

m-Learning and Mobility

Daniela Vieira[♦], Marketing & Innovation Director, Wilson Learning Portugal

New technologies are assuming more and more an increasingly importance concerning the different experiences and approaches to organizational learning. No matter the industry or sector of activity, many organizations adopted the e-learning as privileged learning format to grant training and development to its employees. At the same time, the b-learning or blended learning – a kind of learning which combines the traditional and online training – has been gathering more and more supporters.



Following the evolution between new technologies and organizational learning, emerged the concept of learning with mobility – *mobile learning or m-learning*. The m-learning consists in the use of mobile devices such as mobile phones, pda, pocket pc or laptops, in the teaching and learning process.

In fact, the mobile phone is no longer just a mean of communication and has become an utility. Nowadays its function goes beyond the aim of its creation. In its original format the mobile phone worked exclusively with voice, but with transition to data there was a change of paradigm because people could be able to access solutions that were not initially available by this mean.

At the same time, companies belonging to the mobile industry – that are growing well against the global economical tendency – are looking for new ways to provide services to its customers.

Mobile learning appears as a tool of follow up and skills integration into daily activities. Besides, the introduction of new and innovative methods of learning gives a quick and just-in-time answer to the needs of information and training of today's professionals.

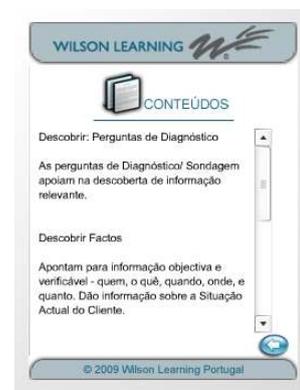
[♦] Corresponding Author: Daniela Vieira, Wilson Learning Portugal, Rua Fonte de Maio n.º 37, 1.º, 2770-065 Paço de Arcos, Portugal, Tel.: +351214400410, e-mail: daniela.vieira@wilsonlearning.com.pt

As it has 3 essential features – mobility, accessibility and commodity –m-learning is highly recommended to the Organizations that have sales forces distributed geographically, “mobile” or “field” professionals, etc. m-learning process allows for the quick, easy and practical access to structured and organized information in order to accomplish specific needs of each group of participants.

It is a mean (vehicle) of information that helps to optimize time and effort dedicated to skills development, due to its mobility, accessibility and commodity, and by being accessible in places where computers are not practical, during travel, in spare moments, etc.

The way we return m-learning to our customers is translated into the availability of small units of knowledge that allow participants to consolidate learning and perform practical activities in the field. Above all, m-learning is a way of skills reinforcement and knowledge integration.

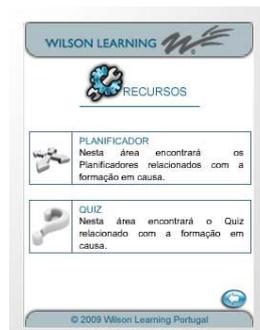
Due to diversity and constant development of mobile devices, the creation of efficient and practical contents to m-learning depends mainly on the selection of better training strategies. How contents are organized and displayed demands a design adaptation to this new format, to the learning needs, to the type of the technology available, to accumulated knowledge about new technologies and to the training formats in use by organizations.



This type of learning considers two different approaches. For instance: participants who select information they want to receive and participants who interact with a tutor/facilitator. The later support a development regarding individual plans and daily skills integration, that is, a more collaborative vision of support by mentoring and coaching strategies.

The participants’ access to the information in *user friendly* environments, where contents are available as summaries, schemes, job aids, mini-tests,... makes information easily apprehensible.

Wilson Learning* provides a portal where customers can access to the information related to m-learning and b-learning releases. At this portal the participants can download contents regarding their résumés and benefit from de reinforcement and *follow-up on-going*.



To conclude, we must state that innovation is more and more a key for distinction. As m-learning is an innovation, concerning organizational skills development, the future will certainly bring the adoption of these new approaches. We evolved from distance

learning to e-learning, and today we're observing a technological evolution that dictates which formats will prevail.

* **Wilson Learning** (www.wilsonlearning.com.pt) is a consulting company in HR and training, with given proofs in implementation of strategic Projects of organizational development. Wilson Learning engages itself to help organizations to develop and train their teams with surgical skills, allowing them to create value added to organizations and their customers.