The art of the possible
There is no doubt that technology is transforming the way we learn and work. In the Towards Maturity Benchmark Report 2014-15, over half of the respondents reported that they were using 16 or more different technologies to deliver learning. Spurred by a move towards multi-platform delivery, we appear to be at a point where many businesses are reconsidering their approaches to learning and technology. LEO believe that now is the perfect time to explore the major changes that are under way and to consider the art of the possible for the future of learning and know-how in business.

The art of the possible
The technologies available to us today open up significant opportunities in two key areas.

1. Firstly, they allow us to build more focused learning to meet the needs of individual learners, offering greater efficiencies and better ROI. Today’s technology enables us to facilitate clearer diagnostics, monitor progress more usefully and adapt content and learning journeys to match. This is an exciting time for L&D teams, allowing us to move away from a one-size-fits-all approach towards the delivery of smarter, more targeted programmes.

2. Secondly, technology is allowing for more integrated learning than ever before. Technology in the workplace is facilitating the smarter joining up of every aspect of our knowledge horizon. Not only does this hold the key to making workplace learning more efficient, it also means we can align our learning, knowledge management, performance and communications approaches for a far more cohesive overall business learning architecture.

In this ebook, we look at several current trends that closely link to these opportunities, and which are profoundly changing the face of learning today: an insight into the art of the possible.
In our last ebook, ‘A new future for learning’, we said that the learning of the future would become increasingly personalised, moving towards ever more focused programmes and knowledge delivery systems for individual learners. We are seeing this as a cornerstone of many of our clients’ learning strategies. But how do we actually achieve this?

Smart diagnostics can play a major role in the shift from one-size-fits-all to learner-specific engagement – from just-in-case to just-for-me. This can be done through more profound pre-learning activities, as well as ongoing deep analysis of learner progress throughout a learning journey. Diagnostics play into adapted and aligned learning journeys based on real learner results and analytics.

Technology also allows us to collect richer data than ever before about our learners. Using new analytics tools means we can even use data to predict what learners are likely to need and when they will need it. Making use of deep data to personalise learner journeys, knowledge and resources to give people exactly what they need when they need it ensures precious time is not wasted, and learning is more engaging and ultimately more effective.
Learning architectures

Creating standalone, disparate learning ‘moments’ is no longer enough. Defining a fully joined-up and consistent blended learning architecture is one way to ensure that learning and communications programmes throughout an entire business are strategically aligned with the wider organisation’s values and objectives.

Taking this a step further, the consolidation of learning, knowledge management, performance support and communications can drive a major shift in the business-to-learner relationship. Many organisations still have separate functions looking after each area, meaning content is often duplicated, messages are not synchronised and learning is fragmented. We have always known that learning and communications is a key pairing for success, but it is now time to recognise this formally and design it strategically into our businesses. This kind of thinking is driving an increase in learning portals – hubs around important initiatives and topics – that draw multiple channels and content into highly-thought-through user experience-focused knowledge centres.
Fidelity – or realism – in learning delivery has always been critical to engaging, relevant and immersive learning, particularly when delivering complex or emotional content, or when needing to present real-life physical situations and processes through scenarios.

A key way to do this has been to take advantage of increasingly affordable yet higher quality video recording, editing and playback technologies, which enables us to be more creative with the video content we produce, and use it within many more types of learning asset. Video and multimedia content is especially good at adding the human angle – opinion, drama and narrative – into our learning, bringing in multiple perspectives and allowing for greater emotional depth.

Building on this need, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) are currently hot topics in the learning technologies space, and with good reason. The potential for more immersive, personalised and therefore powerful learning experiences with technologies such as Oculus Rift and Google Cardboard is vast. AR gives us the ability to superimpose a user’s view with information, enriching their real environment with curated content. This is ideal technology for overlaying layers of detail on physical spaces or objects, such as factory processes or car engines.

VR can create a highly immersive, interactive environment which would otherwise be expensive or dangerous to create in real life, such as training in a battlefield or in emergency situations, and it allows us to take a learner to a different place – to explore the interior of an aeroplane or experience a new vehicle before launch. As well as the uniquely dramatic experience VR can create, it is a way to administer the same, global, hi-fidelity experience over and over again inexpensively and risk free.
Gaming in learning is a key trend in the learning technologies space, and we believe it is becoming an increasingly powerful option for driving complex skill and behavioural change.

Games with more freedom in particular give players the opportunity to explore and interact with a game world (and learning content) in a way that appeals to them, giving them a completely unique, personalised experience every time they play. Even introducing gaming approaches and elements of gamification into other learning materials, such as leaderboards, rewards and achievements can make the learning experience more socially fuelled, encouraging more self-motivated activity as players compete on their own or in groups to beat their colleagues.

Games also allow us to collect rich data about our learners, which can feed back into their gameplay experience and the learning record store (LRS) to give us a clearer picture of what they have learnt. Response times and success rates are used to adapt the difficulty of the game, ensuring people are constantly challenged, and maximising time spent playing. The longer learners engage, the more data we can gather, enabling us to build up a detailed profile of our learners, how they approach challenges and how well they understand our material.
Integrated workplace learning

Technology is playing a pivotal role in our ability to embed learning into everyday working life. Learning, knowledge and support (what we often call ‘business know-how’) is no longer a series of one-way training workshops, but permeates throughout our working lives.

Truly integrated learning empowers learners to find the right balance between ‘pulling’ the learning they need when they need it and having businesses ‘push’ the content the learners need at the most appropriate time. It also opens the learning and knowledge feedback channels to enable shared, two-way learning.

Mobile learning is enabling performance support and nudges into our learning architectures, allowing us to provide growing and easily accessible mobile digital resources to our learners, as well as pushing notifications and reminders to their devices to keep learning at the front of mind.

Virtual classrooms have the potential to become another business-as-usual tool in most organisations. A critical advantage we are seeing in this change is the support for spaced practice – spreading learning out over a longer period, rather than focusing on a single or a few learning events. Learning programmes can now be designed and delivered with an achievable blend of tutor-led events and group learning as well as distance and on-the-job components.
Accredited learning

With many people moving jobs more frequently, and workers having a more open attitude towards changing jobs, there is a renewed focus on external accreditation, enabling learners to take their training with them.

Learners and businesses are now recognising that a very large proportion of their learning is taking place outside of their own organisations, and the great advantages industry-wide knowledge and knowledge-sharing can bring. Added to this, for many learners the offer of externally provided accreditation from a respected body provides extra motivation to complete the learning, knowing that the programme will benefit their long term careers.

Tracking and analytics technology also makes it easier than ever to monitor progress of learners towards accreditations. For example, Experience API (xAPI) and open badges mean we can formally track our learners across many more channels, making much more of their learning activity recognisable in exchange for formal credits. We can track learners who post on a forum, visit a webinar or comment on a blog post about a certain topic, giving us a better overview of their activity and progress than ever before.

All these factors are driving an increased interest in combining externally accredited programmes with organisation-specific learning, with technology at the heart of the mix – allowing ever more portable, personalised learning for learners and more powerful and effective learning and change for business.
Communities & social learning

With a massive 96% of new starters preferring to learn through team collaboration when they start a new job and 91% willing to share what they know with their peers, it is clear that there is a learner appetite for communities and social learning. (Towards Maturity Learner Voice Part 2 2015)

User-generated content, such as blog posts and forums, as well as open and searchable content repositories, are a natural way to drive more integrated learning in the workplace and make it more personalised to the individual learners and groups within your organisation.

At LEO, we have set up dozens of successful communities using Google+ to facilitate knowledge sharing throughout the organisation. These communities are used to post and respond to questions, share important resources and discuss key industry topics.

Using technology and methods such as forums, webinars and networking sites also enables us to create scaffolded social learning strategies for our clients, whereby group learning opportunities are built into a learning programme at key stages. This helps drive the massive power of discussion and sharing in the learner journey, and gives learners the chance to clarify their understanding with their peers and mentors.
The future is now

These are just some of the important areas in which LEO recognises huge potential, and we are already seeing these technologies bring about profound changes in global organisations.

Now is the time to look closely at your learning strategy and approach, and explore what the future could look like for you.

As experts in technology-enabled learning and transformation, LEO will sit alongside you to help you identify the most effective strategies to enable more personalised, integrated learning for agile change and quick response in today’s fast-moving business world. Greater engagement, improved efficiency and better bottom-line results will help you achieve the strategic business outcomes you need for future success.

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Learning technologies have never looked so exciting, and we want to show you why. Take the first step towards the business results you want by contacting us today.

LEO believes that technology-enabled learning innovation has the power to deliver truly transformational results. LEO’s mission is to deliver transformational results for our clients through learning innovation and the effective use of learning and performance technologies. Backed by more than 30 years of experience and with an unrivalled capability, we design engaging learning architectures that fit seamlessly into businesses and improve performance throughout the entire organisation. LEO has the deep understanding of learning design and technology combined with our pioneering, creative approach to drive learning transformation.

For more information or to talk to one of our learning experts please visit:

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