

Social Learning

This section explores the use of social media and social learning tools in the workplace and how they change the landscape of the learning and performance field. While the techniques are important, they are only tools that enable learning, especially informal learning, to occur. In short, they are a means to an end and are only one component of learning.

Social learning can occur as either a formal, organization-driven process or as an informal employee-driven process. A WLP professional should be constantly monitoring the trends in this area and determining ways to incorporate them into their programs.

What Is In This Chapter

- ☑ Identify the uses & benefits of social learning technologies.
- ☑ Discuss the application, advantages, and disadvantages of social learning technologies.
- ☑ Discuss the barriers to implementing and gaining acceptance of social learning technologies within organizations.
- ☑ Explain strategies to influence others & increase acceptance of social learning tools.
- ☑ Indicate approaches for increasing user adoption.

Overview

A colleague once shared his experience of the first time he saw a demonstration of Instant Messaging (IM) in an organization. “Wow!” was his reaction – “this could be big!” His initial thought was “Instant messaging is going to be great for the deaf and hearing impaired, who can’t just pick up the phone and talk to someone. It’s not something most people will use much, but for that slice of the population it’s amazing.”

That was in the early 1990s. Nearly two decades later, instant messaging is a part of everyday communication around the world. Tens of millions of people with perfectly good hearing are IM-ing, proving that sometimes, we miss the point.

When most people today think of social media in a business context, they think of it as a set of tools for marketing. However, networks of people belonging to all professions, working across time and space, can make informed decisions and solve complex problems in ways they couldn’t dream of years ago. By bringing together people who share interests, no matter their location or time zone, social media has the potential to transform the workplace into an environment where learning is as natural as it is powerful.

Social learning is a fundamental shift in how people work—accelerating and broadening individual and organizational reach.

For example, imagine a course in which learners can write embedded blog posts to share their own best practices, techniques, or insights with other participants in the course. Imagine a course where learners could participate in live discussions, or rate ideas and see the ratings of others. These types of “social” technologies can be easily incorporated into traditional, formal training.

Social learning is learning with and from others. It occurs naturally at conferences, in groups—even among old friends at a café— as well as in classroom settings, or among colleagues online who have never met in person. We experience it when we go down the hall to ask a question and when we post the same question on a blog anticipating that someone will respond.

Defining Social Media and Social Learning

To understand social learning, we must first understand social media. Social media is a set of Internet-based technologies designed to be used by three or more people. It’s rarer than it sounds. Most interaction supported by technology is narrowcast (one to one), often with a telephone call or an email message; niche-cast (one to small groups), for instance using email distribution lists or small-circulation newsletters; or broadcast (one to many), using vehicles such as online publications or a radio show.

While social media is technology used to engage three or more people and social learning is interacting with others to make sense of new ideas, what’s important is how powerfully they work together. Social tools leave a “digital audit trail,” documenting our learning journey—and leaving a path for others to follow. Tools are now available to facilitate social learning that is unconstrained by geographic boundaries or time-zone differences among team members.

“Formal training and workshops account for only 10 percent to 20 percent of what people learn at work,” says Jay Cross, one of the foremost experts on informal learning and systems thinking. On his blog, he has compared formal learning to passively taking a bus, whereas informal learning is like

riding a bike, in that “the rider chooses the destination and the route. The cyclist can take a detour at a moment’s notice to admire the scenery or help a fellow rider.”

What’s powerful about social learning is that it goes beyond the use of social media for marketing to enhance the transfer of knowledge and connect people in a way that’s consistent with how we naturally interact. It is not a delivery system analogous to classroom training, mobile learning, or e-learning. Instead it’s a powerful approach to sharing and discovering information, leading to more informed decision-making and a more intimate, expansive, and dynamic understanding of the culture and context in which we work.

Table 1. Definitions

Term	Definition
Social Media	<p>A set of Internet-based technologies designed to be used by three or more people.</p> <p>For example, commercial tools such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, and wikis, and enterprise applications such as Microsoft SharePoint, IBM WebSphere Portal Server, Lotus Connections, and Oracle’s Beehive.</p>
Social Learning	<p>Involves learning with and from others. It has been around for a long time and occurs naturally at conferences, when working in groups, among old friends, and among colleagues online who have never met in person.</p> <p>It can happen in person or virtually. For example, it happens when we participate in a conversation thread triggered by a blog posting, during coaching and mentoring sessions, or even during a workout at the gym.</p> <p>Today, social learning, which centers on information sharing, collaboration, and co-creation—not instruction—implies that the notion of training needs to expand.</p>

What’s the Difference between Training & Social Learning?

Senior leaders in organizations consider employees’ knowledge to be a strategic priority and competitive advantage. Over the past 15 years, companies have striven to transform organizational learning by streamlining the training function and moving courses online. That doesn’t address the deeper dilemma that training and learning are not the same thing.

Training describes an outside-in approach to providing quantifiable content, while learning describes an inside-out process that originates with the learner’s desire to know, either long-held or spontaneously arising from recent events or a moving interaction.

Social learning does not replace training. It may overlap a little and complement a lot, but it can also enable the transfer of knowledge in a way that training cannot. Social learning fosters an environment where people readily and easily pick up new knowledge and skills as the world shifts around them, meeting the demands of a constantly changing workplace. It focuses on:

- *More information resources:* access to people who can lessen uncertainty with vetted data, presentations, research, and wider perspectives that can help make a business case or decision easier.
- *More dissemination points:* people can self-serve their information needs by accessing available resources, giving you back time and freeing up other resources.
- *A network:* access to a forum of communicators and collaborators who can enhance workplace learning.

What Social Learning Is Not...

Another way to think about social learning is to compare it with what it is not.

Social learning is not just for knowledge workers:

It can empower people who work in any type of job, for any kind of organization.

It's not at odds with formal education:

Learners use social media tools to communicate with each other or with instructors and facilitators. Instructors and facilitators can also use social media before and after classes to capture and share everyone's ideas.

It's not a replacement for training or employee development:

Social learning can supplement formal training in the classroom or online; however, it cannot work as a substitute. It covers different knowledge that formal training is rarely able to provide.

It's not synonymous with informal learning:

Informal learning is a term often used to describe learning that does not take place in a formal program or class. It does not necessarily involve social interaction.

It's not the same as e-learning:

E-learning is a term used to describe a structured learning environment in which the training or instruction is delivered electronically. This broad category can include social tools and, if it's organized through an online learning community such as Moodle, can be quite communal.

What Social Learning Is Not...(cont.)

It's not constantly social in the same way a party is:

Often people are alone when they are engaged in social learning. The social-ness refers to the intermingling of ideas, information, and experiences.

Uses of Social Learning Technologies

According to Allison Rossett, professor emerita of education technology at San Diego State University, "The most significant thing going on in workplace training and development today is that we have punched through the walls of the classroom to allow experts and peers to bring their messages closer to work and life through technology."

Social media is the driver that enables social learning by accomplishing the following:

- **Exchanging information:** Social media supports informal learning by serving as a platform for learners to gather and share information and resources from both internal and external collaboration networks. Learners can thus generate their own learning content and take advantage of collective knowledge.
- **Facilitating communication:** Social media facilitates communication among learners. Rather than a class or workshop being "pushed out" to learners, learners can "pull in" concepts and ideas outside of formal learning sessions. These tools can also facilitate communication between external networks and subject matter experts so that the knowledge gained can be both internal as well as external to an organization.

- **Personalizing the learning experience:**

Social learning personalizes the learning experience from two perspectives:

- by allowing users to gather information and learn when they need it rather than when traditional courses are offered
- by allowing the users to generate content that meets a specific need or audience.

For example, a user may gather information by soliciting feedback on an idea or question from a network using a micro-blog. Later, that same user may then generate new content and consolidate resources for a particular audience within an organization.

- **Supporting informal learning:** The model used most frequently for training today is the same model that has been patterned from the way we learned in school. According to this model, information is dispensed and learners are tested for recall of facts and concepts. The problem with this model is that it doesn't match how businesses operate. Employees need information on demand to do their jobs well. How employees access and use that information ultimately determines their effectiveness in the workplace. Enter informal learning.

In November 2008, ASTD and the Institute for Corporate Productivity (i4cp) conducted a study, *Tapping the Potential of Informal Learning*, and according to their research, 41 percent of

respondents believed informal learning was already occurring to a high or very high extent within their organizations. There was also a very large gap between the degree to which employees share knowledge and the degree to which they think they should. In other words, seasoned employees share their insights at a lesser rate than that which was expected by respondents.

Traditional methods of training have shown rapid knowledge loss. For example, 60 percent of material can be forgotten 24 hours after a formal class is given. A new study from the State University of New York shows that students who listened to a podcast of a class scored 15 percent better on a test than students who attended the live class.

Informal learning fits the context of today's knowledge-on-the-go world where information is best processed in small information bites.

- **Creating immersive learning environments:**

Immersive refers to a sense of surrounding ourselves in something, a space in which we are present. Examples include IMAX movies, surround sound, and **massively multiplayer online games (MMOG)** applied to the web and business applications.

As a result in the growth of social media, immersive learning environments have now become more of a reality for organizations since the technology has become less cost prohibitive and more practical for organizations to implement. These types of immersive technologies support the customization of learning and provide end-users with an “authentic” experience of how they might experience a situation in the “real world”—but within a safe environment to practice, make mistakes, and learn. Simulations, one example of this type of technology, can be tailored toward specific audiences by providing a learning experience that is more “hands-on” for some learners based on their job role and the type of tasks they must complete on the job.

What these all have in common is that they engage—even engross—the people using them.

Social Learning Categories—Applications & Limitations

Most learning industry analysts and thought leaders agree that integrating social learning into formal learning strategies represents a major change in the way organizations have typically trained and developed talent.

What people have yet to agree on is how to get “there” from “here,” or what a blended social and formal learning model might look like. A good way to begin is to discuss what a social learning model will *not* look like.

A social learning model will not replace traditional formal learning. Companies will still need to create, deliver, manage, and report on certification and compliance initiatives. Physical classrooms, virtual classrooms, and web-based training (WBT) will all still be appropriate vehicles for content delivery, and instructional designers will still need to determine which approach to use. To move toward a social learning model, one strategy is to socialize the formal learning that happens through courseware, curriculum, and certifications by embedding social learning inside formal content or wrapping social media around formal content.

For example, WBT often removes all opportunities for social networking and interaction with colleagues, dramatically reducing the benefits that come from diversity of perspective and sharing of

ideas and real-world experiences. Embedding social media within WBT courses reintroduces these social exchanges without sacrificing the cost savings or ability to “replay” content.

So what type of social media should be considered for use within the learning function? While there is a broad social media landscape, let’s look at several categories of social media to demystify this topic. The categories you decide to facilitate for social learning will depend on your organization’s business goals, what you are trying to achieve and how willing to accept these technologies your organization and learners are.

Figure 1. Categories of Social Media



While Figure 1 illustrates general categories of social media, keep in mind that there is a cross-over between many of these categories. For example, Twitter could fall under micro-blogging, but it also belongs under social networking.

The key to success with social media is to first define your business needs and learning strategy—then select the category of media which best supports these.

Table 2. Types of Social Media: Advantages & Disadvantages

Social Media	Considerations for Use
<p>Social Networking Tools</p>	<p>Social networking, the broad term, encompasses wikis, blogs, LinkedIn, Facebook, and other tools.</p> <p>It is ideal for facilitating interactions between people who cannot easily meet in person due to geographic distance, or people who have difficulty identifying needed skills, resources, or other information. With just a few clicks, technology can bridge the gap between the current work climate and the one you want to foster—one in which people want to learn from each other because they trust one another.</p> <p>With its unique abilities to connect people, social networking offers exciting potential for learning solutions. Its ability to alleviate cost pressures, and the sheer variety of available tools are other compelling factors. Also, with four generations in the workplace today, technological solutions that address different learning styles deserve consideration.</p> <p>Social networking can promote decentralized decision-making and collaboration. And the relationships and connections formed can help build engagement.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Links learners before or after a formal training event. Social software can help employees share best practices, discuss obstacles and solutions to skills application, and foster collaboration. • Provides content prior to face-to-face learning event. Social networking can help learners establish a baseline of common knowledge or information before a training session so classroom time will be spent on application. • Provides links to resources related to new learning content. Social networking can reinforce learning by providing links to articles, webinars, and on-the-job examples of desired skills being applied. This can be a highly effective way to refresh and expand knowledge and it reinforces the importance of applying new skills.

Social Media	Considerations for Use
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used as a coaching and mentoring tool. Coaching and mentoring helps individuals understand how to apply newfound knowledge and skills from others with more experience. While peer-to-peer coaching and mentoring may take place without the use of technology, technology can be used to match up mentors and mentees. These relationships can be quite fluid and form and dissolve around specific issues. <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content found on social networking platforms such as blogs and wikis may vary in currency and accuracy. • It is difficult to maintain currency and accuracy of information. • Senior leadership concerns for sharing competitive information, possible use in litigation, and possible damage to brand identity. <p>The terms “online community” and “social network” are often used interchangeably.</p>
<p>Blogs, micro-blogs, and video blogs</p>	<p>More than one billion people are connected via the Internet. Blogging currently stands out as one of the most popular tools to enhance professional development.</p> <p>There are several types of blogs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blogs (text) • audio & video blogs • micro-blogs (text limited to 140 characters). <p>Blogs give individuals a voice and enable conversation to flow.</p> <p>Think of a blog as a professional journal where you can record your thoughts and ask questions of your peers.</p> <p>Each blog post has a unique identifier, called a permalink, which can be referenced by others. Blog posts support the learning process by allowing others to comment on the blog.</p> <p>Often, bloggers are not satisfied with merely typing blocks of text</p>

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or including images to share their ideas and experiences. Bloggers can now integrate audio and video capabilities into their blogs using relatively simple applications that are easy to install and use, providing readers with a richer multimedia experience.

For example, a blogger can record audio or video with a mobile device or computer and instantly post that information to their blog.

A **micro-blog** differs from traditional blogs because the content is delivered in short bursts of information. Twitter is a free micro-blogging service. Users sign up, create a profile, and begin sending short messages (140 characters or less) known as “tweets” about what they are doing or thinking. All users must be given access to view someone’s tweets. While instant messaging requires you to address others individually, blogs and micro-blogs broadcast content to an entire group of followers. Within the 140 character limit, people can ask questions, post feedback, highlight news stories, and link to items on the Internet.

Micro-blogging (also known as micro-sharing) is a powerful way to connect people for personal, professional, or corporate benefit. Enterprise-focused Twitter-like tools such as Socialcast, Socialtext, Signals, Cubetree, and Yammer are specifically designed for organizations so that they can bring micro-sharing capabilities in-house. Because they operate behind firewalls, these tools help protect confidential information and can link back to other enterprise systems.

Advantages:

- **Accelerates a learning curve by supporting learners before and after instruction.**

Many educators already use micro-blogging to create community around a class or an activity. Instructors or facilitators who have used Twitter say it is a useful back channel during and after class because they receive immediate feedback on the relevance of the instruction or meeting. After a class or workshop, WLP professionals can leverage micro-blogging to support relationships among the learners or attendees.

Trainers or facilitators can post “tips of the day,” questions,

Social Media	Considerations for Use
	<p>assignments, and other prompts to keep learners involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• Augments behavior modeling. For example, to model good workflow, a person who excels at a task or process would send out frequent updates on what they are doing. The organization might then formalize the process to the extent that it would select exemplary performers to post regularly, and pick those who should follow their posts.</p> <p>• Provides an opportunity to link learners and build communities of practice. Blogs represent an opportunity to engage others and make our thoughts known. Maintaining a blog gives users a permanent presence on the web and can serve as a jumping-off point for deeper professional discussions.</p> <p>• Provides feedback and connects to communities of practice. Learning professionals can connect to communities of practice and get informal peer review. In a community of practice, the “who” becomes greater than the sum of the parts, and knowing who to call becomes more important than having the right answer.</p> <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>• There is a possibility of criticism. Having a blog does allow for an opportunity for criticism, so learners will need to have an open attitude to learning in order for this type of media to be successful.</p> <p>• It is not a solution for all learners. Keep in mind that blogs and micro-blogs are not for everyone, and are most suited for mobile, on-the-go people who can learn anywhere.</p>
<p>Work Collaboration Tools (e.g., wikis)</p>	<p>Collaboration is something people have done their entire lives. When used by several people simultaneously, modern collaboration tools enable a shift in individual thinking about the energy and intelligence that can be produced together. The</p>

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power of collaborative content tools is in their ability to offer a single destination where people bring their ideas together, vet them with their peers, and publish them in a way that can be revised and revisited, representing multiple viewpoints.

This category of tools includes “wikis,” which are websites that allow users to edit the content of the site at any time. Beyond their service as a substitute for hard drive files, wikis are gaining momentum as training tools and as an open forum for exchange of ideas among colleagues.

For example, a wiki invites all users to edit any page or to create new pages within the wiki website, using only a web browser. This type of software fosters a more interactive approach to learning, where all users can contribute to the process.

Work collaboration tools promote meaningful topic associations. This category of social media seems to involve the visitor in an ongoing process of creation and collaboration that constantly changes the website landscape.

Advantages:

- **It is available for little to no cost.**

The real bonus for WLP professionals is the price; some wikis are free, while others only require a minimal monthly hosting fee.

- **It is easy to use and allows for quick updates.**

It supports the creation of a knowledge repository that can be used for training purposes or for response to customer queries. A defining characteristic of wiki technology is the ease with which pages can be created and updated.

- **It permits monitoring of content.**

Posting of best practices, work-arounds, and tips in a common site enables monitoring of what is being shared, which in turn, enables corrections if necessary.

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	<p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It requires a culture change. As with many other forms of social media and knowledge management, implementing web collaboration tools requires a culture change whereby employees adopt a habit of entering content regularly. Any kind of shared content, such as notes from a meeting, should be put on the wiki. If someone solves an issue—it should be posted on the web collaboration tool as well. It might be a challenge initially for employees to accept and adopt this new habit and way of interacting. • Acceptance and usage are necessary for success. Wiki technology works best if everyone is contributing and participating. Usage and widespread acceptance is contingent upon organization leaders learning about these tools and thinking creatively about their use. • It looks like raw webpage content. Because these tools often look like raw web page content, they are often easily misunderstood. The low cost is a double-edged sword as the simplicity of some tools is dismissed as unprofessional or inconsistent with a corporate image. • There is no validation that the content is accurate. Generally, there is no review before modifications are accepted. Many wikis are open to alteration by the general public without requiring them to register.
<p>Virtual Immersive Environments</p>	<p>There is a category of emerging technologies that encompass Virtual Worlds (e.g., Second Life), gaming, and simulations that have a social component and closely mirror working with someone in the same physical space. “Immersive” refers to a sense of surrounding ourselves in something, a space in which we are present.</p> <p>We can immerse ourselves in a sport, a hobby, work, or an environment. The degree of immersion is important because the more we feel like we’re in the environment, the more likely we are to feel engaged.</p>

What makes virtual immersive environments unique is that we emerge from them with real-live experiences we've actually participated in, not just imagined.

- **Virtual Worlds**—online representations of reality that you step through as you would in the physical world. They are particularly useful when people need to engage in multi-site meetings or multi-party conversations, especially when virtual cues and nonverbal communication are important. They enable a sense of being together, working together, interacting in real time, seeing one another, and sharing space.
- **Games**—multiplayer online games help players develop and exercise skills closely matching the planning, learning and technical skills increasingly needed in the workplace. Playing often requires strategic thinking, interpretive analysis, problem solving, formulating plans, team building, cooperating, and adapting to rapid change. For example, the U.S. Army offers a 3D virtual video game called *America's Army*, which lets participants crawl through obstacle courses, fire weapons, and engage in paratrooper actions—without leaving their chairs. What feels like a game is actually an army recruiting and training tool.
- **Simulations**—digital models that represent situations or a process. When a story gets wrapped around it and people are asked to do something in the simulation, you have a scenario. They provide opportunities to track decision making in realistic environments and show the repercussions of those decisions in a risk-free environment.

Advantages:

- **Learn by doing complex work in an authentic environment.**

Researchers have known for a long time that learning by doing is the most effective means of learning certain kinds of things; yet it is often hard to create a safe environment for people to learn new job roles. Some scenarios and situations are simply too expensive, dangerous, infrequent, or impractical to do in real life. In virtual environments, people

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	<p>can fail safely and create memories to improve performance when recalled later.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Play with the possibilities. Often, deep learning depends on engaging with materials in realistic environments where you can learn through trial and error. The feel of the experience becomes the basis for understanding how to excel and gain confidence to continue to a higher level. In a virtual environment you can play any role you like, regardless of who you really are. You can fail in one role, reconnect and try another one, learning from each. <p>Disadvantage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They are expensive. While instructive 2D games can be made relatively cheaply, often from templates that can be updated with the simple insertion of a new audio track, some solutions in this category can be quite expensive. To combat this perception, many developers of 3D purport that technology advances will improve efficiencies through scalability, lowering the cost-per-student price. The cost of virtual technologies ranges dramatically from being practically free to requiring significant investments of time, resources, and money.
<p>Mobile/ Location-Based Technologies (e.g., Smartphones, Tablets, Netbooks, Mobile Applications, etc.)</p>	<p>This category of social media includes mobile applications, also known as “downloadables,” which are common on most phones, including inexpensive models. Their wide use is due to the many functions they perform, including providing user interfaces for basic telephony and messaging services, as well as for advanced services such as games and videos, downloading and reading blogs, and more.</p> <p>A geographically dispersed business might have a community of practice in several functions. Everyone uses a geo-locator app that allows all users to see, for example, that an expert in a particular function “checked in” at a given location. If it is nearby, users can then contact each other to meet for lunch or shadow on a job task, making these applications a good way to build relationships and/or share knowledge.</p> <p>Mobile applications have evolved to the point that they now give users a rich and fast user experience. For example, the U.S.</p>

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	<p>Army is piloting a program using iPhones as mobile devices with tailored applications for learners to continue learning after leaving the classroom.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning is not location dependent. The learning experience can continue outside of the classroom or in place of it altogether. • It is cost effective. Digital media eliminates the expense of reproducing class materials. <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology is still in the infancy stage, and development of custom applications may be expensive. Since social media is emerging as a viable option for training, development of custom applications may be cost prohibitive.
<p>Shared Media (e.g., Audio and Video)</p>	<p>Media sharing is more than a tool or a broadcast medium, and is more than the multimedia CD-ROMs of years past. It's a way to foster interaction and sociability, and is another way to cultivate community—one that extends to co-workers, partners, suppliers, customers, and other people interacting in the workplace.</p> <p>What was once sent out on audiocassettes, videotapes, and CD-ROMs/DVDs is now downloaded directly off the web, a key difference. Production tools are easier to use, and the ability to distribute a wide variety of audiovisual material over the Internet has made the podcast and all its cousins (e.g., vod-casts, etc.) extremely popular and far less costly than past approaches.</p> <p>Media sharing encourages and enables a community where people can see and learn from one another and get contributions from everyone—changing the perception of what a knowledgebase is.</p> <p>For example, video messages that include the option for viewers to comment help bridge the gap between the organization's leaders and the larger ecosystem.</p>

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	<p>People can provide feedback, ask questions, and send their own videos through the platform's commenting, tagging, and sharing features.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is cost effective. The advent of podcasts and videocasts has made the use of audio and video much more cost effective and prevalent. <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology is not often used. Why? A number of factors must be considered, including equipment, logistics, and extra time and cost. Even with compression techniques that make audio and video as small as possible while maintaining sound and image quality, network resources are often strained by using audio and video. <p>When incorporating sound or images in e-learning instruction, WLP professionals must also be aware of copyright issues.</p>
<p>Social Bookmarking (e.g., Digg, Reddit, etc.)</p>	<p>Allows users to share, organize, and search for bookmarks of web resources. In a social bookmarking system, users save links to web pages that they want to remember and/or share. These bookmarks are usually public, and can be saved privately, shared only with specified people or groups, shared only inside certain networks, or used in a combination of public and private domains. The people with access can usually view these bookmarks chronologically, by category or tags, or via a search engine.</p> <p>As these services have matured and grown more popular, they have added extra features, such as ratings and comments on bookmarks, the ability to import and export bookmarks from browsers, emailing of bookmarks, web annotation, or other social network features.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces time searching for information. Users can save a favorite web page or website to reduce the time spent on searching for them, as well as collaboratively

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	<p>share these pages and sites with other Internet users. Social bookmarking websites can assist in categorizing pages and links, and in determining if a particular site is useful or not through a decision made by the community.</p> <p>For example, any user can share a bookmark, and the larger community makes a collaborative decision whether that bookmark is useful or not. This helps make it easier for other users to navigate through large amounts of web-based information.</p> <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a lack of standards. Most social bookmarking services do not have set standards for establishing keywords—that is, defined terms and vocabulary used. This can create a problem since people rely on searching for information using key words and this practice is susceptible to mistagging—for example, if someone misspells words, uses key words that have multiple meanings, or uses jargon or other personalized tags.
<p>Shared Workspaces</p>	<p>A shared workspace is an inter-connected environment where participants in dispersed locations can access information and interact. Shared workspaces represent the most commonly used work-related function. Some examples include Microsoft SharePoint and Google Docs.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is easy to use and convenient. A shared workspace site is often considered the most convenient way for a group to work together on documents and projects. Shared workspaces enable users to post documents in which all members of the team who have “access” can view and share documents, make updates, make comments, maintain lists of tasks, and share related websites. They're a great alternative to using email attachments and file shares to collaborate on files. <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistency can result in naming conventions and where information is stored.

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	<p>Since a shared workspace can consist of folders, sub-folders, documents, and so on, the ease of using a shared site depends on how the group started it. If there was not agreement or consensus regarding the hierarchy of folders and consistent naming conventions of documents, it can be difficult for users to quickly search for and find what they're looking for.</p>
<p>Peer Rating Tools (e.g., Amazon.com ratings)</p>	<p>Think about any website where you've purchased an item, for example, from Amazon.com. When making your purchase, did the site enable you to see the number of "stars" that previous purchasers or users gave an item? Did the site allow you to post or read reviews from others? Did you have the option to answer questions and indicate if you agreed or disagreed?</p> <p>Many websites, social networks, and other types of social media enable users to search for and gather input from others based on various integrated "peer rating tools."</p> <p>Yelp is a popular social networking and review site where users rate and comment on local restaurants. Younger generations are accustomed to relying on user input on sites such as rateyourprofessor.com to decide everything from where to have fish tacos to which professors to avoid at college.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps identify the most valuable information. When combined with other user-generated content such as blogs or video sharing, peer rating can help identify the most valuable information, or the best responses to a question. Peer ratings applied to reviews/comments (e.g., "Was this review helpful to you?") can be used to show the "best" responses first, reducing search time for the user. <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates a bias. Small numbers of ratings can be skewed by uninformed or biased users.

Social Media	Considerations for Use
<p>Synchronous and Asynchronous Communication Tools</p>	<p>Synchronous communication tools include applications used for live webcasts where a group is actively participating and communicating in real-time. Methods include audio and video, using chat panels, white boards, and polling questions.</p> <p>Asynchronous communication tools include those that support message boards and threaded discussions. As a user, I can post a question but there may be a delay in receiving responses from others.</p> <p>Advantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitates collaboration. Newer synchronous communication tools allow for virtual breakout groups which enables group interactivity • They are economical. When planned and executed well, synchronous communication tools can be an acceptable substitute for a face-to-face interaction, saving significant travel and costs accrued from time away from the office. <p>Disadvantages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires planning and excellent facilitation skills. There is significant planning as well as skilled facilitation required to make synchronous communication tools effective, such as planning to use polling tools or chat responses. Simply presenting a PowerPoint slideshow and acting as if everyone is in the same room is a recipe for disaster. • Limits spontaneous interaction. Most synchronous events require muting phone lines and other similar steps that eliminate any possibility of spontaneous interaction, which is frequently the source of rich discussion in a face-to-face event.

In the Real World: Micro-Blogging Case Study

The Mayo Clinic is the first and largest not-for-profit medical practice in the world, employing 57,000 physicians, scientists, researchers, allied health professionals, and residents. The world-class staff's aim is to create a culture of collaboration with social media. The idea came about when a radiologist saw something on an x-ray that he had never seen before and asked, via the Mayo Clinic's internal microsharing network, how microsharing could be used clinically. His question led to the formation of a three-person team—all colleagues who'd never met before—that collaborated to write a proposal to study how to do microsharing well, and never met in person until the project was approved and funded. The entire scope of the project planning—from inception to launch—was done via microsharing. There were no face-to-face meetings, no email, no phone calls, texts, or file attachments. And all of it was accomplished in three weeks.

Techniques for Overcoming Organizational Challenges

According to a study undertaken by ASTD Research in 2010, most organizations have yet to implement social media policies. The lack of policy implementation mirrors the lack of policy adoption. It's important for organizations that use learning technologies to have policies in place governing their use. The Study found that respondents from high-performing organizations were slightly more likely to have policies in place than low-performing organizations. Also, companies whose employees derived more benefits from social media were also more likely to have policies in place.

This underscores the beneficial impact that a formal plan can have. If adoption outpaces policy implementation, then social learning tools are likely to provide little or no benefit, and they might even be detrimental to the learning function.

When considering whether to implement social media within an organization, it's often helpful to assess the readiness of the organization as well as determine if some internal functions are already leveraging social media—thus making the adoption that much easier.

This is a key theme when studying the challenges that WLP professionals encounter when trying to champion and implement social media and social learning initiatives within their organizations. Why does this happen?

Organizational leaders are often resistant to the idea of “social learning,” which makes it difficult to create an effective policy. Part of the difficulty is the word “social,” which often suggests “socializing” and can give the connotation of “wasting time.” Also, many leaders are afraid of losing control of organizational messages.

To assess if social media might be a good fit to augment the learning strategy, consider if the organization has:

- geographically-dispersed employees
- a learning strategy that promotes on-the-job development

- the need to foster cross-functional collaboration
- a significant employee population from the millennial generation
- business priorities that require synchronized teams
- a need for sharing knowledge quickly
- an increased emphasis on innovation
- an appetite for experimentation
- a culture that supports decentralized decision making.

If the organization meets a large number of the requirements listed above and possesses these qualities, this indicates a high level of readiness to implement social media to support social learning.

To help overcome organizational challenges, WLP professionals should focus on understanding the barriers and obstacles to implementing social learning, influencing others, and increasing user adoption.

Barriers and Obstacles to Implementing Social Learning in an Organization

A key to overcoming organizational challenges involves understanding the main arguments to implementing and encouraging use of social media in the workplace. Some of the most common obstacles to implementing social media and ways to address follow in Table 3.

Table 3. Overcoming Social Media Challenges in Organizations

Challenge	Obstacles & Ways to Address
Security and Privacy Issues	<p>Obstacle: “These systems compromise classified or private information. Social media is effective, but primarily for socializing, which could lead to lawsuits (e.g., sexual harassment).”</p> <p>Strategy 1: Provide a venue and guidelines. Information about an organization seeps out when people talk in restaurants over lunch, or speak on a mobile phone while waiting in line at the post office. WLP professionals should work with their organizations to provide venues where people can share peer to peer and be accountable. In these situations, the best information rises to the top because many people have rated it as useful. Different voices can weigh in and revise incorrect information. Rather than aim for control (which is elusive), expand the circle of trust.</p> <p>For example, organizations such as the U.S. Central Intelligence</p>

Challenge	Obstacles & Ways to Address
	<p>Agency (CIA), Wells Fargo, and the Mayo Clinic use social media widely even though their data is very sensitive. Rather than pronounce this new approach unfit for their environments, they practice good governance. They remind people to participate in online information-sharing communities with a full understanding that they bear responsibility for protecting proprietary, sensitive, or classified details.</p>
<p>Organizational Culture</p>	<p>Obstacle: “We’ve never done it that way. Our organization will never embrace social media. Social media can’t be governed and it’s against our compliance rules.”</p> <p>When you try to implement a new strategy that counters the corporate culture—the corporate culture will push back and almost always win. This type of challenge is often identified when leaders and employees say, “We’ve never done it that way.” This attitude represents a fear of something new. Cultures may be more resistant to adoption if they are less technologically-dependent, or if the organizations are more hierarchical. Demographics, such as generational differences, may also play a role in this dynamic.</p> <p>Consider the following strategies in this situation.</p> <p>Strategy 1: Start by implementing social media with simple rules.</p> <p>Rather than start with a large, heavy-handed policy condemning the use of social media, put in place simple rules stating when people should use which tool to communicate, create, or share specific types of information. Make it easier for people to classify information they create. Specify which data and content are appropriate for what use—especially use within the organization.</p> <p>Strategy 2: Ease into usage.</p> <p>Organizations often ease into using social media by adopting an enterprise tool that can be implemented for free, or employees may be encouraged to comment on company blogs or to blog on their own. Embracing social media for learning is a process of adopting and adapting. Begin where the company is and build it so that it suits the culture and environment. Just don’t quash social media because some people don’t understand it. Learn from those who do.</p>

Challenge	Obstacles & Ways to Address
<p>Written Organizational Policies</p>	<p>Obstacle: “People will say inappropriate things. Off-message communications will lead to communications that are inconsistent with the marketing and image that the organization wants to convey.”</p> <p>The first two concerns listed in this table often feed into this third major barrier—where organizational written policies prohibit or limit the use of social media. As a result, WLP professionals will need to move outside their comfort zone and work with legal and IT departments to move their organization in a direction that embraces social media.</p> <p>Some strategies to combat this barrier include:</p> <p>Strategy 1: Provide input into relevant organizational policies. To help organizations implement and encourage use of social media, WLP professionals can help to shape written organizational policies by getting involved with the human resources department. They can also help to encourage acceptance and usage of these tools internally by working across organizational boundaries—for example by working with both the HR department and legal counsel to craft policies and procedures.</p> <p>Strategy 2: Maintain governance and compliance. Social tools are often held to higher standards than traditional business tools because they are new, and negative stories can go viral quickly. Rather than ban the use of social tools, educate people how to use them effectively for work. They are the future of collaboration and learning at work, so the more you prepare people for how to use the tools respectfully and how to apply good social practices, the better.</p> <p>Strategy 3: Put forth regulations. Regulated industries have guidelines for all other forms of communication that may be distributed internally and externally; one example is email. WLP professionals should consider partnering with marketing or HR departments that are responsible for crafting corporate communications policies and guidelines to help champion the appropriate use of social media within the</p>

Challenge	Obstacles & Ways to Address
	organization and provide input and training regarding the appropriate usage guidelines for each.

Strategies for Influencing Individuals and Building Comfort with Social Media

People who use social media at work cite that the top three benefits of using social media include: finding resources more easily, improving knowledge sharing, and enhancing communications.

According to an ASTD study, *The Rise of Social Media: Enhancing Collaboration and Productivity Across Generations* (2010), respondents indicated that they find wikis, podcasts, and shared workspaces provide the most value. Although overall usage for social media for work-related learning is still relatively low, workers clearly see value in it.

While use of the tools for learning is not widespread, a clear value exists. Once senior leadership has bought into the value of social learning tools within an organization, the next challenge is to increase the number of users who leverage these tools, by influencing individuals and developing strategies to build comfort with these tools.

Table 4, Strategies to Influence Others, outlines some strategies to consider when trying to influence others and increase adoption of social media within an organization.

Table 4. Strategies to Influence Others

Strategy	Description
Find Opportunities and Frame Social Media Benefits	<p>When a new process is introduced, there is a tendency to focus on what can't be done rather than what can. One of the largest roadblocks to getting started with social media and online communities is battling those individuals who feel these tools have little or no value.</p> <p>To help combat that objection, look for opportunities to leverage social media to address issues that the organization needs to solve. Organizations generally recognize the power of increased collaboration rather than "stove pipe" processes.</p> <p>For example, see the <i>In the Real World: Micro-Blogging Case Study</i> in this chapter.</p> <p>Identify an issue and perhaps work with a small group of peers to leverage some form of social media to resolve the issue. By piloting and showing the value of how the technology can be a strategic asset to the organization, you can not only help to frame your business case, but you'll have success stories to share to pique interest and frame the case for social learning in a</p>

Strategy	Description
	<p>more positive light.</p> <p>In addition, when planning and implementing social media, get employees involved, for example, in discussing how the tool needs to work for the user. Some recommendations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the tool easy for everyone, not just the tech-savvy. • Build it to mimic the way people communicate by asking questions and answers. • Don't worry about making it perfect technologically. • Keep it simple. Some people are still afraid to use wikis, blogs, and other social media because they are complicated. • Don't make it part of a larger system; it will lose its meaning and people will not adopt it. • Communicate to employees exactly what it's for.
<p>Demonstrate Cost Effectiveness</p>	<p>In tough economic times, some people seem to become critical of every activity, even those generating energy required for success. In large part, innovation and learning comes from the little moments between the activities previously thought of as “real” work.</p> <p>Many social learning tools are freely available online, deferring many of the direct costs typically associated with formal learning initiatives. The indirect costs can also be deferred if the new process increases efficiencies where none existed before.</p>
<p>Foster Trust</p>	<p>Trust in any relationship—organizational or personal—is earned over time through actions. People require some level of trust before they are willing or able to learn something from another person. Each of us seeks ways to determine if we can trust the people we work with enough to count on what they share.</p> <p>The factors that contribute to an effective learning culture, such as the free exchange of ideas, are also critical to the effective use of social learning. For that reason, it is critical for WLP professionals to increase trust and encourage participation among the users of social learning tools, because an online community fosters relationships with people across multiple service lines, geographic locations, and affiliations.</p>

Strategy	Description
	<p>These tools enable employees to build and earn trust with people who they may not know or have encountered before. Sociologists have researched trust in communities extensively. They have identified that ongoing positive interaction, getting a sense of “someone’s identity,” and noting people’s opinions of others are key ways to gain trust.</p> <p>In online communities within organizations, there is no “friends” list. There are no anonymous posts. All conversations are open to all users and people are accountable for their entries because everyone can see them. This accountability fosters trust because it demands honesty, and it decreases the risk of hostile or negative comments.</p> <p>A core capability of any online community is its member profiles. Viewing a person’s profile should essentially provide the same feel as visiting his or her office—complete with pictures on the desk and certifications and awards on the wall.</p>
<p>Adapt Communications to Different Audiences</p>	<p>Today, networks of knowledgeable people, working across time and space, can make informed decisions and solve complex problems in ways they didn’t dream of years ago.</p> <p>When trying to gain support for and institutionalize social media and social learning within an organization, it is important to ensure that your communication targets workers from all three generations, and emphasizes the power of social media tools for learning. Different audiences require different arguments to appeal to the “what’s in it for me” attitude regarding the benefits of social learning. For example, employees from the Boomer generation who are more concerned with security issues may be persuaded by efforts to keep social learning interactions private within the confines of the organization.</p> <p>To really understand the power of informal learning, WLP professionals need to understand the key driver for it: the Millennial generation, born between 1977 and 1997. Research shows that members of the Millennial generation are more likely than older generations to rate social media tools as helpful in the workplace.</p> <p>One important trend in social learning is the changing</p>

Strategy	Description
	<p>composition of the workforce. Estimates in the United States suggest that members of the Millennial generation will potentially make up a whopping 47 percent of the workforce in 2014.</p> <p>Some questions you may want to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are they different from previous generations? • What do they value, how do they use technology, how do they communicate, how do they learn, and how do they get things done? • How are they changing the workplace? <p>As WLP professionals, we must adapt the learning environment and communications to support all generations—but especially the Millennials—to recruit, engage, retain, and develop these individuals.</p> <p>A key approach is to employ the tools and technologies with which they're most comfortable, and apply them to their collaborative styles. ASTD's research study, <i>The Rise of Social Media</i>, found that Millennials were the largest consumers of social media for work and personal use. More than 50 percent of Millennials—higher than Baby Boomers and members of Generation X combined—said that social media tools help them get more done, get better work done, learn more in less time, and learn truly useful things.</p>
<p>Understand the Bottom-Up Nature of Social Learning</p>	<p>Many organizations take a phased approach when it comes to implementing and increasing acceptance and use of the tools from all ranks within the company. It may take many months to begin building momentum in early stages to a point whereby all staff members are encouraged to use and add content regularly.</p> <p>To begin this cultural transformation, one CEO advised the IT department who was developing the tool not to focus initially on its appearance when implementing a wiki. The emphasis should be placed on building awareness throughout the office—and some staff members were tapped as “champions” responsible for building and encouraging interest. They promoted its use during daily staff meetings.</p> <p>The rationale for this approach? The CEO felt that there wasn't a</p>

Strategy	Description
	<p>need to focus on great design because it didn't matter to the initial users. They focused rather on encouraging early adoption, and chose to invest in the design to enhance the experience for users only after they had a critical mass.</p> <p>To help encourage early adoption of new technologies that often requires a cultural change, consider turning a wiki or shared workspace into a universal tool, whereby staff members adopt a habit of entering content regularly.</p> <p>Any kind of shared content, such as notes from a staff meeting or a project, should be put on the wiki or shared workspace. If someone solves a vexing issue with a client, the solution should also be entered to help populate content and show the value of shared organizational knowledge that's supported by these various types of social media.</p> <p>Most of the research on best practices in social learning suggests that when implementing it, WLP professionals should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • start slowly • find an executive sponsor • identify a department or area that is highly interested in it (participation is key) • partner with IT or compliance, especially if you're in a regulated industry • use the low cost software tools available today • govern lightly. <p>Keep in mind that acceptance, adoption, and regular usage of social media within an organization does not only come from the bottom-up, but you also need buy-in from senior management and the frontline adopters in order to achieve success.</p>

Approaches for User Adoption

So how do you get individual users to buy-in and begin using social media at work? When you talk with pockets of individuals who are resistant to change and acceptance of new social learning tools, you're often met with some of the following objections:

- I don't have time.
- I can't participate because my company blocks it.

- It's only for young people.
- It's overwhelming.
- I don't know how to use it.

To help address the objections posed by individual users, even the most security-conscious organizations can bring these capabilities in-house; CEOs and industry leaders of all ages are beginning to use social learning to open dialogues within their organizations, throughout enterprises, and with potential customers.

According to the study, *The Rise of Social Media*, conducted by ASTD Research in 2010, Millennials are more likely to visit organizations that have online communities, than are Generation X and the Baby Boomers. Once on the site, Millennials are also more likely to post a blog or a video than the other generations.

Getting users to contribute is key. A great example of a company getting veterans to share knowledge with younger workers is Citi, where there is a space for alumni of the leadership development program to go and share their experiences, whether through blogs or answering discussion questions. People new to the program can then go to this site and gain insight from those who have gone before them.

To help encourage individual adoption by users within an organization, consider the strategies outlined in Table 5.

Table 5. Overcoming Individual Objections to Social Media

Challenge	Obstacles & Ways to Address
User Adoption & Usage	<p>Obstacle: “I don’t have anything to say or contribute.”</p> <p>Once senior leaders in an organization buy-in and support social learning, the biggest challenge that WLP professionals face is determining how to encourage users to adopt the new systems and integrate them into their work.</p> <p>No matter which forms of social media an organization is implementing, if users aren’t going to participate, then the media is likely to hit some speed bumps or die on the vine. WLP professionals can help to encourage user adoption in two key ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by actively managing networks • by encouraging user contribution and participation. <p>To accomplish these goals, many organizations install social media software that allows employees to ask and answer questions quickly and easily.</p> <p>Actively manage networks and encourage participation by seeding</p>

Challenge	Obstacles & Ways to Address
	<p>the system with questions and answers for the first few months by selecting some people to “overuse it.” Selecting advocates or champions to populate the system with information helps move questions along and gives the inference engine something to work with.</p> <p>It’s also recommended to have the launch team, advocates, and champions lead by example by filling out their profiles quickly and using the system appropriately. Encouraging managers and leaders to use the system also helps to build support for the tools within all ranks for the organization.</p> <p>If you find adoption to be somewhat slow, and people aren’t joining groups or filling out profiles, then use the system’s metrics to diagnose the health of the community. You might want to reinforce or push the desired behaviors with specific communications to certain groups.</p> <p>When implementing any new social media tool, there are bound to be bumps in the road. One organization found that people wouldn’t complete their profiles if they didn’t have a picture to upload. The solution? They set up a photo station to take photos and help users to upload their photos.</p> <p>To encourage new users of social learning tools, consider recommending that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • post regularly • keep posts short • follow carefully and search for people and topics of interest • go mobile so that they can have the freedom to post any time • engage in the experience by responding and contributing to others’ posts • be genuine (be themselves).

Summary

Our inherent drive to learn together can be facilitated through emerging technologies that extend, widen, and deepen our reach. More than any other technology, social media allows us to embrace the needs of changing workplace demographics and enables people of all ages to learn in ways that are comfortable and convenient for them. Social learning helps people become more informed, gain a wider perspective, and be able to make better decisions by collaborating with others.

While many organizations struggle with getting all of the collective knowledge of a group into one place, social learning now paves the way for collaboration instead of relying on conversations that happen in the break room or by the water cooler—hopefully they can rely on them happening via social media.

As with any other learning initiative, the business case has to be made for its use. For example, social learning can be used as a “catalyst” of formal learning to encourage transfer to the job. Pointing out that other organizations are using social learning to enhance business performance is also effective. Framing these programs as value added to existing programs provides an even more compelling case for their use.

In summary, for organizations that wish to use social media tools more effectively, keep the following options in mind:

- Consider the following tools since they are most strongly associated with reported learning and productivity success: shared workspaces, blogs, shared media, wikis, and social networks.
- Stress that these tools can help employees to find resources more easily and improve knowledge sharing. That is, they are excellent for helping employees to “learn on the fly” as they’re trying to be productive.
- Use these tools for collaboration and informal learning opportunities, helping people gain knowledge directly from one another rather than relying on more conventional learning techniques. Learning professionals should use these tools in ways that complement other learning practices such as coursework.
- Enable experts to use social media tools to teach others how to use them. These may be younger employees who have grown up with these tools and know how to leverage them in sophisticated ways to boost their own productivity.
- Find early adopters within the organization to help champion the use of new technologies.
- Encourage the use of these tools on the job where they can aid productivity. Collaborative tools are only useful when there are people to collaborate with. This is especially true with veteran workers who may possess vast amounts of knowledge but lack the desire to use new tools to share that knowledge.

Glossary

Collaborative learning tools—software, platforms, or services that enable people at different locations to communicate and work with each other in a secure, self-contained environment.

Informal learning—learning activities that are not easily recognizable as formal training or performance support. Informal learning generally takes place without a conventional instructor. It is employee-controlled in terms of breadth, depth, and timing. It does not usually include activities such as organized classes, workshops, and conventional job aids.

Immersive learning—learning that occurs when we surround ourselves in something. See also *virtual immersive environment*.

Learning environment—physical or virtual setting in which learning takes place.

Learning technologies—a wide set of applications and processes that aid learning and collaboration, including online communities, asynchronous web-based courseware, virtual classrooms, and social media tools such as microsharing and crowdsourcing applications.

Microsharing tools—social software that enables people to update others through short bursts of text, links, and multimedia. Messages sent this way typically cannot exceed 140 characters (for example, Twitter).

Shared workspace—a commonly used work-related tool that enables participants in dispersed locations to interact and access the same information/content (typically simultaneously) in order to collaborate about ideas. May include capabilities for document management, application sharing, presentation development and delivery, white boarding, chat, and more.

Social learning—uses software to build online communities of people who share interests and activities; services are primarily web-based and provide multiple ways for users to interact, such as chat, messaging, email, video, file sharing, blogging, discussion groups, and so forth.

Social media—a set of Internet-based technologies used to engage three or more people.

Virtual immersive environment—a category of emerging technologies that encompass games, simulations, and virtual worlds (for example, Second Life), have a social component, and closely mirror working or behaving in the same physical space. Immersive refers to a sense of being surrounded and engaged in a virtual community.

✓ Knowledge Check

1. A WLP professional is planning to leverage social media to support social learning within an organization. When building the business case, all of the following are examples of how social media can support learning except:
 - a. gathering and sharing information and resources from internal and external collaborative networks
 - b. enabling learners to generate their own learning content either formally or informally
 - c. leveraging the collective knowledge both internal or external to an organization
 - d. discussing a topic in a one-on-one conversation with a peer

2. Which of the following social learning tools is best described as content delivered in short bursts of information and is limited to 140 characters or less?
 - a. audio & video blogs
 - b. social networks
 - c. micro-blogs
 - d. social bookmarking

3. A WLP professional is presenting a business case for using social media to enhance social learning within the organization. During the presentation, several senior managers challenge the viability of using social media by saying “These systems compromise proprietary information.” The key issue they are raising is best described as:
 - a. organizational culture issues
 - b. security & privacy issues
 - c. written organizational policy issues
 - d. user adoption issues

4. A WLP professional has cleared the first hurdle to getting social media implemented within the organization as senior management has signed off on the project and she’s been given funding to work with the IT department on the initiative. The next hurdle she faces is in influencing others and building comfort with social media. All of the following are strategies she should consider employing except:
 - a. finding opportunities to leverage social media to solve a business problem and framing social media benefits for users
 - b. fostering trust
 - c. demonstrating cost effectiveness
 - d. focusing communications on members of the Millennial generation since they are the primary target audience for using social media

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Answer Key

1. A WLP professional is planning to leverage social media to support social learning within an organization. When building the business case, all of the following are examples of how social media can support learning except:
 - d. discussing a topic in a one-on-one conversation with a peer

2. Which of the following social learning tools is best described as content delivered in short bursts of information and is limited to 140 characters or less?
 - c. micro-blogs

3. A WLP professional is presenting a business case for using social media to enhance social learning within the organization. During the presentation, several senior managers challenge the viability of using social media by saying “These systems compromise proprietary information.” The key issue they are raising is best described as:
 - b. security & privacy issues

4. A WLP professional has cleared the first hurdle to getting social media implemented within the organization as senior management has signed off on the project and she’s been given funding to work with the IT department on the initiative. The next hurdle she faces is in influencing others and building comfort with social media. All of the following are strategies she should consider employing except:
 - d. focusing communications on members of the Millennial generation since they are the primary target audience for using social media