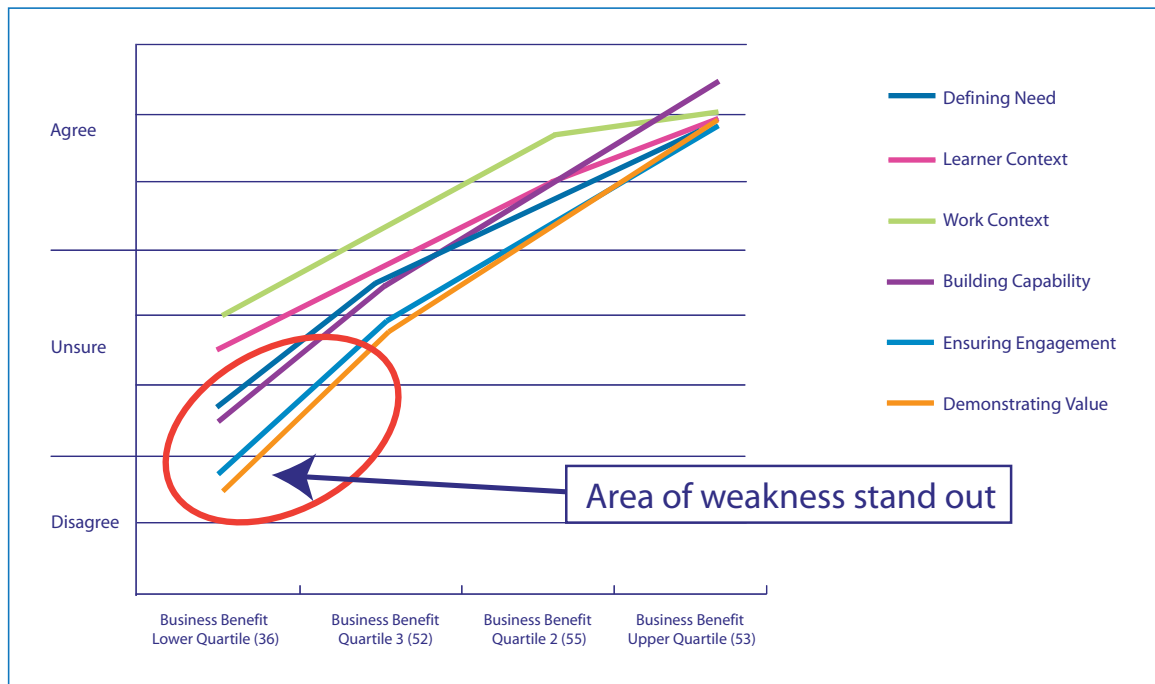
1. **Defining need** – activities that help align implementation with both business and individual needs
2. **Learner Context** – activities that provide learners with choices and options that support their work life balance and working context
3. **Work Context** – activities that understand and address issues of IT infrastructure and managerial support
4. **Building Capability** – activities that build the skills of learning and development professionals in strategy, informal learning, assessment, support and design
5. **Ensuring Engagement** – marketing and communications activities that address the stakeholder requirements of learners, managers and L&D staff
6. **Demonstrating value** – activities that involve gathering feedback, measurement AND ongoing communication of results



### Do these strands still influence success?

In 2008, the action statements behind the model were reviewed for currency from a number of industry experts. We also engaged a more diverse audience - the 2008 sample was a third as big. The responses for each strand were mapped against levels of maturity, business impact, staff impact and take-up for e-learning. Do these strands of activity still have an impact on results? Figure 17 illustrates that they do.

**Figure 17 - Average strand rating by business benefit**



Those in the top quartile for business benefit consistently agreed that they practice all 6 strands of activities in their implementation processes. Those in the lowest quartile of business benefit are more likely to consider the learner context and work context but they are less likely to engage in activities that help to define need or build capability of learning and development staff. They are even less likely to look at issues of engaging stakeholders and demonstrating value.

### How can the Towards Maturity Model help to improve results in the workplace?

The individual strands are broken down into a number of dimensions. These dimensions have been built from a series of related actions that all behave in a similar way when mapped against each other. Analysis has shown that each of these dimensions positively influence results across the 3 measured areas.

By considering the extent to which organisations agreed, disagreed or were unsure about the actions within each dimension, we were able to look at the areas of strength and weakness of the sample of respondents in order understand which actions influence others and to highlight areas of improvement<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>9</sup>The Mapping process is based on Principal Component Analysis



## Understanding the business environment

All of our work has shown that an understanding of the current business drivers, culture, and infrastructure is critical for successful implementation.

**Figure 18 - Understanding the Business Environment**

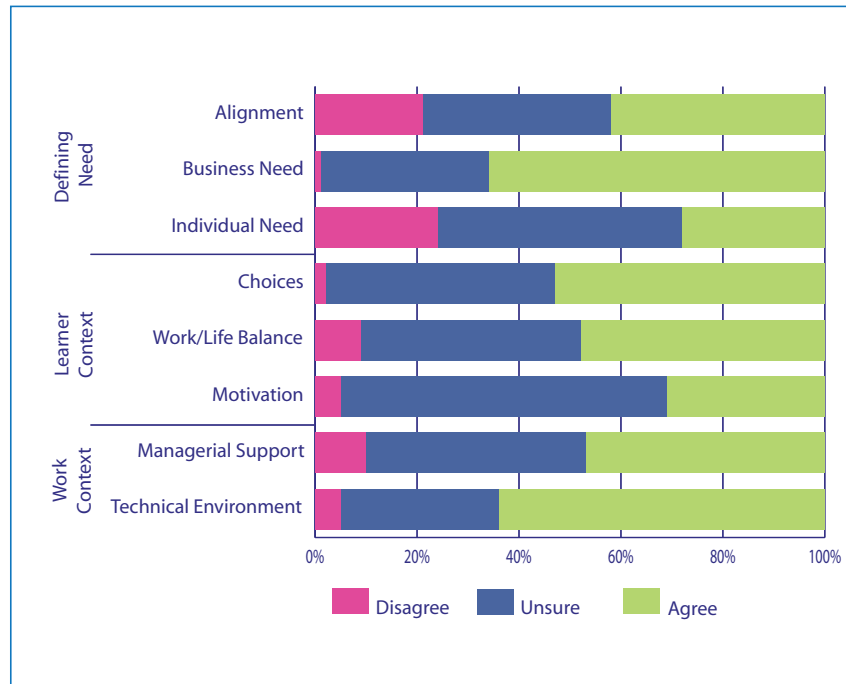


Figure 18 shows the % of the total respondents who agree, disagree or are unsure about their activities around the strands that help us to respond to the business environment. Often learning and development professionals cannot influence this environment directly but this and previous studies have shown that the more aware we are of the environment, the more likely our solutions are to be successful.

In the strand of **Defining Need**, the majority are more confident that they are reflecting their business's need (i.e. that learning is aligned to jobs or competency) than in their strategies to align learning to business goals (through the setting of clear business endorsed strategy with agreed targets).

Specific areas of note:

- Only 65% of the total confidently agreed that their learning was relevant to current job roles (ranging from 80%+ of the mature and to only 50% of the sporadic), the rest being unsure.
- Only 30% of the respondents agreed that e-learning contributed to qualifications.
- Only 13% of the participants agreed that their learners were given recognition for participation.

The dimensions within **Learner Context** show that we are most likely to focus on understanding the need for learner choices (where learners are offered personalised experiences and control over their learning) and work life balance (where learning is convenient and linked to lifestyle choices).

Specific areas of note:

- Only 30% agree that their learners are motivated.
- The more mature again are more likely to focus on individuals and learner motivation.
- Established users are 3 times more likely than the sporadic users to agree that staff consider their e-learning to be good for their careers.



The **Work Context** strand looks at 2 key influencing factors outside of the control of the individual and the learning and development department - managerial support and IT infrastructure. Whilst understanding both is key we are much more likely to agree that we have considered the technical environment than the managerial context.

Specific areas of note:

- *Most organisations have made provision to ensure that learners have technology access - nearly 70% of all respondents agree that staff who are not regular PC users have access to them at work.*
- *Many more are unsure about the managerial support available to learners which also makes a considerable difference.*

### Building capability for learning and development staff

71% of participants felt that their training department were willing to embrace new technologies yet only 47% believe they know what e-learning can do for them. 2 out of 5 participants are not confident that they have the skills to take advantage of the new opportunities for delivering learning.

**Figure 19 - Building learning and development capability**

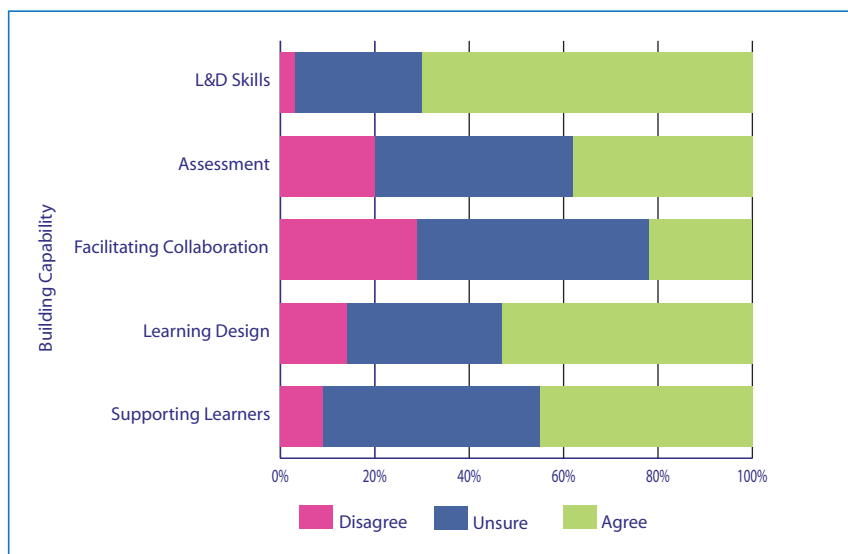


Figure 19 looks at the extent that organisations are **building capability** within their own learning and development teams.

In the **Building Capability** strand, we can see that respondents are strongest in developing generic learning and development skills and attitude.

However specific skills in the areas of using assessment, facilitating collaboration, supporting learners and learning design are not as evident.

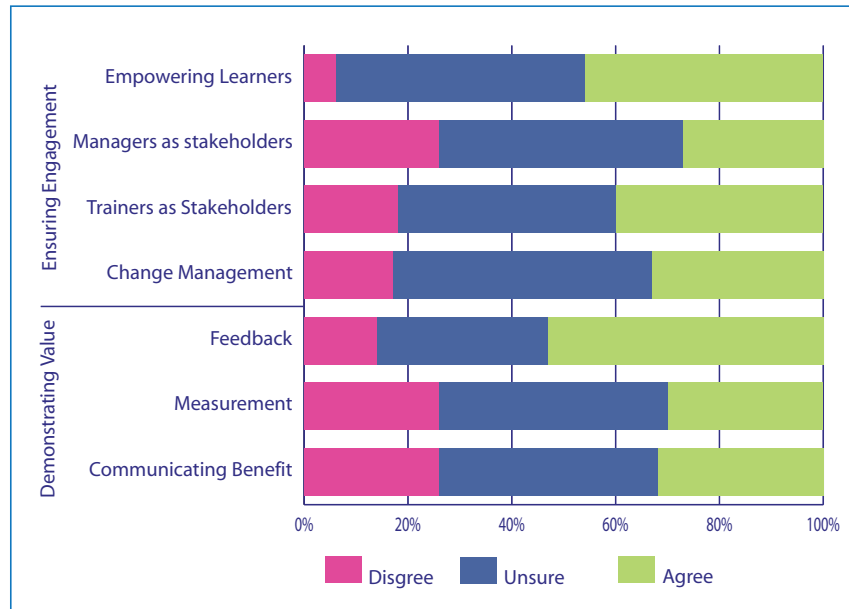
Specific areas to note:

- *Despite the plethora of tools and techniques available, 1 in 5 of all participants are still providing text based learning only.*
- *Only 50% say that e-learning is always part of a broad mix of methods.*
- *Only a third of the sample provide e-tutor support to learners.*
- *Less than a quarter use assessment to tailor learning to individual needs.*



The Towards Maturity Model highlights that all of these dimensions (and many more) significantly influence the results reported and yet they are not common practice - we have a way to go!

**Figure 20 - Engaging the business**



### Engaging the Business

The strands of **Ensuring Engagement** and **Demonstrating Value** cannot be considered in isolation from the rest of the strands. However they are often the weakest.

Figure 20 shows that within these strands, the strategies for engaging trainers and learners are probably the strongest but the study has shown that there is much room for improvement.

Areas to note:

- Only 38% agree that staff know what learning is available to them.
- Only 40% agreed that staff know how to get hold of the training that they need.
- Less than half of the respondents agreed that their face-to-face training courses integrate e-learning content and support (remember that all of those participating are doing so because they have already invested in learning technologies).
- Despite the increasing evidence about the benefits of integrating learning technologies into blended solutions less than half actively train their trainers to create blended learning solutions.
- Just over a third identify local champions and change agents.

Previous studies<sup>10</sup> have shown that 55% of learners say that their manager's opinion is the most influential when it comes to doing e-learning. Supporting managers directly is one of the key activities that correlate to both business results and staff impact, another is ensuring that top managers use e-learning themselves (see section on individual actions). Yet activities that target managers as stakeholders is the weakest dimension in this strand.

<sup>10</sup> Linking Learning to Business 05 and Towards Maturity 07



In the **Demonstrating Value** strand - respondents are strongest at gathering feedback. However our focus is mainly on the learners. One area that will need focus moving forward in this economic climate is the area of measurement and the way that we link our solutions back to tangible business measures.

Specific areas to note:

- 52% regularly conduct regular surveys of learner satisfaction but only 25% survey line managers (with figures doubling for the more mature).
- Over 30% fail to set measurable targets for their e-learning.
- Only 26% measure specific business metrics when evaluating e-learning effectiveness (these figures increase dramatically for those that are embedded).

### Personalised benchmarking and resources for improvement

Each of the respondents within the review received a personalised benchmark report describing the dimensions in more detail and benchmarking their scores. A copy of the generic benchmark report is in Appendix 2 and highlights the scores in each quartile for the full sample and provides links to a list of case studies and resources to help organisations support improvement in each dimension.

### What single action areas have the biggest impact in the workplace?

We analysed the specific actions within the different dimensions that influenced business benefits (BB), staff impact (SI) and take-up (TU) the most. Table 8 provides a quick checklist for those looking to improve benefits.

**Table 8 - Individual actions that influence results**

Strand	Activity	BB	SI	TU	% agree
DN	There is a clear statement of the vision of e-learning endorsed by business leaders.		x		29%
DN	There are measurable targets for learning and e-learning.	x	x		30%
LC	Staff find e-learning convenient to their work schedule.	x	x		53%
LC	Staff have access to a broader range of learning opportunities.		x		66%
LC	We support career aspirations (or personal job goals) with e-learning.	x	x	x	27%
BC	We use highly interactive methods, such as games, in our e-learning solutions.	x			23%
BC	We use several different learning technologies.	x			61%
BC	We consistently use video, audio, images and animation as well as text in our e-learning.	x			52%
EE	We equip line managers with resources and training so their teams get the most out of e-learning.	x	x		20%
EE	Information about e-learning is easy to find.			x	42%
EE	Our top managers are seen to use e-learning.			x	25%
DV	We know the full cost of learning delivery.			x	39%
DV	We report against the targets agreed for e-learning.			x	34%
DV	We report external success in awards to the business.			x	34%





### Growing in maturity

The journey towards maturity is not guaranteed - previous studies have shown that organisations can remain sporadic or developing users for years. Whilst all of the strands and dimensions of implementation activity increase with maturity, we were interested in the specific areas of activity that characterise the transition between each of the maturity levels. Table 9 highlights the main findings.

**Table 9 - Growing in maturity**

<b>When compared with sporadic users, developing users are more likely to:</b>	
Focus on the awareness and capability of the Learning and Development/Delivery team function	They are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 times as likely to agree that they know what technology can do for them.</li> <li>• 2 times as likely to train trainers to apply blended solutions.</li> </ul>
Target engagement & communications at change agents	They are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 times as likely to agree that they regularly communicate e-learning successes to line managers and supervisors.</li> <li>• 4 times as likely to train local champions to act as change agents</li> </ul>
<b>When compared with practices of developing users, established users are more likely to:</b>	
Involve management	They are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3 times as likely to agree that they equip line managers with resources and training so their teams get the most out of e-learning.</li> <li>• 2 times as likely to agree that there is a clear statement of the vision of e-learning endorsed by business leaders.</li> </ul>
Target engagement & communications at learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 times as likely to agree that staff know what is available and how to get hold of the training they need.</li> </ul>
Concentrate on setting measurable results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 times as likely to agree that there are measurable targets for learning and e-learning.</li> </ul>
<b>When compared with practices of established users, embedded users are more likely to:</b>	
Be more confident in speaking the language of business	They are <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 times as likely to agree that they identify specific business metrics in partnership with senior management and compare financial data when e-learning is involved.</li> <li>• 2 times as likely to enjoy top management support (they agree that the top management not only demonstrate a commitment to e-learning but are also actively involved in promoting it and are seen to be using it).</li> </ul>



<b>Encourage collaboration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 times as likely to agree that they encourage staff to help each other using discussion boards and that learners interact with each other in real time.</li><li>• 2 times as likely to prepare staff for collaboration (agree that their staff know about safe and secure use of web technologies).</li></ul>
<b>Focus on Learner support and ambition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 times as likely to agree that learners have access to a subject tutor during e-learning and that objectives and aims of learning are discussed with learners before they start learning.</li><li>• 2 times as likely to agree that they support qualification and career aspirations (or personal job goals) with e-learning.</li></ul>
<b>Integrate learning into working practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 times as likely to agree that e-learning allows them to more closely simulate the work environment for assessment.</li><li>• 2 times as likely to agree that their staff work collaboratively through technology to solve business problems.</li></ul>
<b>Be willing to share success</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2 times as likely to publicise individual's success as a result of e-learning.</li><li>• 2 times as likely to use external acknowledgement and recognition to promote successes back into the business.</li></ul>

### *Summary*

- 6 strands of Towards Maturity model (and associated dimensions) continue to positively influence business benefits, staff impact and take-up.
- The journey towards maturity is not guaranteed.
- Sporadic users are less likely to focus on developing learning and development skills and change management processes to take advantage of new ways of learning.
- More mature users are more likely to be involved in activities that engage learners and managers as stakeholders, have clearer alignment to business need and process and will measure and communicate the results to the business.



## APPENDIX 1 – WHAT TOPICS ARE E-ENABLED?

**Table 11 - What topics are e-enabled?**

	% of respondents delivering topic by ANY media	% of respondents using an e-component in delivery	Skills e-rating
General IT user skills	84%	59%	0.71
Company specific (not included elsewhere)	89%	49%	0.55
Industry specific regulatory requirements	76%	46%	0.60
Industry specific skills	85%	44%	0.52
IT professional skills	77%	44%	0.57
Health & safety	90%	42%	0.47
Induction	95%	41%	0.43
Email and Web protocol	68%	40%	0.59
Equality and diversity	78%	40%	0.51
Office/admin skills	74%	32%	0.43
Communication skills	82%	32%	0.39
Leadership & Management skills	91%	31%	0.34
Customer handling/service	77%	25%	0.33
Problem solving	71%	22%	0.31
Team working	83%	22%	0.26
Sales and marketing	55%	19%	0.34
Literacy	34%	18%	0.53
Numeracy	32%	15%	0.48
E-commerce	24%	14%	0.58
Foreign language skills	34%	12%	0.34
Entrepreneurial Skills	29%	9%	0.31
Food Hygiene	33%	6%	0.19



## APPENDIX 2 – BENCHMARK COMPARISON

---

**Each participant in this programme received an individual benchmark report. The following table provides an opportunity to compare their individual results with the total sample that took part.**




The benchmark review includes 112 agree / disagree statements, 97 of which investigate inputs (actions and attitudes), the remainder investigate outputs (business benefit or staff impact or take up).

Each agree / disagree question is measured on a scale of 1 to 9 (totally disagree to totally agree). Based on a factor analysis approach these questions are grouped into dimensions. All of the questions in a given dimension behave in a similar fashion. The rating of the dimension is calculated from the average of the individual scores of each question in the dimension.

The following table shows the average of all users ratings for each dimension , the percentage of the benchmark users who are good performers in that dimension (defined as those with a rating of 7 or above), the average ratings of participant scores in the top quartile and the average rating of participant scores in the bottom quartile.

# APPENDIX 2 – BENCHMARK COMPARISON




Table 12 - Benchmark comparison

6 strands of activities	Dimensions that contribute to success	Description	Average (n=234)	% of good performers (7 and above)	average score from Top Quartile of sample	Average score from bottom quartile of sample	List of free resources to help improvement can be found at <a href="http://www.towardsmaturity.org">www.towardsmaturity.org</a>
 <p>Mature organisations are more likely to align learning to business strategy and ensure programmes are relevant to both business and individual requirements</p>	Alignment	A clear e-learning strategy driven and measured by the business	5.2	42%	6.5	3.5	Hints and tips on aligning to business strategy
	Business need	Learning is aligned to work leading to relevant competency/ qualification	6.4	66%	7.3	5.7	Examples leading to Qualification
	Individual need	Learners gain competency/ qualification relevant to work and career	4.6	28%	6.0	3.3	Chapter 2 e-learning: the drivers and the business case <i>Towards Maturity Insights Report</i> Chapter 2 - Creating firm foundations <i>Linking Learning to Business</i>
 <p>Mature organisations have a greater focus on understanding the context of the learner, their motivations and environment</p>	Choices	Learners have choices and personalised experiences	5.9	53%	6.8	5.3	Chapter 3 – e-learning planning and Development – getting ready - <i>Towards Maturity Insights Report</i> Chapter 5 – Influencing Take-Up 5.1 – learner choices- <i>Towards Maturity Insights Report</i>
	Motivation	Learners are motivated	5.3	31%	6.2	4.3	Chapter 3 - Understanding learners - <i>Linking Learning to Business</i>
	Work-life balance	Learning is convenient and contributes work life balance	5.7	48%	6.8	4.8	Chapter 3 – e-learning planning and Development – getting ready - <i>Towards Maturity Insights Report</i> Chapter 4 - Manager influence and engagement - <i>Linking Learning to Business</i>
 <p>Learners in mature organisations benefit from managerial support and the technical infrastructure to enable flexible learning</p>	Managerial support	Managers provide support in the workplace	5.5	47%	6.7	4.3	
	Technical environment	Technical environment supports learning anytime and anywhere	6.2	64%	7.4	5.2	

Run your mouse over the items in the final column for direct links to resources.

# APPENDIX 2 – BENCHMARK COMPARISON CONTINUED

Table 12 - Benchmark comparison

6 strands of activities	Dimensions that contribute to success	Description	Average (n=234)	% of good performers (7 and above)	average score from Top Quartile of sample	Average score from bottom quartile of sample	List of free resources to help improvement at <a href="http://www.towardsmaturity.org">www.towardsmaturity.org</a>
 <p>Mature organisations target the changing needs of the learning and development professionals to ensure that they are equipped with the right skills, resources and reputation to effect change</p>	L&D skills	Learning and development specialists have appropriate approach, attitude and contacts	6.7	70%	7.8	5.7	Effective blended learning design: Interview with Clive Shepherd – Part 1 and Part 2
	Assessment	Learning and development specialists are able to make best use of assessment tools	5.1	38%	6.8	3.7	Chapter 4 – Creating Learning Solutions - <i>Towards Maturity Insights Report</i>
	Facilitating collaboration	Learning and development specialists take advantage of informal learning	4.4	22%	5.6	3.0	Chapter 5 – Holistic Learning - <i>Linking Learning to Business</i>
	Learning design	Learning and development specialists are able to use mix of media and methods in learning design	5.6	53%	7.3	4.3	Further examples on: Assessment Informal Learning Learner Support Rapid e-Learning
	Supporting learners	Learning and development specialists use a variety of electronic and personal methods to support e-learners at work	5.6	45%	6.8	4.4	
	Empowering learners	Learners are equipped and informed to help them take advantage of available learning technologies	5.7	46%	6.8	4.5	10 tips for communicating with Learners Examples for engaging managers and leaders
 <p>Mature organisations have proactive strategies for involving critical stakeholders who influence behaviour change</p>	Managers as stakeholders	Effective programmes engage managers as both users and key stakeholders	4.6	27%	6.0	3.0	Example stories for engaging Trainers
	Trainers as stakeholders	Effective programmes engage classroom trainers as both users and key stakeholders	5.3	40%	6.9	3.9	Chapter 5 – Influencing Take-Up 5.3 – change management and communication - <i>Towards Maturity Insights Report</i>
	Change management	Change management and communications strategies in place	5.1	33%	6.3	4.0	Chapter 7 - Winning hearts and minds - <i>Linking Learning to Business</i>
 <p>Mature organisations will be proactive in identifying the value their learning technologies are adding to their organisation</p>	Feedback	Feedback is routinely collected from managers and learners	5.7	53%	7.3	4.7	Hints and Tips for Demonstrating Value
	Measurement	Business measures and financial data are used in measurement of delivery and effectiveness	4.7	30%	6.2	3.0	Example case studies: In Communications - Cable and Wireless In social care - Care UK In Manufacturing - Bae Systems In IT - Thomson Reuters
	Communicating benefit	Business and staff success are regularly communicated to key stakeholders	4.8	32%	6.6	3.0	



## Further Information

Full details of this research and ongoing discussion regarding this report can be downloaded from the Towards Maturity Website – [www.towardsmaturity.org](http://www.towardsmaturity.org)

### Resources

Also available on site are resources to help you on your journey to improve the impact of learning technologies in the workplace:

- The Towards Maturity Model for e-learning success.
- Case studies
- Interviews
- White papers
- Industry research



### Towards Maturity

Towards Maturity CIC is a not for profit organisation that provides research and resources to help organisations improve the impact of learning technologies in the workplace. [www.towardsmaturity.org](http://www.towardsmaturity.org)



### Next Generation Learning @ Work

Supporting the effective use of technology in workplace learning & development.

[www.nextgenerationlearning.org/work](http://www.nextgenerationlearning.org/work)



### Becta

Becta is the government agency leading the national drive to ensure the effective and innovative use of technology throughout learning. [www.becta.org.uk](http://www.becta.org.uk)



For further information please contact: [e-learning@towardsmaturity.org](mailto:e-learning@towardsmaturity.org) or visit [www.towardsmaturity.org](http://www.towardsmaturity.org)