What Does “E-Learning Design” Really Mean? Thoughts on Creating Engaging Online Experiences

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What Is Design?
What Is Design?

Selected definitions from the Merriam-Webster dictionary:

• A mental project or scheme in which means to an end are laid down.

• A preliminary sketch or outline showing the main features of something to be executed (the design for the new stadium).

• An underlying scheme that governs functioning, developing, or unfolding.

• The arrangement of elements or details in a product or work of art.

• The creative art of executing aesthetic or functional designs.
What Do You Think of When You Hear the Term “Web Design”?
What about When You Hear “Architectural Design”?
Design and Technology
Don Norman and the Design of Everyday Things
Don Norman and the Design of Everyday Things
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Cognitive/Emotional System</th>
<th>Product Characteristic</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visceral Design</td>
<td>Appearance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral Design</td>
<td>Pleasure and effectiveness of use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Design</td>
<td>Self-image, personal satisfaction, memories</td>
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Steve Jobs’ View of “Design”

“In most people's vocabularies, design means veneer. It's interior decorating. It's the fabric of the curtains of the sofa. But to me, nothing could be further from the meaning of design. Design is the fundamental soul of a human-made creation that ends up expressing itself in successive outer layers of the product or service.”
An Engaging Learning Experience
An Engaging Learning Experience

Why Was This Project Assignment So Successful?
Selected Comments from Corporate E-Learning Users in 2011 & 2012

“I always wait until the last possible minute to do my e-learning.”
[financial services industry]

“I click through the pages as fast as possible to get to the test—I just want to get it done.”
[retail industry]

“E-learning is a waste of my time.”
[high-tech industry]
Keys to Good E-learning Design

• Know your audience.
• Define your goals.
• Make it relevant.
• Create an emotional experience that suits the audience..
  • For training, an engaging story, simulation, realistic game
  • A performance support piece—maybe a standalone product, maybe a way to connect with others, maybe both--that fits into the audiences’ workflow
  • Take all of the above into account when thinking about how and when to use different types of devices—iPads, smartphones, etc.
Sample E-Learning Design Approaches
Welcome to the NHLBI discussion forum! Join our staff in enlightening discussions of issues and trends in heart, lung, and blood research! To participate in the discussion forums, you will need to login first. Please review the forum policies and guidelines before posting.
Learn-By-Doing Simulations

ONLINE LEASING SIMULATION
"Leasing Interview" Module

What do you want to say?

"Could you come back in a few minutes, please?"

"Are you the new receptionist?"

"I'm on my way out, would you come back tomorrow, please?"

"How can I help you?"
New Online Methods such as “Watch, Rate, and Compare”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Stars</th>
<th>Helpful</th>
<th>Rude</th>
<th>Respectful</th>
<th>Confusing</th>
<th>Clear</th>
<th>Good Timing</th>
<th>Great</th>
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<tbody>
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Overall Rating:
- Horrible: ○
- Great: ○

SEND RATINGS
Online Problem-Solving Activities

Darkness in the Den

Joe turns on the switch in the den. No light, just as Mrs. Babcock said. What’s the next thing Joe should do?

- Check the light fixture
- Check the light bulb
- Check the main service panel

Ask a Question
- How does an electrical switch work?
- What can cause an electrical switch to stop working?
- How do you figure out why an electrical switch doesn’t work?
- How do you test a switch for continuity?
Realistic Games and Game-like Simulations
Mobile Performance Support

Hardlines
Front-Facing Items

The front of each item must face the customer:
New Gesture-Based Training Activities
More Performance Support
“Oh, Just Ignore That…”

Carla, the building’s owner, denied a resident’s request for a handicapped parking space because she is concerned that it will lead to other residents asking for more things. She says she is justified because the building was built in the 1970s and is not required to be accessible.

Was she complying with the requirements of both the Fair Housing Act (FHA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)?

**Compliance with the Fair Housing Act**
- The owner’s decision complies with the FHA
- The owner’s decision does not comply with the FHA
- The FHA is not relevant in this situation

**Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act**
- The owner’s decision complies with the ADA
- The owner’s decision does not comply with the ADA
- The ADA is not relevant in this situation
Key Takeaways from the Examples

• They *focus on goals* – in corporate training, usually these are performance goals.
• They’re *inherently enjoyable* for the target audience.
  – They’re relevant
  – They’re active
  – The connection between the experience and the audience’s goals and interests is clear
• They *are designed in ways that are appropriate for a particular device* and the way that it’s used.
• They’re *built to last* – training experiences initially when needed, plus performance support to help people sustain and improve performance over time.
• They can help *build employees’ confidence* and comfort in their job roles.
Additional Key Advantages

- Employees can get a “feel” for a job or task before doing it.

- The creative, relevant use of technology helps motivate employees, and establish and support the company’s culture.

- These uses of technology can help bring about additional employee-generated learning that’s unexpected—for example, Target employees would spend time discussing the “shoes guy.”
Our goal should be to design and use technology in ways that take advantage of and expand on what we know about learning, behavior, and performance.

This approach can, among other things, lead us to a positive view of the ROI of L&D initiatives.
E-learning for companies should focus on improving performance (both short-term and long-term) and changing behavior rather than simply on “learning” and “information.”

Rather than being just about “knowing information,” successful performance-improvement approaches rely on active learning by doing, performance support tools, motivational techniques (e.g., building confidence or teamwork), and performance-based assessments.

The approach should be human-centered—focused on the needs of the target audience and integrated into the audience’s natural workflow.
An integrated human-centered approach to the design of e-learning and performance support software can create a culture of satisfied, motivated workers who appreciate the ways technology can help them in their jobs.
Steve Jobs on Technology

“It’s in Apple’s DNA that … technology alone is not enough. It’s technology married with liberal arts, married with the humanities that yields us the result that makes our hearts sing.”

--Steve Jobs
Thank You

I’m happy to answer any questions!

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