LMS vs. LCMS

What's the Difference?
LMS VS. LCMS

Shopping around for a solution to your organizational learning and training needs can be very confusing. Not only are there a wealth of different platforms and systems available, but they often fill slightly different roles — determining what fits your company’s specific requirements can take a lot of time and effort. Putting that time in up-front is required if you want to ensure you end up with a solution that really works for your organization.

One common point of confusion among Learning and Development (L&D) professionals is a misunderstanding of the difference between a Learning Management System (LMS) and a Learning Content Management System (LCMS). At first glance, these two solutions do look and sound very similar, but they actually provide very different (though complementary) functions at different stages of your learning content’s journey.

The core difference between an LMS and an LCMS is the target user. LMS platforms are designed with the learners in mind, whereas LCMS users are learning content creators, instructional designers and other learning professionals. But that’s not the only difference. Let’s start with some definitions.

**LMS – LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM**

The LMS is perhaps better thought of as the learning delivery platform; this is the interface which the end-user or learner uses to read and interact with learning materials, courses and assessments.

Most LMS solutions also combine some form of metrics or user analytics, enabling instructors to monitor course progress to ensure that learners meet performance milestones. Typical LMSs provide reporting and analytics tools that also allow instructors to identify areas where a course may be lacking so they can make modifications and offer learners supplemental resources to help improve performance. Some examples of data tracked in an LMS might include completion rates, learner performance and progress, learner satisfaction and approval, instructor and manager ratings, and learner competence and proficiency. That said, data collected within an LMS can be stored, tagged, and analyzed within an LCMS.

Some of the most well-known and widely-used LMS platforms in the workplace are Absorb, Articulate, BizLibrary, Captivate Prime, Docebo, and Litmos to name a few, though many organizations have their own in-house solution.
As you evaluate LCMSs, it’s important to think about your specific requirements and learning program objectives and challenges. Here are some important things to consider:

- Do you need a single place to store all of your content in a variety of formats (HTML, PDF, SCORM, and rich media)?
- Do you want to make your learning content accessible for reuse by other departments within your organization such as marketing and technical docs? Do you want to use their content in your training materials?
- Do you need to reuse existing learning content in different formats and distribute through multiple channels?
- Do you need a more effective way to discover and navigate existing learning objects?
- Do you need to semantically enrich content to enable content reuse?
- Do you need to streamline the approval process and provide a full audit trail describing who made what changes to an asset and when?
- Do you need to know how learning objects are being used and the accompanying rights and permissions information?
- Do you need to audit and analyze course content to ensure your learning objects are up-to-date and compliant with established standards?
- Do you need to disseminate courses out to web, app, print, or LMS?

LCMS – LEARNING CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

The LCMS is the interface which content authors use to collaborate, create and assemble the learning content — which is then pushed out, or published, to the LMS platform (or to wherever else you might want it to go: a PDF, print course, mobile app or website) for consumption.

At its core, the LCMS is a more specialized variety of a Content Management System (CMS) — it gives you the storage space and the tools to manage and control your content at a granular level, allowing you to maximize the value of each learning object.

A standard LCMS typically includes a content repository, authoring tool, workflow and task assignment, and multi-channel publishing capabilities.

Depending on the platform, an LCMS may also include features like collaborative authoring, media annotation, asset management, workflow and task assignment, rich media capabilities, rights management, granular search/discovery across all learning objects and materials, and semantic enrichment and metadata tools.

For example, a sophisticated LCMS can be used to semantically link and associate learning objects with each other in a way which supports auto-assembly of objects into a learning pathway that is specifically tailored to the individual learner, and responds to their progress by adapting to their needs. This is a key step in making personalized, adaptive learning a reality.
INTRODUCING

Learning Content Management System (LCMS)

Our Learning Content Management System provides an intuitive authoring interface and powerful content management functionality, enabling instructional designers and L&D professionals to assemble and deliver dynamic content in multiple ways. By ensuring your learning content is rich, dynamic and personalized, you can boost learning outcomes, maximize the value of every content asset, and streamline content production.

Learn how the LCMS can help you maximize the value of your learning assets at www.copyright.com/lcms.

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