

Articulate 09 - Rapid E-Learning (Jul 09)

Articulate is one of our favourite desktop authoring tools which we have used to develop content for clients such as O2, BP, HSBC and many others. The guys at Articulate have recently released Articulate 09 with lots of new great features. Here Theo Cardiff of Kineo shares her experiences.



Articulate 09 review

Articulate Studio 09 was released back in October. Since then Kineo have been putting it through its paces. Articulate has been one of our favourite desktop authoring tools for a while. We have used it to develop content for clients such as O2, BP, HSBC and many others. It has a great range of out-of-the box interactions that can be brought together in PowerPoint. You can quickly get started producing effective courses. See an [example piece of content produced in Articulate 09](#). This module is 'out of box' Articulate, see a previous [example with one of our Kineo skins](#).

The new Articulate Studio 09 comes with some real improvements. Here are some of our favourites:

Quick Quizzes

Quizmaker has been completely revamped. Quizzes are now easier to insert, easier to edit. There's more functionality like branching, question pools, inclusion of blank slides. Quizzes can look good and include animation. Quizmaker 09 gets our thumbs up.

Custom interactions

Presenter just got better too. We really like the branching and slide-locking . We've used these features to create our own custom interactions.

Kineo Rating: Recommended

This authoring tool offers an excellent level of interactivity at an affordable price.

Criteria	Rating	Comments
Ease of use	Very good	Very simple to learn, though there are a lot of different settings to keep remembering.
Instructional design flexibility	Good	There is a good range of simple interactions and questions.
Ability to incorporate existing content	Very good	Easy to incorporate audio, video and existing presentations.
Ability to handle variety of topics	Very good	It's great for product knowledge and can handle simple scenarios. We wouldn't recommend using it for systems training.
Ability to incorporate graphics and media	Excellent	You can import many types of graphic, animation, video and audio.
Ability to publish SCORM/AICC compliant courses	Very good	Articulate is one of the most reliable tools from this point of view. You can either set courses to track on slides viewed or on the results of one quiz.
Technical support available	Excellent	Support is available via their web site or email.
Knowledgeable support team	Excellent	I've never before encountered a software support team this well informed and this willing to help.

Articulate 09: The Full Road Test

Ease of use: Very good

You can get started really quickly and will have a reasonable idea of the different elements of Articulate within a couple of hours. The tricky bit is making things look good and behave consistently. There are a lot of settings to be set each time you add an interaction.

Articulate isn't great for working collaboratively. It works on absolute file paths. Though the 'Send to Package' feature helps from the point of view of putting everything in one place, this too can be temperamental.

Instructional design flexibility : Good

Articulate will allow you to use a range of instructional design models. However, there is a danger when letting subject matter experts loose with tools like Articulate that it will simply result in long, boring narrated power points. However, in the hands of a designer, skilled SME or ideally a designer working with an SME you could produce some high quality e-learning very rapidly. To learn how Kineo can help make sure your e-learning designs don't fall into this trap, contact our Rapid E-learning Team.

Ability to incorporate existing content: Very good

Clearly you can use existing PowerPoints. You can also import audio, video and animations. The Video Encoder will help you to convert existing video into the right format for Articulate.

Ability to handle variety of topics: Very good

Articulate is great for quick briefings, product knowledge and you can even generate nice scenarios with a bit of practice. If you want systems training then you may want to look to a screen capture tool like Captivate.

Ability to incorporate graphics and media: Excellent

It's very easy to drop in graphics, flash animations or video. It's easy to import audio or to record your own audio narration. You can sync audio in with slide animations. There is a pretty decent audio editor within Articulate, though we tend to use Audacity as it has more functionality and is less fiddly.

Ability to publish SCORM/AICC compliant courses: Very good

This is really easy and really reliable. Simply select what standard the course should comply to, say whether you are tracking slides viewed or a quiz, add some more detail about the course if you want, and hit publish. It is very very simple.

Technical support available: Excellent

The support on the Articulate website is fantastic and includes manuals, tips, demonstrations, along with the best forums you've ever encountered. This forum is administered properly. If you post a question, it will be answered. If forums aren't your style, you can always send an email. Either way expect a prompt response.

Knowledgeable support team: Excellent

The Articulate support team is great. They are always looking to improve the product and will take the time to understand what you need and where possible will solve your problem.

Conclusion:

Articulate is a great tool for producing simple content quickly. It is easy to use and has everything you need to get started.

Bought Articulate Studio 09? Agree or disagree with this review? Let us know.

Got an authoring tool, and need get some help in making the most of it? Kineo's Rapid E-learning Design Team can help. Contact Kineo.

Kineo has accepted no payment or reward of any form from any tools company for this independent review.

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