

# Getting started with Authoring Tools

An overview of proprietary and open-source software



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# Introduction

What are authoring tools? What types of tools are available? How difficult are they?

## WHAT ARE AUTHORIZING TOOLS?

The term authoring tool refers to a software or program used by trainers and instructional designers to create e-Learning courseware. These tools enable trainers to integrate a wide range of media (e.g. text, graphics, audio, video) to create interactive training content and to produce attractive and useful graphic applications. Authoring tools allow non-programmers to easily create multimedia content.

## WHO USES AUTHORIZING TOOLS?

Not long ago, to produce e-Learning courseware it was necessary for a team of individuals of distinct skills to work together. Instructional designers would work with subject matter experts to create an analysis document and a design document, and then storyboard each and every screen they needed to build. Programmers or developers would make it all work on a particular software, while media specialists produced audio, video, images, and animations. Now there are authoring tools available that make this production process quicker.

Many of the authoring tools available on the market target instructional designers or subject matter experts. The tools have become simpler and easier to use, the graphics have been enhanced. They are less technical and don't require programming knowledge. These rapid authoring tools enable the development of highly interactive and media-rich content. The average time to create one hour seat time learning is around 15 to 20 hours, half of what it would take with the previous processes.

## FITTING THE DESIGN INTO THE TOOL

The advantage of many of these rapid authoring tools is that they make it possible to create e-Learning lessons faster and more easily than in the past. However, one needs to consider that it is not the technology per se that will create an effective course; an effective design is what will make the difference in producing the expected results of a particular course. Thus, the ideal approach is to combine a good tool with an efficient

***It is an effective design that will make a difference in producing good courseware. An authoring tool facilitates your work in getting there.***

instructional design strategy to accomplish an e-Learning course that will produce the planned results.

## COMBINING TOOLS

Combining authoring tools is required at times, depending on the planned output. So, it makes sense that you choose tools whose features complement each other. For example, a tool that permits the merging of different outputs to be integrated into another - making the process seamless to the learner - would certainly give you flexibility to manage your work.

# Types of tools

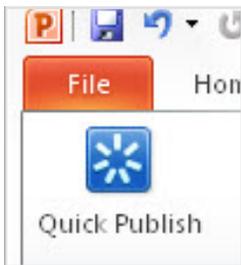
There are different types of authoring tools. They can be categorized as desktop authoring tools, powerpoint-plugin tools, web-based authoring tools and complementary tools.



## Desktop authoring tools

Installed on your desktop, these tools are generally more complex to use than other types of tools but they give you more control over style and interactions.

Examples of these tools include **Adobe Captivate**, **Lectora**, and **Articulate Storyline**.



## Powerpoint plugin authoring tools

These tools use Powerpoint as the authoring environment. They allow you to add interactivity and assessments and to publish your content packaged ready to track in a learning management system. These are very easy to use.

The most popular tool is **Articulate Studio**.



## Web-based tools

These tools are hosted on an external server and are typically accessed via a web browser. These tools are very easy to use and they manage your files, perform updates and maintain content. They are also good at workflow processes and allowing subject matter experts to review and comment on e-Learning modules as they are developed. They are particularly good for large and dispersed teams to work together on content development.

Examples of these tools include **ZebraZapps**, **Adobe Connect** or **easygenerator**.



## Complementary tools

These tools may be helpful to create and add graphics, videos, animations and quizzes to your e-Learning courses.

Examples: **Raptivity** or **Camtasia**.

# Different tools produce content differently

If you are working with a Learning Management System (LMS) like Moodle, you need to determine whether your authoring tool produces the type of file that can be integrated. In Moodle, you can integrate SCORM or AICC files.

SCORM files (Sharable Content Object Reference Model) are the most common standard used in the e-Learning community. The SCORMs are packages of different files, which govern how online learning content and LMSs communicate with each other. Other common standards are AICC (Aviation Industry Computer based Training Committee), IMS Global Learning Consortium and Microsoft LRN.

## Different projects require different tools

Here you can see three examples of e-Learning lessons. Knowing the right tool for your lesson, will prepare you better to take your design to publication.

# 1

### Lessons created in PowerPoint with voiceover and no interactivity

Have your PowerPoint slides exactly the way you want it with all the animations in place and your script ready to go.



Record your PowerPoint and voiceover with a screencast tool. This ties the video to the audio seamlessly and makes editing much easier.



Add slide transitions in the screencast tool after you have finished editing.

Output: Video and Flash files that can easily be converted in to SCORM or AICC files

# 2

### Lessons created in PowerPoint with some interactivity

Import your simple, unanimated PowerPoint presentation into an authoring tool that can read PowerPoint files.



Choose a visually interesting theme for each slide and the tool will automatically format your slides. Most tools offer knowledge checks, tables of contents, and other interactive features.



You can record and edit a voiceover separately and import snippets of audio into each slide as needed. You can also record voiceovers directly to the authoring tool.

Output: SCORM or AICC files

# 3

### Interactive lessons

A powerful authoring tool helps create hotspots and links to different sections of your content easily.



If you are importing PowerPoint slides, it is best to remove all PowerPoint animations and slide transitions before doing so. Some programs don't do a very good job translating most of these animations upon import.



If you start from a blank page or template, there are many element options that are a lot of fun to play with as you make your interactive tool more engaging.

Output: SCORM or AICC files

# Overview

This overview starts with a presentation of tools sorted in the following categories stand-alone, powerpoint-based, web-based and complementary. It presents an overview of well-established and new tools. This list does not encompass the full set of available authoring tools.

## ONLINE RESOURCES AND TUTORIALS

Click on the icon of a tool or on the resource links to find out more on the respective websites.



## THE TOOLS

### COMPATIBILITY

The authoring tools presented in this overview are all capable of publishing presentations or lessons that integrate seamlessly with any SCORM compliant Learning Management System (LMS) like Moodle, for example.

Some of the tools listed below offer free versions that are not listed separately because they cannot publish to SCORM files.

### FREE TRIALS

Almost all of the tools discussed here have a 30-day-free trial period. You can test most of them without any restrictions of functionality to see which fits best your needs.

## GUIDELINES TO HELP YOU

In the conclusion, you will find guidelines and comparisons to help you make a good decision. Make sure to always check out the up-to-date online reviews.

# Desktop authoring tools

Here you can find examples of stand-alone tools.

## Adobe Captivate



Adobe Captivate stands out as the application with most features, but also with the longest learning curve. According to *The eLearning Guild's Rapid eLearning tools report 2011*, it is the most popular and used authoring tool.

### PRICE

Roughly \$770.

### MAIN FEATURES

There are 12 different characters to use and about 50 different graphics for each. You can set up a variety of different types of Interactions: Tabs, Process Circle, Pyramid, Timeline, Circle Matrix and Glossary to name a few.

You can create different types of Quizzes and even pre-tests, so depending on how a user performs they will jump to different sections of your course (branch aware). Captivate has some good features like the ability to create gradients, rotate and crop, apply drop-shadows, etc.

### STRENGTHS

Adobe Captivate is the tool with the most features and thus the most power. Additionally, many developers like the fact that they are able to work on files in Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Flash and Adobe Captivate without any problems of file compability.

Captivate has strong interactivity capabilities. You can easily create product demos in HD, interactive application simulations and assessments.

### LIMITATIONS

Captivate has many features, so it seems quite complex at first. You can definitely benefit from a training course or a book on Captivate.

### MOBILE

Captivate is capable of playing on mobile devices (iPad and iPhone). Captivate has added mobile features in version 6, but there is a list of things that do not work on HTML5.

### RESOURCES

[Adobe Captivate Tutorials](#)

# Articulate Storyline



Storyline is a standalone product that allows you to add interactivity and build drag-and-drop interactions with a few clicks. It's a “universal” tool with an extensive online community.

## PRICE

Storyline is usually on sale for about \$1400.

## MAIN FEATURES

Storyline has a visual approach to the design of e-Learning content and has control buttons similar to the ones you find in PowerPoint. Slides are organised in scenes. They have layers in which you can place content on top of content and make it appear and disappear at will.

Storyline offers all kinds of quizz types and the program offers a large variety of tools for building interactivity: buttons, lighboxes, hotspots, data entry fields etc.

## STRENGTHS

Many users are impressed with its balance of ease of use and power. There is not much to the learning curve, and the advantages are plenty. You can get up and running with Storyline very quickly.

The inclusion of characters is an option that saves many hours of work for many people. You can choose a character's pose and expression; insert them anywhere you like, resize, crop it or change it for another one. Also, a gallery of photographs with a good selection of expressions and poses is included.

Storyline can use Powerpoint Presentations as the basis for creating lessons or scenarios.

## LIMITATIONS

As mentioned the controls of Storyline are based on PowerPoint. For some people this would make their task much easier, but for others this is too simplistic and flat.

## MOBILE

Storyline is capable of playing on iPad and iPhone. It has more options for publishing: Flash, Storyline mobile player or HTML5. They have a clear documentation on their site about what does and does not work in each version.

## RESOURCES

[Articulate Online Video Tutorials](#)

# Lectora



Lectora is a desktop based e-Learning authoring tool, which enables you to publish content in various formats.

## PRICE

Lectora is \$1600 for the core e-Learning software, while the Inspire suite with extra multi-media tools is \$2500.

Lectora leads in the field of interactivity when it comes to options for actions and variables. For quizzing, Lectora gives you the most access to question variables.

## MAIN FEATURES

Lectora released of version 11 at the beginning of 2013. Lectora is a fully functional self-contained authoring tool. It is slightly more complex than other desktop tools as you have to get to grips with the tool including its conventions and interface.

Lectora allows you to publish dynamic HTML whereas some of the other tools only generate Flash output. The published content comprises light page that load rapidly.

## LIMITATIONS

Lectora is not as easy and intuitive as some of the others. It is slightly more complex than other desktop tools as you have to get to grips with its conventions and interface.

Price. Lectora is more expensive than other “big” tools, especially if you are buying the full Inspire suite.

## STRENGTHS

It is richer and more functional than other desktop tools, particularly the professional version which comes with additional editing tools such as an image editor, audio and video editor. In contrast to Lectora, most other authoring tools require you to create and size images for example in a separate tool such as Photoshop.

## MOBILE

Lectora is capable of playing on all kinds of mobile devices.

## RESOURCES

[Lectora's Youtube channel](#)

# Powerpoint-plugin tools

Examples PowerPoint-based tools

## Articulate Presenter



Articulate Presenter allows the creation of Flash-based presentations and e-Learning content from Power Point slides.

### PRICE

\$799.

### MAIN FEATURES

Existing PowerPoint content can be imported and enhanced with audio, any video format, branching scenarios, quizzes, surveys, games and web pages. The presenter's voice can be synchronized with slides and animations. The presentation is customizable with your own logo, layout, navigation options, color schemes, and language.

You can create software demonstrations, interactive simulations, branching scenarios and quizzes.

### STRENGTHS

The tool is regarded as user-friendly and cost-effective;. The interface is considered intuitive and clear. Good customer support is provided. Users can develop interactions in any language (even Arab right-to-left TEXT orientation is supported).

### LIMITATIONS

It is important to have well-designed Powerpoint slides to start since the menu choice is limited for instructional designed needs. Some users have reported fuzzy screen resolutions in translating PPT into Flash. In addition, the built-in quiz tool is quite limited because producers want to push users to purchase their Quizmaker tool separately.

### MOBILE

Articulate Presenter publishes only to Flash. For non-Flash devices such as iPads you have to use external tools.

### RESOURCES

[Product information](#)

[Articulate Presenter Review](#)

# iSpring Suite



iSpring Suite is a PowerPoint to Flash toolkit for creating online presentations and e-Learning courses, quizzes and interactions in PowerPoint.

## PRICE

iSpring Suite costs \$497 when purchased with a single licence. The more licences you buy, the cheaper the price, ie. 10 licences cost \$ 2770.

## MAIN FEATURES

The title, hierarchy, visibility, method of advancing, duration, layout of slides can be modified. You can create quizzes, record and add media: record video through a webcam; record and import audio; add YouTube videos if a course is online on a public server.

You can sync an audio track with video with actions on the screen or with the sliding slides. You can also add background music and create a looping playback.

## STRENGTHS

The iSpring Suite offers lots of functionality for a price that fits most budgets.

It handles almost all PowerPoint animations and slide transitions.

## LIMITATIONS

Critics say that the customer support can be a bit hard to reach. Community support and forum groups are fairly sparse, especially compared to Articulate and Adobe.

## MOBILE

iSpring generates presentations and courses for mobile devices and iPads/iPhones.

## EXTRA

iSpring Free is a version of iSpring with limited features. It allows commercial, educational or non profit organizations to create media-rich online presentations from PowerPoint to Flash for free. To use it, users must simply get a free license.

## RESOURCES

[iSpring's Youtube Channel](#)

# Articulate Studio



Studio is composed of Articulate Presenter '09, Articulate Quizmaker '09, Articulate Engage '09 and a video encoder. All components can be acquired individually.

## PRICE

Studio is usually on sale for about \$1400.

## MAIN FEATURES

The two features that usually make Articulate stand out from the rest of the crowd are Engage and QuizMaker. Engage is a module that contains several pre-packaged Flash learner interactions and as any experienced Instructional Designer will tell you, the learner interactions are often the biggest thing that separates a good learner experience from a bad one. Articulate also includes a feature that allows you to create branching scenarios in your learning content.

## STRENGTHS

If you are going for easy, Articulate Studio is a good choice. Much of what you do PowerPoint, which you most likely already know. The rest is primarily form- and template-based.

Articulate Studio is great for quick briefings, product knowledge and you can even generate nice scenarios with a bit of practice. There is a good range of simple interactions and questions.

Studio has the full capability of PowerPoint's graphics and animation capabilities (which are more extensive than most people know).

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.

## LIMITATIONS

There is limited ability to duplicate PowerPoint animations and no capability to duplicate PowerPoint slide transitions.

Articulate Studio '09 was released in September 2008, which was ages ago in the world of e-Learning. The new version planned for 2013 is still not available, as of May 2013.

## MOBILE

Studio only outputs to Flash, so it can not generate courses and presentations for iPhones and iPads.

## RESOURCES

[Articulate Online Video Tutorials](#)

# Adobe Presenter



Adobe Presenter is a PowerPoint add-on that allows you to create Adobe Flash presentations and e-Learning courses all inside PowerPoint.

## PRICE

Roughly \$ 500.

## MAIN FEATURES

Users can add narration, animations, audio, video, Flash SWF files, software simulations, quizzes and questions.

You can purchase a microphone and record audio directly to a PowerPoint presentation; or they can import audio files.

You can use a Wizard (the Quiz Manager) to create your questions or surveys, and Presenter will create the PowerPoint slides for you.

There are six types of interactions you can build with the Quiz Manager: Multiple Choice/Multiple Answer, True/False, Fill in the blank, short answer, drag and drop and Likert-type surveys.

You can also create videos and interactive presentations.

## STRENGTHS

Content can be easily shared in a variety of formats, including mobile phones and that support Flash. Users appreciate the ability to narrate once the presentation is set up.

It is easy to use and you have a familiar working environment as it is a PowerPoint plug-in.

## LIMITATIONS

There are some conversion problems with PowerPoint, but most of them have workarounds.

There is no option to embed live streaming content. Quiz scores or survey results can be captured only if you have an Acrobat Connect account.

## MOBILE

You can export your content to mobile devices.

## RESOURCES

Video: Adobe Presenter Overview

# Lectora Snap!



Snap! by Lectora is a Power Point plug-in that enable users to create presentations and e-Learning courses including narrations, video content, flash animations, access to additional documents, surveys.

## PRICE

\$ 99.

## MAIN FEATURES

You can record and/or import audio in PowerPoint slides, sync the audio with the PowerPoint animations, insert video headshots of presenters.

Furthermore, it is possible to insert Flash or other videos as a page in the lesson. With Snap! you can create excellent assessments from Snap!'s built-in quiz tool.

## STRENGTHS

Low price: this fact could make Snap! a more feasible option for many.

Snap! has all the basic tools and features to create useful e-Learning lessons. The integrated quiz/assessment tool makes insertion of assessments smooth and easy, and it behaves much better than Articulate's separated QuizMaker application. There is an excellent and highly useful full-screen button for learners.

It's very easy to insert presenter video head-and-shoulders shots on each page. It's simple to add a YouTube video.

## LIMITATIONS

It publishes to one SWF file, which will make it impossible to use with any lesson above 20 slides or any lesson with a robust quiz.

It has very limited color schemes or GUI customizations that will likely leave you disappointed.

## MOBILE

Snap!-published content won't run on the iPhone or iPad.

## RESOURCES

Video: Learn in 2 minutes how to use Snap!

# Web-based authoring tools

Here you can find examples of externally hosted tools

## ZebraZapps



ZebraZapps is a cloud-based technology for building interactive media applications for sharing, teaching, and training. Its editor allows non-programmers to quickly create interactive, animated, media-rich applications.

### PRICE

You can try ZebraZapps free for 60 days. After that, to continue using it, you need to pay \$ 9 a month for the basic licence, Pro has a price of \$39.95 a month.

### MAIN FEATURES

There are some very nice visual mapping and connecting of elements, almost like its own visual programming language.

A published Zapp (a lesson you create in ZebraZapps) can be quickly shared through a number of online formats: Sending e-mails with URLs; iframe code for Blogs and Web Sites; Facebook Pages; Twitter; LinkedIn.

You can also play Zapps in Articulate, PowerPoint, Lectora, and Captivate through their individual Web-link objects.

### STRENGTHS

This software is very powerful. You can probably expect ZebraZapps' learning curve to be slightly higher than some of the tools in this list, but that's understandable given its added capabilities. You could use ZZ to create almost any kind of interaction, including physics-based simulations.

### LIMITATIONS

ZebraZapps' interface doesn't follow a PowerPoint paradigm; the options are so open that it can be jarring not have the guardrails you would expect in rapid tools. Currently, there is no LMS connectivity.

At the moment, any videos you use need to be uploaded to YouTube.

### MOBILE

Content developed and published in ZebraZapps is currently limited to Flash-player output, so it cannot be played on Ipads/Iphones.

### RESOURCES

[ZebraZapps introduction video](#)

[ZebraZapps how-to-videos](#)

# Adobe Connect



Adobe Connect allows the creation of both live and asynchronous training sessions. It also acts as an aggregator of different types of files to quickly assemble learning materials.

## PRICE

Cost varies according to the number of learners and payment arrangement. You can buy up to nine hosts per account and each host can hold meetings with up to 25 attendees. Host cost is 55\$ per month.

## MAIN FEATURES

Slideshows, presentations and demonstrations can be displayed with an audio commentary. Chats can be organized into separate tabs for public and private conversations. Notes can be saved and emailed to participants.

There are interactive whiteboard sessions where text and shapes can be added to the whiteboard. Meetings are recordable for future viewing.

Rich multimedia content can be shared with participants without any additional plug-in needed. There is limited learning management system functionality – which allows enrolling learners and following their progress. You can create quizzes and software demonstrations.

## STRENGTHS

A good server security, good customer support and high-quality video conferencing (depending on Internet connection) compatible with every browser.

## LIMITATIONS

Being a web-based service, it can be difficult to access when using a slow Internet connection.

## MOBILE

Adobe Connect Mobile allows you to host, attend, present, and drive collaboration in online meetings or trainings on any mobile devices.

## RESOURCES

[Getting-started-tutorials](#)

# Mohive



Mohive is helpful if you have a lot of content to be managed and need collaborative development such as multiple authors at multiple locations.

## PRICE

No price information is offered at their homepage. But as it is a sophisticated hosted system it will be at the higher end of the price range.

It is very easy to import PowerPoint slides, and import audio and flash files including video. You can cut and paste text in the usual way. Mohive generates content that will run in all the main LMS tools.

## MAIN FEATURES

There are lots of types of presentation screens and all of the elements are free to move & create any screen layout you want.

All of the design content can then be presented within any kind of art direction you choose, with menu options being automatically generated from the chapters you have created.

## LIMITATIONS

Like most server-based tools, since it uses its own screen styles, it does not keep all those natty animated builds that you previously created within Powerpoint.

## STRENGTHS

Mohive is very easy to use. It has a development environment with simple buttons and instructions all following a natural flow.

## MOBILE

You can use the same authoring environment to design courses for computers and tablets. Once you have published them online, the modules will automatically be on the right format for the platform on which they will be viewed.

## RESOURCES

Tutorials & guides

# easygenerator



Sana easygenerator is a tool designed to create interactive training and assessments easily & quickly.

## PRICE

The price for easygenerator is for a twelve month subscription. They start from \$1.250. When you buy more licenses the price per license will drop. These prices include: Hosting, installation, maintenance and updates.

## MAIN FEATURES

The software is aimed at non-technical writers and designers who will – with a bit of practice – be able to create and edit e-Learning content fairly easily using the tool. More advanced developers/programmers can use many of the advanced features of easygenerator such as talking directly to Flash files and creating master page templates using CSS.

The standard page templates are good to use and there is a very good range of question templates for assessments.

Easy to import Flash/Captivate files and Flash video.

## STRENGTHS

Very easy to use, a WYSIWYG interface, easy to jump in and get started. Easy to import Flash/Captivate files and Flash video.

## LIMITATIONS

You can not import PowerPoint files.

## MOBILE

With easygenerator you can use Flash or HTML when creating courses, making it possible to publish to Apple devices and other platforms.

## RESOURCES

[easygenerator video tutorials](#)

# MyUdutu



MyUdutu is an entirely FREE online application that allows users to produce and manage SCORM compliant e-Learning courses.

## PRICE

It is entirely free to use for authoring courses, and courses can be extracted to be hosted on the user's server.

## MAIN FEATURES

MyUdutu consists of Workspace, Library and Administration sections: The Workspace is where screens and courses are created. The Library is where the user uploads and stores the common content used in the course. The Administration section allows the user to define themes, add screens and purchase hosting for screens.

The application can import Power Point schedules into a screen; two basic types of courses can be created: tree-view or linear. There are three types of screens: Basic, Assessment and Advanced to create flash interactions.

After completing the course it can be either published live (generating a link to share with others), published to LMS or published on Facebook through UdutuTeach and UdutuLearn applications.

Flexible and customizable templates allow users to effortlessly present material to learners, engaging them with interactions, and immersing them in branching scenarios.

## STRENGTHS

MyUdutu is easy to use once you are familiar with it: MyUdutu users with no other web skills can make their courses look professionally designed. All major types of graphic, sound, and video formats optimize automatically for web delivery.

## LIMITATIONS

When you publish a course the .zip file can be very large, because of all the course elements which have been added, even if there aren't interactions.

## MOBILE

Udutu's authoring tool includes the ability to publish to HTML5 or Flash.

## RESOURCES

[myUdutu's channel on YouTube](#)

# eXeLearning



A free software, eXeLearning was created with the aim of helping teachers to create scripted learning pathways and activities and then to integrate them on Moodle or publish them on the web.

## PRICE

It is entirely free to use for authoring courses, and courses can be extracted to be hosted on the user's server for free.

## MAIN FEATURES

eXeLearning is an open-source application, it works as a Mozilla Firefox plugin.

18 different instructional devices are available (activity, case study, external website, image gallery etc.) The program includes pedagogical tips for instructional designers.

## STRENGTHS

There is a French and English Interface and an easy-to-use WYSIWYG editor for content creation.

## MOBILE

Content can be published to a plain text file for display on mobile devices, or iPod Notes files.

## LIMITATIONS

There are several limitations imposed by this format for mobile devices including being restricted to unstyled text, a strict page size limit, and a design that makes it difficult to include images/audio.

Some reviewers argue that the test/quiz maker is too complex.

## RESOURCES

Videos on features of eXeLearning

# Complementary tools

Here you can find two examples of tools to create and integrate great additional stuff

## Raptivity



Harbinger Raptivity is not a standalone authoring tool but it allows the creation of interactive learning content and software simulations to integrate within other authoring tools.

### PRICE

Raptivity consists of several packs and the price depends on the number of packs purchased. The Raptivity standard version costs \$1,749 (\$1,300 for non-profits).

### MAIN FEATURES

Users can create many types of interactions and embed them within lessons created using another tool, like Articulate Presenter or Captivate.

It is available in packs, each of them contains different types and number of interactions- such as flash cards, matching, surveys, build up and roller and more. It comes with a library of pre-built templates, most of which are interactive, that provide a way to quickly assemble an interaction or presentation segment.

### STRENGTHS

Easy to use, no need of programming skills.  
Timesaver: attractive interactions can be created in few minutes, using the samples provided as templates.  
Users can develop interactions in any language (even Arabic right-to-left text orientation is supported).

The tool works with most of the popular authoring tools on the market such as Articulate and Captivate as well as other tools that allow importing Flash SWF files, including Power Point and HTML files.

### LIMITATIONS

Restricted choices available: creation of interactions is limited by what interaction wizards allow.

### MOBILE

Raptivity can produce Flash and HTML5 to work on a variety of mobile devices.

### RESOURCES

[RaptivityBlog](#)

[Calendar of webinars to learn how to leverage Raptivity](#)

# Camtasia Studio



Camtasia allows users to record all actions taking place on their computer screens and can be used to create presentations, screen casts, demos and software simulations.

## PRICE

\$299 when purchased with a single license. \$ 1,495 for multi-user licence. There is also a separate product for Mac that includes fewer features for \$99.

## MAIN FEATURES

Users can edit videos and share them in a variety of formats. Zoom function allows capturing only parts of the screen needed; and cursor movements can be highlighted to better follow the action.

Captions can be 'dictated' to the software, which automatically transposes it into text. Voice narration and music can also be added. PowerPoint presentations and Quiz interactions can be imported and narrated along the way.

Users can choose to open the entire program or just one of its components (recorder, player, or menumaker). A camera video recording is available to record and integrate video.

You can also create presentation, integrate quizzes into videos.

## STRENGTHS

Some reviews describe it as the best screen recording software', for its audio, video and output choices, for the ease of use and the superior compression. Intuitive user interface

## LIMITATIONS

According to some reviews, it has less robust capabilities than Captivate.

The output is video files, a linear medium: this makes it ideal for those situations where users need engaging video files.

## MOBILE

You can create videos and interactive lessons in Flash and for mobile devices as iPad and iPhone.

## RESOURCES

Video: How to: Work with Camtasia Studio 7

# Other complementary tools

Click on the tool's icon to find out more!



## Go!animate

A fast and easy way to make animated videos and animated lessons for your class, a demo video for your business, or a training video for your staff.



## QuickLessons

QuickLessons comes equipped with quizzes, games, characters, out-of-the-box animations and other customizable content to allow users to create interactive flash-based content. Users can either use QuickLessons for free, publishing their content only on Facebook, or they can buy an individual, corporate or academic account.



## Izzui

Izzui is a hybrid social learning application that can be linked to QuickLessons. It uses Facebook as an LMS to track and deliver courses. Izzui also has an e-Commerce capability allowing users to charge and pay for courses that they have created.



## authorPOINT

authorPOINT allows users to capture presentations and add pre-recorded audio or video, all inside Microsoft PowerPoint. It also allows converting PowerPoint presentations into Flash.



## dipity

Dipity is an online timeline creator. Users can create their own content and share them with other users. It is also possible to integrate social media into timelines, utilizing real-time updates.



## MOS Solo

MOS Solo offers a way for users to create presentations offline, without losing any of the functionality or power to create multimedia content.



## Scratch

Scratch helps users to create creating interactive stories, animation, music, and art, and then share their creations on the web.



## xtimeline

xtimeline allows users to create timeline based content. Users can also share their timelines with other users, creating a community.



## SlideGo

SlideGo is an online slide editor. It comes with a Power Point converter that will retain all animations. Output is HTML5 and SCORM compliant.



## CourseLab

CourseLab offers programming-free WYSIWYG environment for creating interactive e-Learning content which can be published on the Internet, LMS, CD-ROMS and other devices.



## W2L

What2Learn supports users in creating interactive games, quizzes and track learners' attainment.



## ClassTools

Class Tools allows to create educational games, quizzes, activities and diagrams.



## Wink

Wink is a tutorial and presentation creation software that helps users to capture screenshots, add explanations boxes, buttons, titles and generate tutorials.



## LessonLams

LessonLams is a tool for designing, managing and delivering online collaborative learning activities. Teachers can create sequences of learning activities including a range of individual tasks, small group work and class activities based on both content and collaboration. The free account is available for up to 30 students.



## JeLSim

JeLSIM Builder is a toolkit for producing educational simulations in Java. A basic knowledge of Java programming language is mandatory. Once the model has been written, simulation interfaces can be customized by teachers and content developers who have no knowledge of Java.



## Reload

Reload has been designed to facilitate the creation, sharing and reuse of learning objects and pedagogical services.



## Hot Potatoes

Hot Potatoes includes six applications, enabling you to create interactive multiple-choice, short-answer, jumbled-sentence, crossword, matching/ordering and fill-in-the-gaps exercises for the Web.

# How to select an authoring tool

## WHAT'S YOUR BUDGET?

If you've got limited funds (around \$1500 or less) you'll have to consider one of the desk top tools available. If you've got more funds or are looking to scale up your authoring across the organisation or have a dedicated team, it could be worth considering a collaborative server-based authoring tool. These tend to have more powerful capabilities.

## WHAT'S YOUR SKILL BASE?

It's all very well investing in the tool. But once you've bought it, can you use it? How easily can new authors be brought on to the team?

Desktop tools will have an immediate ring of familiarity by working with standard Office applications. This means there is a relatively simple learning curve. Server-based tools, while sharing some features of windows applications, will require a longer familiarisation period but can deliver more sophisticated results. You'll need to weigh up the pain vs the gain, when making your choice.

## WHAT'S YOUR AMBITION?

If you want to produce simple static content adorned with questions and quizzes, a desktop authoring tool will do you fine. It could, with a little imagination and skill, stretch a little further.

All market leading tools accept audio, video and flash animation files. You can commission rich media or create it yourself for integration into your e-Learning. But, generally, the more ambitious you are on how you present your learning, the higher end tool you need to aim for.

## WHAT'S YOUR BUSINESS IMPERATIVE?

If you are designing a training which needs to be tracked and logged, your authoring tool will need to produce SCORM or AICC compliant training. This allows integration with most LMS and will allow you to retrieve data on who did what and when.

Focusing on an efficient instructional design process, well-written content that gets to the heart of the issue, and intelligent use of graphics and media make more of a difference to your e-Learning than the tool you will select.

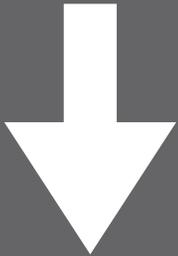
***An authoring tool does not create e-Learning lessons by itself.***

## MAKING SENSE OF IT ALL

Of course the relative importance of each of these considerations will vary depending on what your starting point is (novice or expert), the scale of the work you intend to produce (low, medium or high) and the size and type of the authoring team (solo, group, SME, instructional designer.)

All tools offer a different feel in terms of functionality, ease of use and value. Be sure to do a road test with them before you buy one. Use the 30 or 60-day free trail period that most of the tools offer.

## An e-Learning Pro on selecting authoring tools



*“After 28 years of designing, developing, and managing e-Learning, and having used many tools over the years, I still miss some features of tools that are no longer around and love some of the features of new tools too. However, before I choose a tool, or more likely a set of tools, for any project I’m working on I will first analyze the content the users are to learn, the delivery mechanism and technical specifications that I need to meet, and the audience for the learning. Of course I will also take into account tools that a client already is using, and their budgets and schedules as well, but these are secondary to the needs of the instructional design. Only after I’ve properly answered these questions can I make a judicious decision as to which tool has enough power to meet these needs without being too difficult to use to get the job done in a reasonable amount of time. More often than not, I find myself recommending at least two tools, each of which will best accommodate portions of the instructional design.”*

**Joseph Gancion, E-Learning expert and author of The eLearning Guild report**

source: Rapid eLearning Authoring: Top Tools. 2011. The eLearning Guild

## An overview of prices, power and ease-of-use

weak



medium



strong



	One-time cost	Ease-of-use	Power
MyUdutu	\$0	Medium	Strong
eXeLearning	\$0	Medium	Medium
Lectora Snap!	\$99	Medium	Medium
iSpring Suite	\$500	Medium	Medium
Adobe Presenter	\$500	Medium	Medium
Articulate Presenter	\$700	Medium	Medium
Adobe Captivate	\$770	Medium	Strong
Articulate Studio	\$1400	Medium	Strong
Articulate Storyline	\$1400	Medium	Strong
Lectora 11	\$1600	Medium	Medium

	Monthly cost	Ease-of-use	Power
ZebraZapps	\$9-40/month	Medium	Strong
Adobe Connect	\$55/month	Medium	Strong
easygenerator	\$100/month	Medium	Strong

# NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Here you can find five comprehensive comparisons of e-Learning development tools. Just click on the icons below to find out more.

## ZENITH PERFORMANCE TOOL EVALUATION (2013)



	Articulate 4	Articulate 5	Articulate 6	Articulate 7	Articulate 8	Articulate 9	Articulate 10	Articulate 11	Articulate 12	Articulate 13
<b>Cost</b>										
Total cost (1 = least expensive)	5	8	4	3	6	6	7	2	1	
Monthly option	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Ease of Use</b>										
Easy to Learn (1 = easiest to learn)	7	9	3	5	4	6	8	1	2	6
Rapid Development (1 = least amount of programming knowledge required)	8	9	2	3	4	5	7	1	2	6
<b>Author</b>										
GME's (Subject Matter Expert)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ID's (Instructional Designer)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Technology Issues</b>										
Publish to SCORM	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
ADA (American Disabilities Act)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
File compatibility for mobile	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Documentation/script produced	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Functionality</b>										
Insert elements from other sources	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simple branching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complex branching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mathematical calculations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Interaction options	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Screen captures	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Show me	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Try me	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tell me	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Graphic creation/editing/stock photos	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audio options	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Customizable navigation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quizzing	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

© 2013, Zenith Performance Solutions

## JOE GANCI: SEVEN TOP AUTHORIZING TOOLS (2011)

Interactions	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Quizzes	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Synchronous	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Asynchronous	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Linear Video	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Simple Branching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Complex Branching	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>INTERFACE:</b>							
PowerPoint	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Stage	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Timeline	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wizard / Form	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Online	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>CAN INSERT:</b>							
Images	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audio	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Video	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Flash	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Animations	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
PowerPoint	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Web Pages	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>PLATFORMS:</b>							
Windows	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Macintosh	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Online	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>PUBLISH TO:</b>							

## E-LEARNING UNCOVERED: AUTHORIZING TOOL COMPARISON (2011)

### E-Learning Authoring Tool Comparison

● Strong ● Medium ○ Weak — Not available

Feature	Articulate Studio 109	Articulate 5.5	Articulate 7.4	Articulate 7.4 Creator Tool
Develop content	●	●	●	○
Author	●	●	●	○
Development	●	●	●	○
Options	●	●	●	○
Mobile	○	○	○	○
Scalability for multiple users	○	○	○	○
Interactions	●	●	●	○
Branching	●	●	●	○
Complex branching	○	○	○	○
Knowledge base	○	○	○	○
Keyboard based	○	○	○	○
Full drop interactions	○	○	○	○
Customizable design	○	○	○	○
Advanced design	○	○	○	○
Low maintenance	○	○	○	○
Customizable for content	○	○	○	○
Other interactive features	○	○	○	○
Asset management	○	○	○	○

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## JULIA TANI: COMPARING E-LEARNING AUTHORIZING TOOLS (2009)

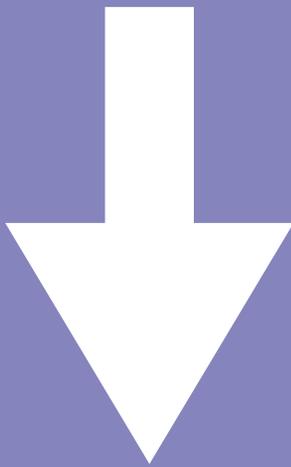
audio narration, Contains a library of 400 ready-made items and 28 characters	purchase		
Inter producer, with Case 1, image gallery, video, text, reflection, and quizzes	High	FREE	Built in Browser
as a library of animated items	High		Installed in pc
layouts, test, quizzes	low interface has too many buttons in small sizes	3,185	Installed in pc
uses flash cards, jigsaw, classification exercises, matching, word cards, station Aids (bulleted list, show, flip the book, word definitions)	Medium	\$2,999	Installed in pc
ive Diagrams, Surveys, Flow simple simulations (let me see familiarization, show), Glossary, interactive tests, FAQ, assessment, Screen			Gagne's Nine Events, Bloom's Taxonomy, Keller ARCS Model, Experiential Learning
Designer to create mini simulations, and quick	High	\$2,499 per year per author and includes updates, maintenance, support and unlimited content	Web-based Templates

An overview  
of

# the big 4

by  
Diane Elkinson\*

Captivate, Lectora, Studio and Storyline are the major e-Learning tools on the market. The comparison below grades them on a variety of criteria, with 1 being the highest grade and 4 the lowest.



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*“Of the big 4, Captivate is the most affordable at \$770, with a subscription model that is more affordable if you only use Captivate occasionally or if you upgrade every year. Studio and Storyline are usually on sale for about \$1400 each. Lectora is \$1600 for the core e-Learning software,”*

---

Feature	Captivate	Lectora	Studio	Storyline
Price	1	4	2	2
Ease of use	4	3	1	2
Graphics capability	3	4	1	2
Animations	2	4	1	3
Interactivity	3	2	4	1
Quizzing	3	1	4	2
Power/flexibility	2	1	4	2
Mobile	3	2	4	1

\* e-Learning expert and author of various books on e-Learning

source: E-Learning Authoring Tool Comparison by Diane Elkinson (January 2013)

# Resources

## Publications

Joseph Granci. The eLearning Guild. Rapid eLearning Authoring: Top Tools. 09/2011  
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## Web Resources

Kineo. Rapid eLearning Authoring Tools Reports. 06/2013

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