



Business Case for Learning Pool Subscription

LEARNING POOL LIMITED

October 2006

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Background

E-learning has the potential to transform the way authorities learn, and it is emerging on the radar screens of local government as a key way of supporting the modernisation agenda. There are however, a number of barriers that inhibit its potential effectiveness in the sector, including duplication of effort, costs of e-learning development and lack of e-learning skills in the sector.

Learning Pool is a unique e-learning service that brings organisations together to create, access and share targeted e-learning for local government.

The Learning Pool solution includes a number of integrated products and services. Learning Pool has invested in the development of technologies to facilitate e-learning exchange, community and content authoring. We have also jointly developed over 40 e-learning modules targeted at the needs of local government. To support the user community and the ongoing effectiveness of Learning Pool, we also provide services such as consulting support, training and help-desk for our subscribers.

Learning Pool provides a high-value, low cost opportunity to:

- Increase training capacity – do more for less
- Support e-government targets through e-skills development
- Drive change by quickly communicating key messages and policies
- Avoid re-inventing the wheel by sharing
- Promote your good practice in an interactive format
- Benefit from economies of scale and achieve Best Value

E-learning is the use of technology to manage, design, deliver, and support learning. It covers a broad set of applications and processes such as online training and education (over the Internet, Intranets, and LANS/WANS), computer-based training (PC-based, CD-ROM), digital collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Its rapid emergence across all sectors is a notable feature of the knowledge economy and it has the potential to transform learning in local government at a time when the need is greatest.

Learning Pool can help your authority become a smarter, swifter organisation in a number of ways.

Achieve Government Targets

The Government targets for efficiency and the transformational agenda have major implications for officers, members and the community at large. To deliver and access e-enabled services will require a new level of competence with ICT on a huge scale.

Through Learning Pool, you will be able to access e-learning materials for end-user ICT training (e.g. ECDL), and other key areas of the e-government skills map including leadership. Using the authoring tool, you will also be able to create e-learning for your new IT systems training quickly and cost-effectively. By receiving learning in an e-format, users begin to experience greater levels of comfort and familiarity with e-enabled services.

Increase Capacity

The White Paper 'Strong Local leadership – Quality Public Services' spoke of a need to increase training and development capacity for members and officers. With growing levels of Internet usage at the desktop and at access points in libraries and learning resource centres, e-learning should provide a greater reach and equality of access to all groups.

The combination of Learning Pool developed materials, e-learning from our partners and the resources shared by other authorities in the pool, will enable you to train more people in more areas. Creating your own e-

learning will add even more capacity to respond to new needs.

Drive Change

In a climate of change, new initiatives and information need to be picked up quickly and consistently across an organisation. How quickly people can get up to speed and contribute effectively can either accelerate or stifle change.

Using the Learning Pool authoring tool, e-learning can be rapidly developed to deliver consistent information in an engaging way, and using your intranet, this can be made widely available very quickly. This is ideal for new legislation, policies and procedures.

“Its implications are beyond just training, although it can be useful for that. It could be used for wider knowledge management. Managers would be able to dip into resources when they needed them and we could use it as a way of communicating key messages and policies in a more interactive way.”

Benefit from Economies of Scale

While claims that e-learning is a ‘cheaper’ form of training delivery can be misleading due to initial development costs, e-learning can reduce training related expenses such as travel, accommodation and facilities. It can also provide economies of scale at higher learner volumes, as the cost of each additional e-learner is negligible once the materials have been developed.

From a Learning Pool perspective, the shared investment in the development of e-learning as a sector will provide significant economies over time.

Avoid Re-Inventing the Wheel

Each time a new learning need emerges, authorities tend to do their own thing, resulting in hundreds of sets of similar materials and programmes. Using the learning pool file-sharing environment, you can share and download resources from other authorities, so you don’t have to start from a blank page. This will save time, encourage good practice and avoid duplication.

Promote Your Good Practice

Learning Pool provides an innovative new channel for you to make your mark in specific areas where your authority has demonstrated expertise. Beacon councils for example can share important documents in learning pool, or can even develop an e-learning module that outlines their work in an interactive format using the authoring tool.

Costs

The Learning Pool service is subscription-based. A single annual subscription will provide an authority with complete access to **all** of the products and services within the pool. The subscription is discounted for Local Authorities in England and Wales and is calculated on the number of officers employed at the council.

Authority Type	No. of Officers	Annual Subscription
Micro Authority	< 200	£1,500
Small Authority	201 – 500	£2,250
Medium Authority	501 – 3,000	£3,500
Large Authority	3,001 – 15,000	£5,000
Super Authority	> 15,000	£7,500

Table 1–Learning Pool Subscription Pricing (Local Authorities)

The annual subscription rates are based on a 2-year commitment, with the price being held at the same level for year one and year two.

For organisations who are not local authorities the price is as follows:

No. of Employees	Annual Subscription
< 10	£2,950
11-50	£4,950
51-100	£7,500
101-250	£10,000
250-1,000	14,000
<1,000	POA

Table 2–Learning Pool Subscription Pricing (Non-Local Authorities)

Products and Services

Unlike standard licensing models for software and e-learning content, **unlimited usage** is permitted across the authority for the same flat rate (i.e. the software can be installed on any number of authority PC's and the content can be accessed by any number of authorised employees or members).

Products	Services
Authoring Tool	Membership to moderated communities
Learning Pool website & e-Learning Exchange	Training and support from the Learning Pool team
Ongoing upgrades and enhancements to Learning Pool software	Brokerage services for e-learning content and technologies
Library of 40+e-learning modules	Consulting support, both free and discounted
Bespoke e-learning packages that support the Local Government	First-line help desk for general enquiries
Local Government created e-Learning that can be tailored to your authority	First-line and second line technical support
Market leading off-the-shelf e-learning products	Seminars and research on e-learning in the sector
Library of stock images for authoring and graphics manipulation software	Attendance at rolling programme of events throughout the country

Table 1– Products and Services Included in Learning Pool Subscription

Appendix 1: Cost – Value Comparisons

Comparison with Market Prices

While we do not regard learning pool as being in competition with e-learning vendors, it is useful to look at some 'market prices' for e-learning to get a sense of the value learning pool provides. In the table below, we have taken an average market price for some of the products and services available in Learning Pool across a two year period. Where comparative products or services aren't available or price points have not been determined, '✓' has been inserted.

Learning Pool Solution	Market Value - Year 1	Market Value - Year 2
Authoring Tool	£2,500 (£500 per user x 5 users)	£2,500 (£500 per user x additional 5 users)
File-sharing Tool and learning pool website	✓	✓
Service packs and software upgrades for learning pool software	✓	✓
Library of 30 e-learning modules (15 hours)	£15,000 p.a. (based on £2 per course hour per user x 500 users)	Year 1
PRIME Leadership program	£6,250 (based on 5 user licences)	Year 1
Bespoke e-learning packages that support Local Government (approx 3 hours)	Year 2	£3,000 (based on £2 per course hour per user x 500 users)
Bespoke e-learning packages that address authority led needs (approx 4 hours)	Year 2	£4,000 p.a. (based on £2 per course hour per user x 500 users)
Leading off-the-shelf e-learning packages	£2,000 approx value	£5,000 approx value
Set of stock images for authoring	£30	Year 1
Graphics manipulation software	£20	Year 1
Services		
2-month supported trial phase	✓	✓
First-line help-desk for general enquiries	✓	✓
First-line technical consulting	✓	✓
Second-line technical support	✓	✓
Access to SOCITM I.T consultants	✓	
Consulting support	£500	£500
Membership to communities	✓	✓
2 day Instructional Design and Training Workshops	£1,200 (@ example of £400 per user x 3 users)	
Seminars and research	Year 2	£200
TOTAL MARKET VALUE (approx)	£27,500	£15,200
Learning pool subscription	£500-£5,000	£1,500-£7,500

In this example using the direct 2 year comparison is

Market Value	£42,700
Learning Pool Cost	£3,000 to £15,000

Comparison with Classroom Delivery

While e-learning is not intended to be a replacement for classroom-based delivery and is a qualitatively different experience, it is useful to compare some basic cost models. As an example, say your authority needed to train 500 people in equalities.

E-learning delivery

As part of the subscription to Learning Pool, there are four e-learning modules relating to equalities, which would equate to around a one-day classroom session. To add value, the Learning Pool authoring tool could be employed to develop a bespoke component to work alongside the generic materials. You may also want to provide an online tutor who would be available to answer any questions by email or through a discussion board.

	Approximate cost
I.T set-up and general support (making e-learning modules available over the intranet)	£500
Amendments to the Race Relations Act (15 minutes)	Learning Pool subscription @ example of £4,400
Disability Discrimination Act (20 minutes)	Learning Pool subscription
Equalities and Best Value (20 minutes)	Learning Pool subscription
Tackling Racial Discrimination (15 minutes)	Learning Pool subscription
<i>20 minute e-learning module developed in-house to tailor specific aspects to the authority</i>	£3,000
Email tutor and e-moderation of discussion areas	£4000 (2 tutors x 10 days at £200 per day)
TOTAL	£15,400
Cost per person	£30 per person

Classroom delivery

To train 500 people in classroom based sessions of maximum 15 participants, over two days. You will need to run at least 34 x 2-day courses (assuming your participants are obliging and fill each session).

Each Course might cost:

	Approximate cost
Tutor costs (Assuming only one tutor needed and an average per day rate)	£500 per day £1000 per course
Room hire	£60 per day £120 per course
Refreshments	£5 per person per day £160 per course
Materials/resources	£30 per course
TOTAL	£1310 per course £44,540 for 34 courses £88 per person per course
Additional costs to add: Time off to attend: (Administration/management overhead and necessary travel and accommodation have not been included)	Average cost £75-100 per person per day
REVISED TOTAL	£3,560 per course £121,040 for 34 courses £242 per person per course

Comparison with Outsourced Development

The average development cost of bespoke e-learning materials can vary between £10-30,000 for one hour of material, with the average being about £15,000. This will be dependent on the depth of instructional design, the level of interactivity and the use of different media components (e.g. audio and video). The actual internal development time estimated for a 30 minute e-learning module (without audio/video) is detailed below.

Scoping project and collating material	3 days
Instructional design	6 days
Graphics	3 days
Authoring	4 days
Review	4 days
Testing	2 days
Total	£2,200 (at an average cost of £100 per person per day)
Average market price	£7,500