



## How the iPhone Will Shape the Future of (Mobile) Learning

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Mobile learning still experiences limitations because of technological constraints. This has changed with the arrival of the iPhone.

The fast adoption of mobile phones and personal digital assistants (PDAs) has fueled the opportunity to deliver learning on devices that already are in people's hands. Because of these tools' ability to deliver learning "at hand," many great applications for mobile learning have been launched successfully.

But mobile learning still experiences limitations because of technological constraints. This has changed with the arrival of the iPhone, a multifunctional mobile device that provides tremendous opportunities to support real-time and on-the-job learning.

The iPhone can deliver the following capabilities:

### Use Google Search and Internet Access

The iPhone allows users to browse the Internet, access knowledge management portals and run applications — all at high speed, using wireless Internet access in hot-spot areas. This transforms the current experience. On the existing generation of PDAs, Internet applications tend to be slow, sometimes freeze and are hard to watch on small screens with user-unfriendly scrolling functionality.

In addition, the iPhone provides typical e-mail functionality, and incoming messages are fully formatted and complete with graphics. Further, PDFs and Word and Excel documents can at least be opened (if not edited).

### Broadcast Video-Based Learning

Video-recorded lectures, instructional video clips, leadership presentations and movies can be viewed and re-viewed on the iPhone. YouTube-style video clips also can be viewed to provide highly engaging and motivational learning experiences.

### Support Collaborative Learning and Social Networking

Learners will be able to check in with their coach, reach out to an expert or collaborate with colleagues through social networking Web sites and communities of practice. On the iPhone, users will be able to update a blog and contribute to a wiki.

### Create Access to Podcasts and Audiobooks

More and more employees have experienced the power of podcasts over the past few years — audio summaries of research studies, lectures and books provide important nuggets of learning.

When there is no time to read a book, learners can listen to selections from a growing library of audiobooks or take foreign language lessons on their iPhone while commuting to work. Additionally, these files can be stored on the iPhone for as long as they need them and deleted when the content is either fully absorbed or obsolete.

### Deliver Online Learning

Webinars, self-paced e-learning courses and virtual classroom sessions all can be offered on the iPhone. There is a drawback, though: Some applications are not yet supported by the iPhone.

### Launch and Track Assessments and Quizzes

Learners can prepare for an exam by taking a variety of practice tests and quizzes. Additionally, online diagnostic assessments can be completed as pre-work for blended development programs and coaching initiatives.

Although it is a very promising learning device, the current iPhone still lacks many technical features that are important for learning, including support for Flash and Java, video recording, a memory card slot and a chat or instant messaging program.

In addition, as we have learned from all other new learning technologies over the past decades, it will take time to experiment and explore ways to develop best practices to use the iPhone for learning.

I am very optimistic, however, that additional features will be made available in future releases and that different companies will develop multiple iPhone-tailored Web programs — the iPhone's potential promises to transform mobile learning. ■

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