

Finding the Right Platform for Your Design | A Checklist of Features

The most important feature for your platform is that it is relatively easy and pleasant for your learners to access – and for you to manage. Beyond this user experience, there are several key features you'll want to keep in mind as you narrow your decision on a platform. Use the checklist below to think through your priorities. See page 2 for brief definitions of key terms, if helpful.

Do you want / need...	If so, look for an LMS with...
<input type="checkbox"/> to see who is accessing your course and assess learners' progress?	Tracking and reporting
<input type="checkbox"/> learners to get certifications or badges for course completion?	Assessment and testing tools
<input type="checkbox"/> to assess learning transfer?	
<input type="checkbox"/> collaboration among learners and/or facilitator?	Collaborative features (e.g. video chat, web conferencing, message boards)
<input type="checkbox"/> learners to access your course on any device (tablets, smart phones, computers)?	Responsive design with multiple devices
<input type="checkbox"/> to craft a variety of interactions and experiences for learners (to help move through complicated material)?	Content creation options
<input type="checkbox"/> to incorporate your brand identity?	Customizable branding
<input type="checkbox"/> to upload interactive content and access more sophisticated reporting + tracking features?	SCORM or xAPI compliance
<input type="checkbox"/> to charge a fee for your course?	E-commerce integration

Once you've thought through your key design decisions, and this list of features, you are ready to compare platform possibilities – and maybe even confirm the one you want to try for this design.

Definitions

Collaborative Features – These include video chat or webinar services (Zoom, WebEx, Skype, Facebook Messenger, Google chat, etc.) and message boards or chat rooms.

E-Commerce Integration – This is a feature that allows you to sell products through your LMS, typically through another service such as PayPal, Square, or Stripe. You'd look for this feature in an LMS if you are intending to charge for your course.

Responsive Design – This ensures that your online content shows up well on any device – a computer/laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

SCORM Compliance – This standardizes the way in which courses are created, and how they're launched. LMSs and authoring tools may be built with this specification in mind and as a result these tools work well with each other. An analogy is the USB port – that's a standardized specification that many technical hardware makers abide by, so all of your products work with each other easily.

Experience API (xAPI) – xAPI is a software specification that allows learning content and learning systems to speak to each other in a manner that records and tracks all types of learning experiences, including games, simulations, team-based learning and real-world learning. It is the next generation of SCORM.