



## 30% of Employee Training Occurring Online, And Growing

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Thirty percent of employee learning in 2007 occurred online, a significant jump from 7 percent in 2005, according to two independent reports on the U.S. training market by the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD) and Bersin & Associates. As importantly, the reports find that “one of every three hours of training is now being delivered via some form of technology, and that ratio is expected to climb in coming years.”

The reason for the switch is that e-learning is more “flexible and efficient...[and] a more fluid model of training delivery” than the traditional classroom model, according to the reports. Instructor-led classes are also generally more expensive per learner, and organizations are growing reluctant to pull employees from their work in order to attend training sessions – not to mention tighter budgets during our slowing economy.

“It’s become pretty clear that companies simply cannot do corporate training without using technology,” said company president Josh Bersin. Even companies that were late adopting virtual training, such as St. Louis-based Anheuser-Busch Cos., have “reached a point where they [have] no choice.”

The studies align with our own findings at ELT, **which suggest an even stronger trend toward online training in the compliance space.** In 2005, we polled more than 2,000 HR, legal and ethics professionals, asking how much education on topics such as harassment prevention and ethics was occurring online in their workplaces. The answer was 25 percent. When we ran the same poll in 2007, the number climbed steeply to 40 percent -- an impressive 60 percent jump in less than two years.

When it comes to mandatory, enterprise-wide compliance training, the sheer volume of learners, as well as the requirement to constantly *re-train* workers, has made e-learning the only real viable option for companies of any significant size. The other trend we’re seeing, however, is a **downsizing in the number of online courses being built or purchased by employers.** While in the early 2000’s, a “library” model gained popularity, most organizations have discovered they purchased far more programs than they could consume, which translated not only into a poor ROI, but also watered down quality of the actual training programs.

The same 2007 ELT study referenced above asked employers where they are investing the majority of their training dollars and time when it comes to compliance subjects. Over 90 percent indicated that efforts were concentrated in ethics/Code training, and

harassment/discrimination prevention. This finding is hardly surprising, given that these are really the only two areas where widespread training mandates impact employers of all sizes, and across all industries. (For a detailed overview, check out ELT's mandatory compliance training summary.)

So as you embrace e-learning, and the volume of online education at your organization grows, don't fall into the trap of over spending on multiple compliance titles that are unlikely to get used, and unlikely to add much value to the bottom line. While we love to see those e-learning numbers climb, sometimes less is more.

And as the economy only looks to get worse, that's an easy argument to sell.