

e-Learning Technology & Formats

There are a number of differing formats and platforms available for people to produce and engage in e-Learning. This post will look at the pro's and con's of some of these platforms.

Blogging – Free / Web-Hosted

Examples of free to access web-based blog authoring platforms include [Blogspot](#) and [WordPress.com](#). These avoid the costs associated with using a paid hosting service, see below, but offer limited publishing options in terms of customisation of content.

Pro's

- Easier to set up
- Beginner Friendly
- Less computer literacy required than advanced options
- Initially higher [Search Engine Optimization](#) (SEO) potential

Con's

- Limited option re: customisation / editing
- Copyright / Content Ownership – who owns the rights to your site
- Limited support

Blogging – Web Hosting + Web Content management System

You can host your own website by paying for a domain name via a web hosting company, such as [BlueHost](#). This lets you pick an available URL domain, such as [emergucate.com](#), and use this to host a site. You will also have to install and use a [Content Management System \(CMS\)](#). There are a number of Content Management Systems including [WordPress](#), [Moodle](#), [Joomla](#), and [Drupal](#). These allow greater customisation options than free hosted sites, but require a higher level of computer competency.

Pro's

- Selection of domain name
- Support from web hosting service
- Flexibility in choice of CMS
- Greater development options
- Sub-domains
- Host wide range of content
- Public / Private division of content easier

Con's

- Cost – Web hosting +/- Web CMS
- Higher level of computer competency required
- Less initial SEO
- Wide variety in user experience offered by differing CMS's
- Need to trouble shoot CMS

Twitter

Multi-format microblogging tool allowing users to publish and share short messages.

Pro's

- Free
- Multi-platform
- Formation of educational communities
- User choice about who to follow and what to publish
- Real time contact with users

Con's

- Limited user group
- Limitation to content e.g. text limit 140 characters
- Requires user to check & sieve content
- Content dilution
- Content variable quality without peer review

Flash

Adobe flash is a software platform used to add graphics and multimedia content to webpages. Flash content can be developed using Adobe Flash Professional, although many programmes will produce content in a flash file format, such as [Articulate](#). Criticism of Flash based content included its effect on website usability, and drain on computer resources.

One of the major issues with Flash is the lack of support for iOS devices which occupy a significant proportion of the web-accessing market, although workarounds are possible.

Mobile platform Flash is no longer supported by Adobe, and many feel HTML5 will supersede Flash content.

HTML5

Latest version of HTML used to design web pages. I've had a brief look at HTML coding in an earlier post which can be found [here](#).

HTML5 has some notable advantage over previous versions including:

- Can play audio / video files
- Advanced storage options over HTML4
- Allows integration of vector graphics
- Theoretically works on iOS devices, although not yet fully implemented

Some limitations of HTML5 are:

- Will not work on older browsers such as IE8
- Does not allow [Digital Rights Management](#)
- Not yet widely adopted
 - Only added to [WC3 recommendation](#) in Decemeber 2012

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