

## **Evolution of and Current Trends in Training**

Henry Findley  
TROY University

Allison Reynolds  
TROY University

Bethany Davis  
TROY University

William Belcher  
TROY University

### **ABSTRACT**

Organizational training is undergoing a transformation. This is primarily due to changes in technology, mainly the computer/internet. The article traces the evolution of training to present day. It then discusses the current technological trends in training- YouTube, Social Media, Smartphone, and others. Implications for HR are discussed.

Keywords: Training, YouTube, Social Media, Organizational training, Training evolution.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Globalization and economic shifts are being accelerated by technological changes with the Internet as the primary catalyst (Mathis & Johnson, 2008). This explosive growth is transforming jobs and organizations and is not only altering the way they do business but the way human resource functions are managed as well.

One recent internet-related phenomenon, social networking, is currently making its imprint on society. Social networking can be defined as an internet-based social interaction in which users primarily produce, rather than consume, web-based content known as social media (Mills, 2011).

Currently, social networking accounts for approximately 11% of all time spent online in the United States (Anonymous, 2009). Facebook has amassed over 500 million users worldwide and its growth remains unabated (Facebook, 2010). The use of social networks is even creating a metamorphosis in political systems both domestic and internationally. In the 2008 presidential election more than \$66 million dollars were collected via social media (Livingston, 2010), and social media have been credited with being a central catalyst in continuing political unrest in the middle east that has led to at least one government change (Bagley, 2011).

Many organizations are now exploring the benefits of social media and other online technologies. For instance, social media has been shown to be useful tool in recruiting (Galagen, 2010; HR Focus, 2010).

Management and human resources can ill afford to lag behind in embracing this internet related-technology shifts that is unrelentingly transfiguring the business environment in much the same way the computer and Internet did after they were first introduced. To that end, this article investigates the business applications of recent internet technologies and their applications to training.

## **HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

Training has been around for ages. Its earliest roots can be traced all the way back to the middle Ages in the form of apprenticeships (Shane, 2012). These evolved into vocational schools in the early 1800's (Desimone, Werner, & Harris, 2002). The advent of the mass production and factories further transformed training. Apprenticeship programs were shortened and what is now known as job instructional training (JIT) was developed around the First World War (Desimone, Werner, & Harris, 2002). It wasn't until the twentieth century that training became a profession and formal training as we know it became the norm (Shane, 2012; Desimone, Werner, & Harris, 2002).

The 1970's forever changed training to become what we know it as today. The workplace was filled with many different types of people: war veterans, Great Depression survivors, and young baby boomers. This forced employers to stray from one type of training fits all and move towards a more focused training approach. Although training is still evolving today to make it more efficient, the workplace will never be able to conduct one training fits all again. The workplace is even more diversified today than it was then. Luckily, as technology advances it makes meeting the specific training requirements of each employee easier to accomplish.

## **EVOLUTION OF TRAINING METHODS**

A variety of training methods have taken shape over the years. Lectures/demonstrations are the oldest forms and most traditional means of training. Hence, it is one of the most frequently used and depended upon methods. In its most basic state, lectures and demonstrations simply present information from the trainer to the trainee (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). On-the-job training (OTJ) is the next most widely used training process. OTJ is considered another form of traditional training, occurring in the workplace and consisting of methods such as apprenticeship, internship, mentoring, etc.(Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). Audio visual enhancements also provide a means for the trainees to not only absorb knowledge in a traditional, basic way, but to also gain insight by exploiting the auditory sense. In this case, retention is more easily transferred when easy viewing is exercised and technical difficulties have been eliminated (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). Today, audio visuals are made available by computer technology. It is hard to imagine the workplace, much less employee training without computer-generated assistance. However, computers have not been around forever. Yet, with recent, rapid advancements, they revolutionized the work culture into a more technically sophisticated society.

## **THE COMPUTER ERA**

It is not clear as to when the first official “computer” was introduced to the world, but nevertheless computers have been evolving for ages. Simple mechanical devices can be dated all the way back to the A.D. era. Charles Babbage, known as the father of the modern computer, introduced the first automatic engine which computed mathematical calculations in 1822 (Wilkes,1992). The typewriter came after in 1874 with speech through the radio making a breakthrough at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Giudice, 2000). It was not shortly after that this time period was followed by an escalation of hi-tech improvement, especially in the 1980s-the computer era.

## **MOVE TOWARDS COMPUTER-GENERATED TRAINING**

As technology advanced, so did the nature of training. Companies today rely more so on computer-generated training such as simulation or virtual training techniques. These types of training become critical especially as companies search ways to become more cost efficient and training more effective. Today, a number of computer-based training approaches have arisen and continue to develop(Blanchard & Thacker, 2009).

## **COMPUTER-BASED TRAINING/E-LEARNING**

Dating all the wayback to World War II, computer-based training (CBT) also known as e-learning, found itself most useful in private industries or the government. “E-learning refers to the delivery of training or education through electronic media,” (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). Today e-learning is converted into numerous training programs, but not all training programs should be incorporate a e-learning format simply due to companies’ specific training needs (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009).CBT such as simulation made its way to the forefront of technical breakthroughs during the time of the second World War when analog and digital units could compute a number of different nuclear outcomes for government purposes such as The Manhattan Project. This technique shifted into military use and has been advancing ever since. Simulations represent the manner in which a company may actually function with respect to real

world problems and situation. (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). Simulations along with games made its true debut as the emergence of the computer age began to escalate which will be discussed later.

## **PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION**

In the 1950s, B.F. Skinner introduced programmed instruction (PI) with his patented teaching machine. Initially, his teaching machine would recognize correct answers and progress to the next. If an answer was wrong, the machine would explain the correct answer (Magliaro, Lockee & Burton, 2005). Typically, information to be learned with PI is taught in pieces. Trainees are tested after each piece of material is presented. PI has developed more so as technology advances. For instance, PI can be seen in the latest training technologies such as online courses.

## **INTELLIGENT COMPUTER ASSISTED INSTRUCTION**

After commercial computers were released in the 1950s, IBM launched the Coursewriter 1 in the 1960s. This is considered to be the first paradigm of intelligent computer-assisted instruction (ICAI) (Koschmann, 1996). Based on the trainees' interactive responses, this type of CBT is personalized in that it tailors assistance to the trainees' needs with characteristics similar to that of a human tutor. ICAI helped cultivate intelligent tutoring systems (ITS). These systems are a spinoff of the ICAI and demonstrate a more advanced approach. It operates in a way that "learns" the best methods to facilitate training based on the trainee's response," (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). Employees have found this method advantageous in that ITS effectively corrects wrong answers or perceptions.

## **SIMULATIONS AND VIRTUAL REALITY**

Soon after the 1970s' emergence of Microsoft, "Pong"- the first ever video game, and the 1983 Personal Computer, simulations rapidly developed. As mentioned earlier, simulations mimic real world job situations for trainees. A more sophisticated simulation is known as virtual reality (VR). It was established in the mid 1980s when Jaron Lanier coined the term "virtual reality" as he sold VR goggles and gloves to a number of organizations. Computer simulation in the form of virtual reality often requires the trainees to wear specialized equipment and interact with objects in a virtual environment that is similar to the situation that will be encountered back on the job. An example of VR is aircraft training. Pilots in training are placed in aircraft simulations with light, sound and even wind factors added in. Although this type of training method is most similar to the job, it is quite costly.

In alignment with the techniques mentioned above and any choice of training methods, an organization should always analyze a needs analysis, determine strengths and weaknesses and then decide on a training program that best fits its goals. Typically, small businesses maintain a traditional method of training more suitable for a small business's needs. However, larger firms are finding CBT to be more supportive and accommodative within their organizational structure (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009).

## **MOST RECENT MEANS OF TRAINING**

With the onset of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s came many different hi-tech innovations for that time period. For instance, CD-ROMs were presented allowing users to download various software programs or import/export information. While CD-ROMs have faded from technology platforms, they were at a time, a stepping stone for workplace management. In fact, e-books were made popular because of CD-ROMs (The Book and Beyond, 1995).

E-books have evolved rapidly since Angela Ruiz Robles invented its earliest form in 1949, the Mechanical Encyclopedia. “[It] operated on compressed air. Text and graphics were contained on spools that users would load onto rotating spindles,” (Lallanilla, 2013). The e-books eventually transformed into e-readers over the span of 64 years with the Kindle, Apple iPad, the Nook and others making large contributions to its success. Today, the e-reader market is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 21 percent between 2011 and 2015 (Research and Markets, 2012). Why such the quick growth? The e-reader allows for the distribution of published books and documents available through a graphical interface. Companies find these beneficial in that e-readers have language translation capabilities. In addition, e-readers save paper and costs. On the other hand, books may not be easily transferred for sharing due to publisher’s “digital rights” making training a complicated issue. So, while the e-reader is established as cutting edge in breakthrough technology, it is very limited to knowledge sharing for organizational benefit.

## **INTRANET**

Intranets are also a popular use of computer-generated training that has developed over time. Intranets are utilized via a company portal and is used to share information within an organization. Intranets were made popular in the mid 1990s. Intranets have found to increase workforce productivity, reduce the time it takes to complete a task or operation, improve communication, make more cost-effective, allows for quick updates/announcements and enable teamwork through collaboration. The intranet’s success lies in its design. An intranet is structured with one audience in mind- company employees. While the intranet provides a high level of benefits, it can also be improperly managed due to the overflow of data instead of being utilized in a way that creates company value (McGovern, 2003).

## **WEBINAR**

Webinars also find themselves in the midst of evolving training trends. Webinars are a form of web conferencing via slideshows, videos, ect. The first form of a webinar was introduced as the IRC, Internet Relay Chat in 1988 (Ross, 2001). The world then experienced the second form which was fashioned as instant messaging in the mid 1990s. The last and truest form, as we know it today is known as web conferencing which appeared in the late 1990s. Webinars deem to be useful in that they are interactive in such ways that members partaking in online webinars can interact with on-screen calendars and other facilitation tools as a slide show or some type of presentation is being conducted. Webinars are quite popular among organizations; however, there is a downside: one-way communication. This aspect of the webinar can enhance cultural/past behaviors that desire to replace present day training technology such as webinars. These behaviors are derived from individuals who prefer a traditional way of operating within the business realm. “80% of the cases, cultural-behavioral issues like these are the cause of slowing or stopping the adoption of collaborative technologies,” (Coleman & Young, 2004).

Regardless of the advantages or disadvantages, webinars which were historically used for demos or meetings, are now trending as means of employee training along with DVDs, Internet usage such as YouTube, and even cell phones, more widely known as smartphones.

## **SMARTPHONE**

Although phones have continuously developed, the term “smartphone” really started to take off in the late 1990s and early 2000s. To this day we associate smartphones with operating systems such as Android, Blackberry, Apple’s iOs and more. Smartphones are convenient, plain and simple, but can also pose as a distraction in the workplace, typically requiring the need for a high level of monitoring (Cheng, 2011). For instance, being able to distinguish employees checking e-mails versus those employees updating their latest twitter status can sometimes seem to be a difficult task. Distributing company issued phones for business purpose only can help reduce personal use. At the same time, this can be a costly maneuver.

For the most part however, smartphones can prove to be valuable in the workplace. Smartphones have made huge leaps in the corporate world and remarkably have the ability to perform the functions of a computer. Consequently, an employee can quickly access or send an e-mail, participate in a conference call, take pictures, upload information to the company site, gain access to apps that prove to be beneficial to company goals. Smartphone or tablet users, such as the iPad, may download applications from an app store that are specifically designed with the end-user in mind. From a social media app like LinkedIn to a company-specific app such as Bump, used for media sharing, millions of apps are available for download at the tips of your fingers. Employee training may be exercised through smartphones through the use of video sharing, e-mails that provide links to a training sessions, and even apps like “Mobile Employee” that make note of training and more over, provide employees with deadline reminders, appointments, travel reward programs, work times including the ability to e-mail files that can be integrated into the timesheet spreadsheets, ect. Needless to say, the possibilities appear endless.

## **WIKI**

Wikis are another resource that can be used for training purposes. Developed in the early 2000s, wikis provide information sharing sites that run via the Internet and allow users to modify information. Some wikis are limited as to who receives access to modify a site while others such as Wikipedia welcome any user to change or add facts/details to a particular subject matter.

Organizations that utilize wikis should be aware of faulty information; some users are illiterate in dealing with wikis. Certain companies may even find themselves having to implement a wiki “how-to” training session before even conducting training via wiki. The value for companies lies in the fact that wikis can be used as a collaboration tool, setting the stage for company-specific tasks/jobs such as project management, knowledge management, and fostering information. The obvious advantage at hand is the cost effective aspect, as with most new technologies.

## **THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL NETWORKING IN THE WORKPLACE**

Social networking has truly made its mark in the world with its earlier roots starting in the early to mid 2000s (Edosomwan, Sitalaskshmi, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, 2011). Due to

the social media rave, connecting and information sharing occur quicker than ever. While social media has served as a catalyst in the business world, it has also deemed to be detrimental to employees who have not illustrated social responsibility on their personal networks. Making snarky remarks online, for example, with regards to an employee's work life or towards the company itself can land an employee in great turmoil and in most cases resulting in termination for that employee. While the consequences seem high for the employee, companies can still seek benefits through social media. For instance, it is a great marketing tool, among other uses.

Take Facebook, for example. With its debut in 2004, Facebook set the benchmark for the ultimate social networking (Edosomwan, Sitalaskshmi, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, 2011). Facebook originally focused on connecting with peers and sharing personal experiences through photos, statuses, messages, ect. Facebook has since evolved into more than just a platform for individual use. Companies now utilize Facebook to create groups or events to promote their business. Other organizations go as far to use Facebook for communication purposes by creating a group, inviting individuals and posting announcements/updates to the discussion forum. This networking tool is of great worth to organizations who like to get information out quickly and at no cost. Individuals can even modify their settings to receive notifications of when updates are posted. For example, if a manager posts a new training video to the discussion forum, better known as the "wall", group employees are notified of this action through e-mail, text message alert, or even Facebook app notifications via smartphones.

LinkedIn, another social networking site similar to Facebook, was launched around the same time. LinkedIn targets a more career oriented audience. The site connects numerous professionals in a variety of occupational areas and assists users by reconnecting them to past or present colleagues, making inside connections to jumpstart business opportunities or careers and offers a host of advice/knowledge sharing groups and experts. Here, both the employer and employee benefit from what the site has to offer. In addition, training tips/advice are readily available through group discussions on LinkedIn such as "Focus on Training," "Training Principles" and more (LinkedIn, 2004).

Likewise, Twitter has contributed to business training solutions as well. The site was launched in 2006 providing users with news, updates and tips as well as permitting twitter users to update their own status, opinions or thoughts. Twitter gained a lot of popularity first because it offered more different options such as micro blogging and secondly because it was used by some celebrities (Edosomwan, Sitalaskshmi, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, 2011). It was not long before organizations jumped on board opening their own twitter accounts. Companies can "tweet" about their recent news, discounts, endorsements and so on. Some accounts include TrainingJournal SHRM, Human Resources IQ and more. These twitter accounts also make use of sharing very broad subjects via external links, documents, videos, podcasts (Twitter, 2013).

Podcasts offer video and audio to make information available to the consumer. Podcast training sessions from iTunes have been heavily exploited, growing in popularity. Podcast training grew from 5 percent in 2006 to 15 percent in 2007 (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). Organizations appreciate podcasts' ease of use in terms of no cost to the creator nor consumer, if so desired.

In midst of the emergence of many social media sites, YouTube found its way to the forefront of it all in 2005. YouTube was a revolution in the social media world because it did need a simple interface in a world where it was not easy, almost impossible to post videos online (Edosomwan, Sitalaskshmi, Kouame, Watson, & Seymour, 2011). Through YouTube,

organizations have found another way to use video sharing with more convenience and at little or no cost at all.

## **EVOLUTION OF YOUTUBE TRAINING**

The use of YouTube for training in the workplace is still in the beginning steps, but there is no doubt it is evolving and quickly at that. Parents are using YouTube for their children to learn and even athletes are making use of the video-sharing website to acquire new skills. So why not take this approach in the work place? Monsanto Company is already exercising this concept by making their own training videos and posting it on YouTube. The company is not only cutting training costs significantly, they are also dramatically increasing the company website traffic which in turn is boosting the company's popularity (White, 2007).

YouTube offers the company two different approaches: Companies can record and post their own videos so that trainees can visit the site and watch multiple viewings of the video. On the other end, companies can take a slightly different approach by accessing the videos of pre-recorded training video published by outside sources. However, companies should be weary as to how the video fits as far as company's needs are concerned. Regardless, YouTube carries many advantages for the company as a whole as well. Not only do employers use the information to train a workforce, but by placing it on YouTube, future, potential employees can view how employees are trained and treated. It can also be viewed by customers whom know when purchasing your company's product, they are supporting a socially responsible organization that cares about its employee's safety and about the product being produced. YouTube training is still in the developmental process; however, it is changing workplace training as we know it.

In 2007, larger companies indicated that they provided 37 percent of their training via e-learning also known as electronic media (Blanchard & Thacker, 2009). "Study after study reveals that the key to a healthy bottom line is investing in employee skill development. This has forced business executives to search for cost-effective ways to enhance employee proficiency" (Salz, 2011). Thus, one solution: Exploring different methods of computer-generated training.

## **YOUTUBE'S ROLE IN TRAINING**

YouTube serves various functions in training and its role as a training tool is hardly going unnoticed. Several companies have tested the water by first promoting marketing efforts via YouTube. Dunkin Donuts advertised its slogan, "America runs on Dunkin" through a YouTube channel which as generated 1,607,416 views as of November 2012. Consequently, many CEOs are embracing the advantage YouTube provides. For instance, a fairly new YouTube channel, CorpU TV, publishes video clips involving CEOs with valuable insight aimed at Fortune 500 companies. "These clips typically run three to five minutes and cover a range of topics including succession planning, coaching, localized learning and sales training. JetBlue CEO, Dave Barger, for one, discusses how leaders should maintain visibility among staff and customers" (Laff, 2008).

While there are companies that exist for the sole purpose of producing professional training videos such as Media-Partners and DigiCast Productions, YouTube can work in the same way and at a lower cost. With sufficient and creative technology talent, a company can produce just as much employee motivation as a training video production company would. Wells Manufacturing, a vehicle electronics company, has generated 35 and counting "how-to" videos



aimed specifically at vehicle diagnostic and repair information. The videos are offered in “both English and Spanish...also available for free viewing via Wells’ website. The videos can [also] be accessed on a 24/7 basis by searching Wellstech on YouTube” (Motor Editors, 2010).

“Analysts say that more and more companies are launching such YouTube-style videos to take advantage of a massive increase in traffic video sites over the past couple of years” (Havenstein, 2008). Online interface is assertively making its debut as a routine and reliable lifestyle.

Other forms of YouTube training that can be searched includes training for salesmen, human resource generalists/specialists, geologists, medical nurses/doctors, technicians, financial auditors, consultants, chemists, engineers and more. The broad, YouTube training scope includes numerous professions and is constantly growing (YouTube, 2013).

## **WHY IT WORKS**

YouTube training becomes more apparent in organizations looking for ways to reduce trainee learning time, cut training costs, keep material consistent with presentation, monitor training progress and allow for easy access to training for trainees. Information technology (IT) research analyst, Whit Andrews from the article titled “YouTube for the Enterprise” admits “Video has been used for training since the Second World War. But YouTube’s ease of use, compatibility, and cross-platform all makes companies excited [about video]” (Collett, 2011). YouTube, among other CBT tools, can be integrated into other methods of training as well. A simple lecture can be transformed into a captivating training demonstration with the use of YouTube videos, for instance.

Denise Court, Vice-President of marketing at Austin-based Itzbig claims, “Given the rich digital media we have today, we all of a sudden have an opportunity to use a platform that is inexpensive and easy to use for companies to express themselves, share ideas and collaborate” (Havenstein, 2008.) Video sharing allows for an open forum in which company customers may easily provide feedback. By properly responding to the viewer, companies can instill trust within customers, employees and even the local community, ultimately resulting in a higher return on investment.

At the same time, content management is becoming more of a concern for those companies turning to video training. While companies may benefit from streaming media sites, these sites can also leave room for information to easily be leaked. Some argue that YouTube will soon become detrimental to information knowledge and dismantle confidentiality. One way organizations are successfully combating this issue is by taking advantage of IT specialists. IT departments are now embracing is the supervision of content management, making IT a fast growing occupation. “[IT]...is projected as the fastest growing of all occupations in the United States. As businesses and other organizations continue to adopt newer, more efficient computer networks, these workers will be in high demand” (Wright, 2009). In addition, from the year 2006-2016 the percentage of IT network systems and data communications analysts will increase 53% (Wright, 2009). Therefore, despite the possible information leak drawback, companies will rely on IT workers to monitor the issue.

Yet, YouTube training still serves as a convenient tool for numerous corporations. Charles Wallace, chief technical architect and IT director for global architecture and infrastructure at Rohm and Haas notes, “online videos support the natural tendency of workers to bypass the knowledge base and go to their next-door neighbor [at work] or to the employees who know how to get answers to their questions” (Havenstein, 2008). Rohm and Haas online training videos are

made available to an overwhelming 15,000 employees. Online videos allow companies, such as Rohm and Haas to be cost efficient as well as maintain high control of training content. And with an employee base of 15,000, online training videos can prove to be quite successful in a number of ways especially for employees that would have had to otherwise travel to seek training.

There are many benefits to incorporating training videos into an online platform. With video training that is standardized and visually stimulating, organizations are assured that trainees will receive all needed information in a way that helps retain knowledge. Retention is more likely to occur using a computer-based method due to the fact that is simply more captivating compared to an instructional lecture. Visual and auditory stimulation help to better tap into an individual's cognitive thinking process. In addition, behavioral reproduction is more likely to produce greater outcomes especially when companies exercise methods such as virtual reality. In all, e-learning such as YouTube makes training available "for more employees, in more locations, and at a lower cost than other training methods" (Blanchard, 2009).

## **TRAINING TRENDS**

A study conducted by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in collaboration with the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM) assessed the changes in the learning and development methods of organizations. The study consisted of research collected from a survey of 952 practitioners in the United Kingdom (60%), United States (23%) and India (13%), (Sinclair, Semiha, & Dalton, 2011). From the study, e-learning interest has especially increased in the United States in comparison to other training methods, as indicated in Table 1 (Appendix).

## **TYPES OF E-LEARNING MEDIA**

With the e-learning trend, comes a variety of different methods organizations may choose from to further increase employee training efficiency. CIPD and SHRM continued their study with an examination of the different measures companies are using (Sinclair, Semiha, & Dalton, 2011). Rapid authoring software and webinars deem to be the United States' most popular means of using new media in this particular study, as indicated in Table 2 (Appendix).

## **TRAINING TRANSFER: COMPUTER-BASED VERSUS TRADITIONAL INSTRUCTION**

How valid can this new training prove to be? Training transfer is the ultimate goal for any organization conducting a training program. How well will KSAs be transferred and furthermore, retained?

A study conducted in 2002 tested the effectiveness of transfer between traditional instruction training and CD-ROMs at the time in which CDs were trending in the business world. Different variables were considered such as years of work experience, age, level of education, years of experience as a supervisor, online course experience, self-efficacy, motivation, ect. The study found that overall, no significant difference in transfer existed between CD-ROM training and traditional training. Both methods produced the same amount of transfer based on statistical findings at the time (Petty, Lim, & Zulauf, 2007).

In contrast, “The benefit of computer-based instruction would lower training costs for program development, delivery, and evaluation while keeping the same level of training transfer,” (Petty, Lim & Zulauf, 2007). The study suggests that further in depth research should be carried out due to limitations of the study such as limited geographical area and lack of online, simulation or virtual reality examination. It is also recommended that computer-based training be tailored to a more industry-specific channel. In doing so, a more substantial shift in transfer may result.

While in 2002, CD-ROMs seemed to produce the same amount of transfer as traditional training, they also helped jumpstart the shift to a more computer-based training focus. Technology has since advanced. However, due to the fact that e-learning training is fairly new to the business organizations since 2002’s CD-ROMs study, limited and empirical research is available on the effectiveness of contemporary training methods.

Regardless, e-learning should not be used as a stand-alone tool. This is the same for all technology training devices. Transfer occurs best when it is hands-on.

## **COMPANIES TAKING A PROFITABLE ADVANTAGE OVER THE E-LEARNING TREND**

Digicast Productions, an internet-based company has taken advantage of the shift towards online training. Digicast Productions “help[s] companies influence behavior change through creating communication and training programs” via Internet ([www.digicast.com.au](http://www.digicast.com.au)). A similar company, Media-Partners has also realized the window of opportunity in creating training videos. Media-Partners is emerging on the forefront as a leading, video training company with a slogan that reads, “*Best Training Videos at the Best Prices*”. Each company, both Digicast Productions and Media-Partners, has established a successful platform and reveals case studies to prove it.

## **CASE STUDIES THAT PROVIDE VIDEO SHARING TRAINING EFFECTIVE**

Fired Up, Incorporated owns Johnny Carino’s, an Italian sit-down franchise whom turned to Media-Partners for a training video specifically tailored to delivering exceptional customer service. Kathy Harris, Vice-President of Media-Partners claims the video is “makes an emotional connection with them [employees], and that's what we want.” “The Difficult Guest” aims at improving guest loyalty. Media-Partners claims “To lose one guest party of two per week, at an average check of \$30 and one visit a month, amounts to an annual loss of more than \$18,000, at one location”. Therefore, “The Difficult Guest” video purchase would make for a great return on investment. Media-Partners has received positive responses in increasing guest satisfaction reports and a favorable response from managers and employees from Fired Up, Inc (Case Studies: The Difficult Guest, 2012).

In addition to Media-Partners, its competitor, Digicast Productions has also demonstrated training effectiveness, particularly in the area of steel manufacturing. Digicast Productions was recognized with the LearnX Award for saving the steel company \$150,000.00 over a 5 year period solely in part by training videos. Digicast Productions was able to help reduce training time from 4 hours to less than 1 one hour. Mike Hamilton, the Technical Services Manager of the steel manufacturing company admits, “We now have some engaging and well written training videos that are giving us great results,” (Communication Resources, 2012).

Furthermore, Media-Partners has utilized YouTube, as a marketing tool in order to promote its company's services. Media-Partners has its own subscription with YouTube that includes 13 uploaded videos promoting training that vary in topic. As of October 2012, the company had 138 subscribers and 133,637 views. To mention a few, video titles include "Change and Innovation," "In This Together-Harassment," and "How to Connect in Business in 90 Seconds or Less."

## **INTERVIEWS**

Due to the lack of empirical research on the issue, we conducted interviews of business executives. When looking at the impact that technology has had on training, it is imperative that the affected employee's perspective be taken into consideration. Do they like this new form of training? Is it effective? Are they bored? As you will see the perspective varies over positions and companies. The following interviews were conducting generating very different answers. The interviews were conducted among diverse positions: a Vice President of Human Resources and Chief of Operations at a major firm, a college professor/health management organization employee, and a worker's compensation analyst.

- Rick Reynolds is a consultant for Kaiser Permanente, a health management organization, and a professor at Auburn University who is pursuing his doctorate. When asked, Mr. Reynolds said that he has participated in formal organizational training in the past in the form of classroom instruction and that he has also participated in non-traditional training such as e-learning. His e-learning experiences occurred during his online courses at Auburn University, where he was able to log onto a secure website and download notes to watch an instructor.

When asked if this type of training was beneficial or helpful, Mr. Reynolds response was that it was beneficial and he preferred it over traditional methods because it allows him to do it on his own time. Since he is a working person and has classes during the days he can review the training during his free time. This new type of training also gave him the ability to review a concept if he did not understand it, which he liked.

He was also able to send an e-mail and receive quick responses to problems or questions that arose. Although he went into the training thinking that he wouldn't like it, it turns out that he does. Since he works with Kaiser Permanente, which is based out of Oakland, California he conducts his own classroom instruction training and he said that he would consider changing his own training methods and moving towards a computer based method. This change would allow him to send the training materials out to a countless number of people.

He said "it's just a matter of getting people interested." Mr. Reynolds also participates in diversity and sexual harassment training for Kaiser Permanente through videos that the company produces. The videos are broken into chapters, followed up by a test. However, one must score a certain percentage before moving onto the next chapter. When asked if he had ever been involved in information knowledge via YouTube, Mr. Reynolds said that he had studied a professor from Stanford University who was lecturing about the new and upcoming profession of data mining.

- James Davis is the Vice President of Human Resources and Chief of Operations at Tyndall Federal Credit Union. When asked if he had ever participated in organizational training his response was yes, the training was delivered in the classroom with workshops. Mr. Davis said that he had also participated in e-learning as well. Since he works at a financial institution which has to keep all staff up to date on policies, procedures, regulations, as well as keep them abreast of all the various scams, and fraud and theft awareness. To conduct all of this training they have customized interactive e-training which places trainees in various scenarios with which to work through so they can visualize and learn. Mr. Davis said that this type of training is essential for his firm.

When asked if he preferred this type of training over traditional methods, his response was “yes and no. You have to have a blend to be effective; you have to have the basics, which occur in the classroom, before you can build with e-learning. The group learning of a classroom in my opinion is essential due to the one on one and classmate interaction. No one person will think of all the questions that will occur in training but a group will produce much better and more through subject understanding and then the trainees will have the foundation upon which to build on, which occurs in e-learning.”

Mr. Davis said that he has been involved in information knowledge via YouTube before. His firm uses sites such as YouTube primarily to educate for member education. Their members and non-members can access the site for information on basic financial education, such as balancing a checkbook and how to obtain, understand your credit report and credit score, and how credit unions differ from traditional banks.

- Melanie Rayburn is a worker’s compensation analyst for Aspirion Health Resources. When asked if she had ever participated in organizational training, her response was “Yes. We have training workshops with our CEO and director of operations to see what is expected out of us by our company and our clients, the hospitals, and our goals and values for the company.

All of our company is web-based and we have the IT department show us how to navigate our compass, the Aspirion database.” When asked if she had ever been a part of non-traditional training such as e-learning, she said that she is required to participate in webinars and HIPPA training per hospitals on their systems. Ms. Rayburn said that this type of training was very beneficial and helpful. She also said that she preferred it to other types of training since Aspirion is a nationally based company; it's difficult for them to fly the needed representatives over for training.

With the webinars it is cost efficient and shows the step by step process of how navigate in specific hospital systems. There is not a standard system, and even though there are some hospitals that use the same system, each is uniquely designed for their facility. The webinars help the representative know how they would like for Aspirion to use their system.

Ms. Rayburn said that HIPPA training is easiest with their e-learning. Many of the representatives can access the information at one time and they are able to move at their own rush, not feeling rushed or slowed down by others. This e-learning style also enables them to learn the law for the first time and allows them to go back and re-familiarize themselves with the information so that it is always fresh.

She also said that since we are moving towards a faster paced environment e-learning caters to that. When asked if she had ever been involved in information knowledge via YouTube she said that her firm uses YouTube to watch the Do's and Don'ts of HIPPA violations.

Each interview produced a different type of e-learning and each representative preferred it to the traditional types of learning. This shows that contemporary types of training have a very vital role in the workplace. Online training allows the trainee to move at their own pace on their own time. While some employers see online training as a risk, because employees can skip through it or avoid it all together, providing a small test as the training is conducted is a wise resource to use as Mr. Reynolds stated. Although it is still in the beginning stages, YouTube and online training are making an impact on the training that we know today.

## **CONCLUSION**

The evolution of training methods throughout the years has continued help organizations reduce costs, motivate its workers increase productivity and ultimately increasing profits. There are a variety of training methods. No one training method is best for every situation or company's mission. Often a mix of training methods are most effective such as using YouTube videos in a traditional lecture or as part of an online learning class.

Technology is transforming training much like other areas of our society. In general they are cheap and as or more effective than traditional training methods. Moreover, the younger generations embraces them and are motivated to learn via these techniques, in particular, those that involve social interaction (Jayson, 2012). But beware the older generation more resistance to change and not as used to technology. Therefore, more traditional modes of training may be better for them.

However, due to cost advantages, organization need to incorporate the newer cutting edge learning techniques such as You Tube, social media, twitter, and other recent trends into their training programs. Otherwise, like other companies who failed to change their business methods in the face of new technology, organizations will wither and die.

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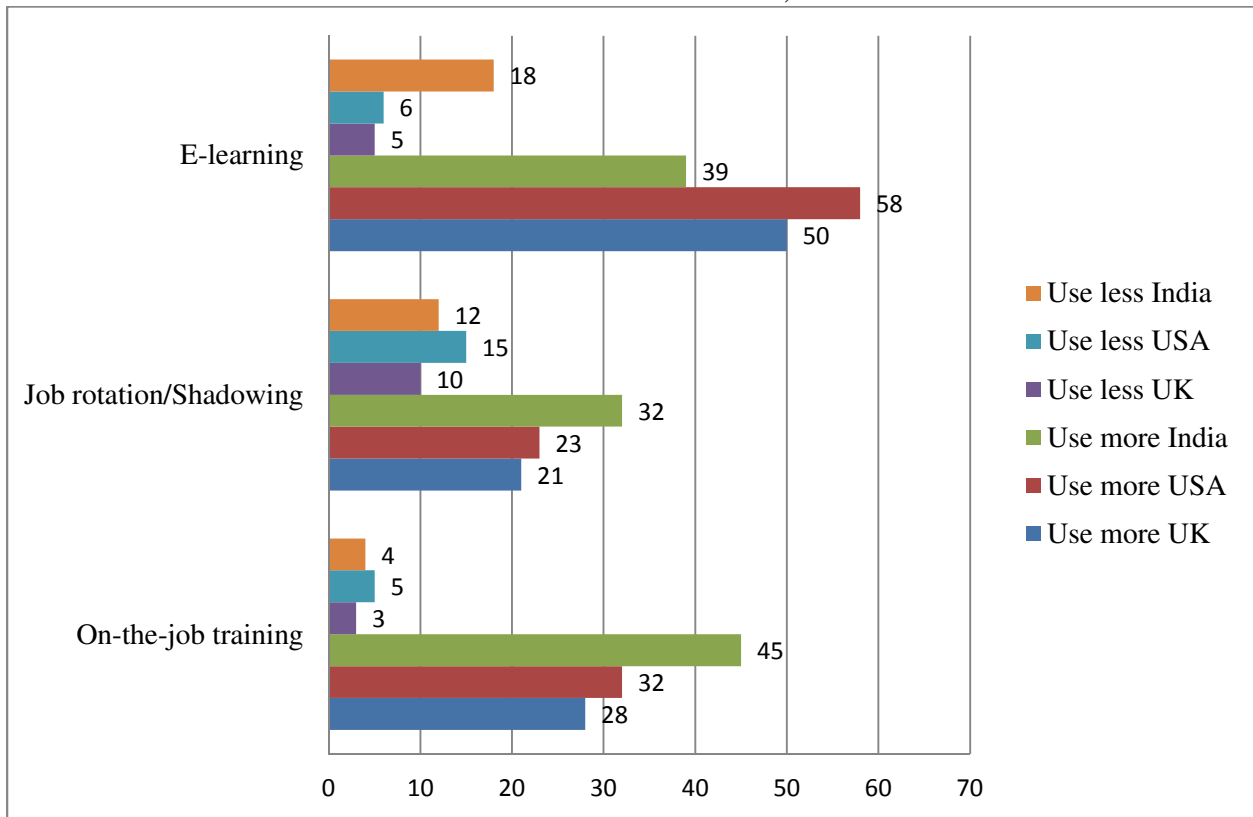
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**APPENDIX**

**Table 1**  
**Percentage of Changes in the Use of Learning and Development Practices in the Private Sector, 2011**



**Table 2**  
**Percentage of Organizations Using New Media to Support**  
**Aspects of Learning and Development, 2011**

