





IO3. Module 3

DESIGN COURSE AND ACTIVITIES

COLLECTION OF TOOLS

Course material

Prepared by WEBIN





Project Information

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UNIT 1

Introduction to Module 3 – Design courses and activities: collection of tools

This module is intended for all those who have the need of creating their own online courses, regardless of the nature of the learning content. The aim of this module is to equip higher education teachers and lecturers to devise their own way of teaching their particular subject matter/learning content in an online environment by resorting to the most suitable online tools and platforms, as well as to the best possible pedagogical approaches to deliver their content in the virtual ambience.

More precisely, this module is intended to support the teaching staff at higher education institutions (hereinafter: HEIs) in the process of designing eLearning courses and activities by:

- Building the staff's capacities to identify and select the proper digital tools
- Supporting the staff in the process of using the selected tools to create and deliver effective and functional eLearning courses.

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Upon completing this module, the users will acquire the following knowledge, skills and attitudes:

LEARNING OUTCOMES			
Module	Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
Design courses and activities - collection of tools	*Knowledge of digital tools for designing eLearning classes for HE *Understand the usability of a comprehensive collection of tools for eLearning activities and classes design	 input for eLearning *Make observations on the peculiarities of different tools *Identify the proper 	*Make use of digital tools for designing eLearning classes for higher education

Since eLearning as a matter of course became even more topical in the post-COVID19 era, the idea of creating eLearning courses and activities has become less optional and increasingly mandatory. The knowledge of HOW to create appealing, interesting and above all useful and successful eLearning courses is a matter of mastering different skills which surpass one's field-specific knowledge. Nowadays, this requires the knowledge of different eLearning tools and platforms, skills to make a proper selection depending on one's subject matter, i.e. learning content and defined learning outcomes, as well as overall competencies to use the selected tools and combine them with proper pedagogical approaches to deliver effective and functional course.

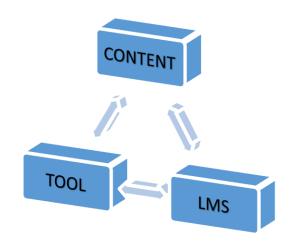




What do we need to know?

The three inevitable elements of creating an eLearning course are as follows:

- the content (WHAT)
- the tool (HOW)
- the LMS (WHERE)



Why do we call the content, digital tools and the LMF inevitable elements of eLearning course design? Because one needs all three in order to create a course and present it to the intended audience, i.e. learners.

The content is the core message which an instructor wishes to share with the audience/learners. It is used by the instructor to help students build knowledge, skills and attitudes in a specific field. The nature of the content very often determines the nature of tools that we can use in the digital environment. Namely, instructors in the fields of humanities and natural sciences very often resort to different pedagogical approaches and didactic tools in traditional classrooms. The same could be applied to the virtual environment. Humanities are most frequently based on narratives and storylines, while natural sciences more frequently resort to graphic presentations, visual exercises and experiments, visible demonstrations. Therefore, an instructor's first task is to choose the proper tool which will help him/her present the content in the most effective and memorable manner.

When we talk about **tools**, we refer to **digital tools**. Since the core topic of the module is designing eLearning courses and activities, the digital tools that we place focus on are **eLearning authoring tools**. An authoring tool is software that enables one to turn one's teaching content into a <u>standardized¹</u> course structure. Once you have designed your course by using an authoring tool, you can export it in the form of different multimedia types. Units 2 and 3 present such options in more detail.

¹ The term standardized is key here because the most frequently used and widely appreciated eLearning authoring tools help you create courses universally applicable to the majority of learning platforms, which contributes to the course scalability and applicability.





LMS, i.e. a **learning management system** is a software application or web-based technology used to plan, implement and assess a specific learning process.

In short, the content is WHAT we present within an eLearning course, the tool is HOW we make the content compatible for eLearning, and LMF is WHERE we go to present the course (an eLearning alternative to traditional classrooms).







UNIT 2

Digital tools for course design

What are digital tools for course design?

When one refers to digital tools for course design one in fact refers to **e-learning authoring tools.**

An eLearning authoring tool is a software programme that users resort to when creating learning content, lessons and courses using text, media, gamified and other forms of content presentation which enables students to interact, discuss and easily memorise the content. The content is usually developed to be used in LMS and it can be saved in various formats.

The best aspect of various e-learning authoring tools is that they are user-friendly and a user does not need any technical programming expertise to utilize the software. This is the best characteristic of authoring tools as they can be used by anyone in need of devising any kind of content they wish to present to the wider audience/learners.

Namely, e-learning authoring tools are generally pre-programmed and offer a ready-to-use interface complete with templates, media, tools, interactions, tests and quizzes that a user can easily arrange and manipulate.

How do authoring tools work?

All eLearning authoring tools differ to a certain extent. Their intended use is their common denominator. Otherwise, their functions, the possibilities and options they offer, and their interface depend on the creativity, expertise, goals and target groups of their creators. This is in fact a good thing because different users have different needs and everyone can find a specific eLearning tool to suit their needs.

The other very important, if not the key aspect which is mostly common to all authoring tools is the compliance with the existing standards for using the created content on different eLearning platforms. One of the most widely recognised standards is SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model). SCORM is a set of technical standards for eLearning products which make your eLearning content and the LMS of your choice work together. To put it in a more graphic manner, if your LMS is a DVD video player, and your course content is a disc, then SCORM is the DVD data storage format which is compliant with your DVD player. SCORM is the most widely used eLearning standard, and almost all relevant eLearning authoring tools are compliant with this standard.

A large number of eLearning tools are created for people who are not experts in new technologies and who require a quick solution when it comes to course design. Such software already offers ready-made templates for simple content, quizzes and other expected options when one is preparing a course. However, for those more versed in new technologies there are





eLearning tools which require a more dexterous user to create customized content, simulation, their own games and virtual experiences.

Regardless of various available features and functionality, authoring tools all perform the same overall function: they help you create eLearning courses for an end-user audience by way of content creation, content organization, and content standards.

Authoring tool - features & capabilities

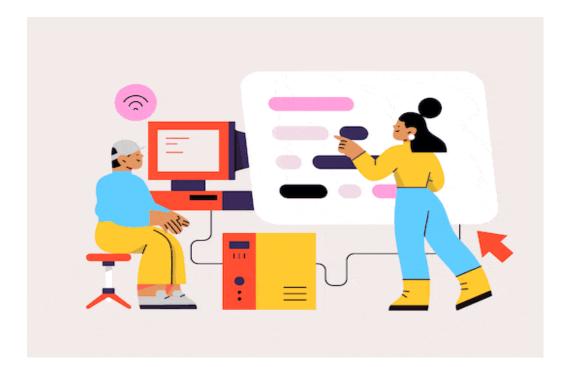
- 1. The ability to create lessons (adding and editing slides, images, text, video, audio or any other on-screen element; record audio for narration, webcam/screen recording, import/export videos, provide links to external sources, provide animations, arrange images, objects and text on your slides, import PowerPoint, etc.). This makes the course come alive.
- 2. Interactivity (engaging learners by having them actively participate in the course through some of the following features built-in activities: drag & drop, matching, hotspot reveal, sliders, or dials, create custom activities or games; create interactions or character scenarios with on-screen objects or images, etc).
- 3. Templates and themes choosing the right design and outlook for your course. This can help you keep your learner's attention on the content instead of being distracted by different designs. Here are some template features to consider: custom theme for entire course, background themes, built-in template shells, ability to create custom templates; navigation player skin options; ability to import external themes or templates.
- 4. Content management: organise your assets, media and other content; stay in control of all the tools and resources you need during the development of your eLearning course. Here are some core content management features to pay attention to: course and lessons libraries, quiz and question bank, template library, resource & media library (video, audio, images, etc)
- 5. Collaboration features enable you to quickly and easily share an eLearning content with whoever else might need to see it or work on it. Consider the following features for getting collaboration going on your own eLearning project: review system with feedback; co-authoring, shared resources, share options (email, link, social media, upload), user roles, author control, versioning. This feature is especially important for those lecturers who work together to provide multidisciplinary courses.
- 6. Assessment features help determine what your learner has retained in the course, enables a way to track learner achievement and progress, and also helps you to determine the effectiveness of the course. The following features can help one assess the learner: quizzes, form-based questions, open questions, multiple retry attempts, feedback, course assessments, question bank, random questions, shuffle, scoring, negative scoring, badges, analytics, tracking, reporting.
- 7. Accessibility is making sure that everyone can take your e-learning course. In order to respect the different audio-visual sensory needs of individuals, accessibility features can change or add on-screen elements, interactions and formatting in order to suit different learners' needs. Here's a list of features to look out for in an authoring tool in order to make your e-learning development more accessible: compliance with Section





508 accessibility guidelines, WCAG 2.0 Support, closed Captions (CC), keyboardaccessible navigation, accessible font sizes, custom tab order, skip navigation, language ID for screen readers, translation file export.

- 8. Publishing depending on what LMS your institution is resorting to, as previously mentioned, it is important to check what those LMS's requirements may be in order to choose an authoring tool that is compliant with your organization's Learning Management System (LMS) or needs. Here are the most current publishing formats available: HTML5, Flash, iOS, Android, CD, File, cloud-based, publish to Microsoft Word or PDF. Compliance standards are SCORM, xAPI, AICC.
- 9. Administration helps you set up your own preferences: language, preview, roles and permissions, etc.
- 10. Support and Training: both novice and experts benefit from help available with any authoring tool. How much support and assistance you might want depends on your needs. Some authoring tools offer help in the form of live chat support, training courses or guides on specific topics, and even dedicated community forums that enable developers to get troubleshooting help or ask questions. Here are the types of support and training features often available: online community forum, live chat support, e-mail or phone support, tutorials and how-to guides, video guides, consultancy services, webinars, demos, updates & upgrades.







UNIT 3

The choice of tools

How to choose a tool?

How do you choose an authoring tool for your own training needs?

In order to make the right decision, it is important to understand the needs and requirements of the course content and the set learning outcomes. Once you know what you wish to achieve with the course you are designing you can set out to find and choose a proper tool.

Most authoring tools have their own unique combination of features and options which can respond to different training needs. Ask questions about your course in order to understand what features and capabilities you may need, and always keep in mind your level of expertise when it comes to working with this type of software: are you a novice or an expert? The answer to this question will also have impact on your choice of tools.

However, if you are a novice, be not alarmed. Most eLearning authoring tools can be used by a novice and still producing some outstanding results.



What kind of eLearning course do you wish to create?

There is a variety of different course types that you might wish to create. You may want to create a quick, template-based course with text and images. This is probably the easiest solution which is not time-consuming and still can produce a stunning effect. Everything is there, ready for you to use. You just need to arrange bits and pieces (templates and icons with the content and/or a story).

Video-based eLearning usually results in a high-impact training. Video is an engaging and immersive format that can help students learn, practice, respond to challenges or solve problems. According to McQuivey's Forrester study *How Video Will Take Over the World* "one





minute of video content was found to be equal to about 1.8 million written words for training retention." It is no wonder that videos are taking centre stage when it comes to online training.

Animation-based eLearning has raised the stakes and created a real revolution in the world of education and training, especially when one refers to online education. Animation is fun, practical and informative, and these three aspects guarantee proper content retention. Namely, animation can make abstract contents clear, help learners' imagination run wild, actively engage learners, etc.

With the previous options one could opt for the content that already exists and incorporate it in one's course content. With the following course designs, one needs to take time, energy, patience and skills to create everything from scratch.

Custom scenario-based e-learning and custom e-learning with complex interactions and graphic design require some expertise in course design and one would need more than the basic set of skills to design a custom-made course described above. However, if you have a team, time and adventure spirit, nothing is unattainable.

Once you have a clearer picture where you wish to go with your eLearning course, the features and capabilities of software can be checked to ensure that the right tool has been chosen.



Some tools that we have at our disposal

Technology changes quickly over time, and content authoring tools are no exception.

In order to keep up with new modes of learning such as mobile or app-based learning, new and revised authoring tools are now available with a variety of features and functionality for every need.

At a high-level, eLearning authoring tools can be both cloud-based and desktop-based, with cloud-based gaining in popularity. Cloud-based tools use remote servers to store the data, and the application and/or content can be accessed online or through an app. This means that one does not need to install applications or software on one's computer. The entire work can be





done and/or saved online. On the other hand, desktop-based tools need to be installed on one's computer, and the results of one's work are saved and stored on your computer memory. Cloud-based tools, as previously mentioned, are becoming increasingly popular because they save time, there is no need to install software and crowd your own computer memory, no need to worry about updates, you can access your content from any place and any device, etc.

Furthermore, while offering the same core features and functionality as the desktop version, cloud-based authoring tools allow for seamless, synchronous collaboration with other developers or stakeholders.

What are some useful and recommendable eLearning authoring tools? It is important to emphasise that the following list includes only free eLearning authoring tools which may have some limitations in terms of functions and options in comparison to paid eLearning software. Nevertheless, they are highly recommended solutions in the process of eLearning course creation.

TOOL	PROS	CONS
iSpring Free	-SCORM compliant -no watermarks -easy to use, no coding skills necessary -looks good and plays well	 doesn't work without PowerPoint installed only three quiz question types only 15 course slides
	-SCORM compliant -no coding skills necessary -ready-made templates -a large variety of assessment questions -interactive learning objects and branching scenarios	 -watermarks removal requires advanced membership -it does not save automatically, so frequent saves are necessary -PPT to SCORM/HTML5 conversion only with paid version
IsEazy iseazy	-SCORM compliant -easy to use, no coding skills necessary -great templates -six quiz question types are available -an option to add interactive elements	 -watermarks and logo are present in the free version -limited space -limited number of projects
Adapt	-SCORM compliant -easy to use, no coding skills necessary -builds courses that are responsive across devices	-sophisticated software installation and configuration -customization aspects require technical know-how -limited variety of animations





CourseLab	-SCORM compliant -no coding skills necessary -six quiz question types are available -tree-like course structure	 -unintuitive user interface requires some training -outdated design -does not import slides from PPT -does not play well on mobile devices -not compatible with many LMSs
GLOMaker	-SCORM compliant -no coding skills necessary -built-in patterns and templates -pedagogical guides and examples are available	-doesn't work without Adobe Air installed -outdated design -minimum interactivity -only two quiz question types are available
н5Р Ң-5 Р	 -easy to use, no tech skills required -content can be easily added to WordPress, Moodle, or Drupal site -responsive and mobile-friendly 	-cannot run standalone; it needs to be used as a plug-in -limited features for customized eLearning courses
AdaptiveU AdaptiveU	 -very handy, no tech skills required -allows creation of interactive well-organized content -can create quick knowledge checks -builds courses that are responsive across devices 	 -doesn't allow the creation of graded quizzes -can't share courses outside the platform -a free plan is available for 5 users and 2 courses, with 1 GB of storage
Moovly	 -intuitive drag-and-drop interface -publishing to YouTube, Vimeo, and Moovly Gallery -1.3 million free images, sounds, and footage -ready-to-go templates for fast authoring -a mobile app to view videos and 	 -can create only video content -publishing a video with no watermark requires a paid account -the maximum video length is 2 mins
	upload media from a mobile device	

Once we are faced with a plethora of tools one needs to have in mind some standards that may help one choose the right tool. We have already emphasised that the content, the tool and the LMS need to be compatible and that these are three key elements of an eLearning course. However, when choosing the right digital tool one may wish to bear in mind some of the following standards as well: 1) the tool should be accessible, easily perceivable and operable, understandable to save time for the course designer and it should offer support in case the





designer gets stuck; 2) the course content and its nature should be in line with the options offered by the tool; 3) before we start typing, dragging and dropping or doing anything concrete, we should take the time to get to know the chosen tool, to become acquainted with its functions and options, as well as limitations; 4) when assessing whether the chosen tool is the right one be honest when answering the question: Can this tool help me design a good course, a course that I wish to create?





UNIT 4

The use of tools

The eLearning authoring tools presented in Unit 3 are but a few suggestions. The list, however, is by no means exhausted. With a clear idea of a course that one wishes to design one can seek and find the most suitable form to enrobe one's contents and ideas. Once one has opted for a specific authoring tool, what would be the next step?

There are some standards that one needs to bear in mind. In order to design an effective eLearning course one needs to bear in mind the following standards:

- ↓ Identify the purpose of the course
- ♣ Frame instructional objectives
- ♣ Align content with objectives
- ↓ Decide on strategies to facilitate learning
- ♣ Provide practice with feedback
- ↓ Include engaging interactivities
- **4** Assess learning

With the afore-mentioned standards and requirements in mind, and once we have become acquainted with the selected tool, we can initiate the course design process.

With an e-learning authoring tool, there's no need to learn technical programming or possess any coding expertise to use it. Instead, an authoring tool is a user-friendly way of developing e-learning courses and lessons using templates, pre-programmed tools, and interfaces that are normally easy to navigate, even for non-technical users.

Content authoring tools may vary in the way they work. Some are made for course creators with little to no technical expertise, so they are mainly composed of templates and drag-and-drop options. The outputs then include simple Word documents, surveys, and quizzes. Others are meant to create custom and more complex learning contents like simulations, interactive learning applications, gamification, 3D or 4D formats, and the like.

Regardless of interface, complexity, and functionality, authoring tools function with the same goal in mind – to help you create e-learning courses quickly and easily.

Finally, why should you use an authoring tool?

An authoring tool serves a great purpose, especially in instructional design and content authoring. Here are some of the main reasons why you need a learning authoring tool:

- a) you can personalise your teaching/learning experiences by providing highly customised content.
- b) if you're working with a team and external parties, an authoring tool can allow you to collaborate with multiple authors with more ease





- c) if you are making your eLearning courses and contents available in various geographical locations, authoring tools can help you roll them out and adapt to changing regulations in each region quickly and easily.
- d) continuous improvement is highly feasible as these tools can collect feedback and provide data to analyse and use for updating the course
- e) learning authoring tools allow you to address learning needs, meet new demands, and update your eLearning content without spending too much time and means.





SUMMARY

In the world which swiftly jumps the steps of technological progress by introducing "machines" who can write poetry and mimic human emotions, lagging behind elementary technological achievements is a luxury that no one can afford if they want to feel at home in this world.

Education at all levels has a large and challenging task to prepare young people for the world of the future. ONLINEHE project consortium has taken a small, but important step in that direction by encouraging the staff at higher education institutions to embrace new technologies in a creative and fearless way, without the pressure to put direct human contact on the back burner in the process of education.

Module 3 has been devised with the idea of offering some new ideas and suggestions as to what digital tools can be used by higher education staff and how to design creative, interactive and innovative eLearning courses which will help students retain the knowledge and skills, but also develop a critical perspective of the content, develop higher-order thinking skills and become aware of possibilities offered by new technologies.

Upon finishing the Module 3, higher education educators should be able to independently design their eLearning courses and respective activities by resorting to adequate eLearning authoring tools of their own choice. The choice will be informed and guided by suggested standards which will help higher education educators feel confident about turning their ideas into appealing presentations by choosing the best possible medium.

The future is now, and willingness to learn constantly and without reservation will forever make the future in education our ally.





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ANNEX I

Assessment

1. What are the three inevitable elements of creating an eLearning course?

- a) the content, the instructor, the LMS
- b) the digital tool, the LMS, the students
- c) the content, the digital tool, the LMS

2.What kind of digital tools one needs to create an eLearning course?a) music production toolsb) eLearning authoring toolsc) software designing tools

3. Why is eLearning authoring tool important when creating an eLearning content?

a) it turns the teaching content into a standardized structure

- b) it is fun and entertaining
- c) it can automatically create any eLearning course

4.In order to use an eLearning authoring tool one:

a) needs to have a degree in programming

- b) needs to have a mandatory online course on how to use an eLearning authoring tool
- c) does not need any technical programming expertise
- 5. What is SCORM?
- a) a set of technical standards for eLearning products
- b) the most popular eLearning authoring tool
- c) a type of learning platform
- 6. Why is SCORM important?
- a) it is interactive and develops critical thinking
- b) it makes your eLearning content and the LMS of your choice work together
- c) it helps students memorize the eLearning content

7. When choosing an eLearning tool, one needs to:

- a) bear in mind the nature of the teaching content
- b) bear in mind the options and features offered by an eLearning tool
- c) one's personal skills in manipulating an eLearning tool
- d) all of the above





8. When opting for an eLearning tool, one must make sure:

- a) that the tool has no watermark
- b) that the tool is SCORM compliant
- c) that the tool has colourful templates

9. What feature does the chosen eLearning tool does not need:

- a) accessibility
- b) assessment
- c) state-of-the-art interface

10. Which statement is not correct?

a) Once I design a course with an eLearning tool I cannot make any improvements and adjustments

b) Once I design a course with an eLearning tool I can use the feedback offered by the tool to continually update the content

c) Once I start designing a course with an eLearning tool I can personalise my teaching/learning experiences by providing highly customised content.





ANNEX II

Additional Resources Section

RESOURCES	SHORT DESCRIPTION AND LINK TO EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE
1.UNICEF Serbia	Open educational digital tools for interactive teaching and learning over the Internet: it is a useful glossary of different eLearning tools and platforms intended for students and educators for the purposes of creating different types of online contents. At the same time, one can also find valuable links to different kinds of repositories containing videos, collections, documentaries, concepts, courses, etc. This is a highly useful link for those who create eLearning courses.
	https://www.unicef.org/serbia/otvoreni-obrazovni-digitalni-alati-za- interaktivnu-nastavu-i-ucenje-preko-interneta
Serbio Nacionalni portal otvorene nauke	The repositorium includes the results of various scientific research conducted by scientist and various scientific institutions around Serbia (higher education institutions, innovation centres, institutes, etc.). The results are open and available to everyone who may have need of them. This repositorium can be useful to all those who wish to enrich the content of their eLearning courses.
otvorene nauke	https://open.ac.rs/index.php/repozitorijumi
VIRAL Virderasmuk.org 3.VIRAL Erasmus + project	VIRAL project aims to trigger higher level of knowledge, skills and application with reference to use of ICT in agricultural education and training in both formal and informal settings. VIRAL connects key HEIs and industry learning communities' participants in the process of co- creating and testing new in and out of the classroom methods and practices, initiating professional pitch competitions (hackathons), and spinning off a distinctive regional university-business collaboration platform. VIRAL SmAg Expo is a fantastic example how eLearning can have a wonderful form and interesting content.
	https://expo.viralerasmus.org/
	http://viralerasmus.org/en/home/
4. Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering	This is a manual prepared by the Faculty of Transport and Traffic Engineering and it is intended for teachers to be able to easily create eLearning courses. Even though it was prepared by a faculty in a technical field, the manual can be observed as a set of universal recommendations and guidelines and it can be useful for anyone venturing into eLearning designing projects.
	http://ord.sr.og.ac.rs/downloads/katedre/drus_nauke/e0cenje_pfffucflik.pdf





Kialo edu 5.KialoEdu mapping and debate site	Kialo Edu is the world's largest argument mapping and debate site, specifically designed for classroom use. Its clear, visually compelling format makes it easy to follow the logical structure of a discussion and facilitates thoughtful collaboration. Kialo's mission is to promote well- reasoned discussion online, and to that end, Kialo is free for educators to use.
	https://www.kialo-edu.com/
EPALE 6.EPALE platform	The project "Q-Ed! Equalizing the chances of success in life of pre- university students through a quality digital education", no. 2020-1- RO01- KA201-080061 carried out in the period 2020-2022 responded to the need for effective tools for learning and evaluating students' knowledge, in order to develop key skills, knowledge and basic skills essential both for continuing studies and for full participation in social life or for integration into the labour market.
	https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/content/q-ed-equalizing-chances-success-life- pre-university-students-through-quality-digital
7.iSpring YouTube channel	Since one of the first eLearning authoring tools recommended within this Module 3 is iSpring, here we provide a short tutorial published by iSpring on their YouTube channel about creating an eLearning course by resorting to this tool.
	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cXuQo- 9nae8&list=PL3h507uK1S2mmqpStbDykFdnTS0HDggkY&index=2