

Ten things we love about e-learning

Let's all make a New Year's resolution to explain our jobs in positive statements



Richard Naish

Explaining your work to people who have never heard of e-learning often ends up being a narrative of what you do rather than what's so good about the job. So the next time you are called on to explain the

sector, try telling them what it is that professionals love about e-learning.

1 It's sparky, motivated, open-minded and friendly

As Donald Taylor said at the last Learning Technologies conference: "You e-learning people are just so nice!" A presenter was having trouble with his technology, but the conference audience was quite happy to bear with it. Perhaps it has something to do with wanting to help people learn effectively or the fact that making loads of money is not the main motivator for people in the industry.

2 The job is constantly evolving

Technology never stands still. Who'd heard of Facebook five years ago? Or of blogging, webinars or the iPhone? As technology progresses, so does technology-delivered learning content. People in the industry don't have to be early adopters, but they are certainly at the forefront of the second wave. That

makes it a great industry for people who embrace the potential impact of technological change.

3 What we do affects thousands of learners

Many e-learning professionals will have been – and many still are – traditional face-to-face trainers. But even if you run 10 workshops a month, you will only reach about 1,200 people a year. E-learning projects are usually rolled out to much bigger audiences, many times a year.

4 We are always in demand

The return on investment for e-learning is usually very high. It is a very cost-effective way to deliver the most up-to-date content to large numbers of people in multiple locations, at a time that suits them. Given this sound commercial reason both the providers and buyers of the content have a future that is more economically secure than other industries.

5 We can work anywhere in the world

All we need is a laptop and an internet connection. With Skype, email and web conferences, not everyone has to be physically co-located to work together. This gives us the freedom to be elsewhere in the world and still be connected to our colleagues.

6 We are always learning new skills

The nature of the learning industry is that we are constantly exposed to the knowledge and skills we are helping others to learn. So we are always

learning new things ourselves, even if only by osmosis.

7 Excellence is recognised and celebrated

The industry has an awards culture that is about quality and innovation in learning content and delivery. Prestigious national awards such as the E-Learning Awards have helped ensure the industry isn't one that judges players on market share or average user spend.

8 Our content is welcomed around the world

We are working in a country whose language happens to be that of international business, and has a billion speakers. Accordingly the learning content that we make available in our native language can be delivered elsewhere in the world to native speakers or people who speak English as an additional language. Britain is also highly regarded internationally for the quality of its education, especially its university sector, which makes it even easier to sell UK-designed e-learning content.

9 We get to play with leading-edge technology and get paid for it

We work in an industry where it is acceptable to buy the latest gadget and investigate its potential for e-learning. That must be why our homes are littered with Wiis, iPhones and Nintendo DSs.

10 Flexible working and work-life balance are norms

Most people in the industry are comfortable with communication technology and most people appear to love what they do. As a result, there is a broad acceptance of colleagues managing their work as part of their life.



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