



In my last blog, I wrote of the importance of an eLearning strategy and how that informs your organisation of what you plan to achieve with an online learning program. This will also inform of the level of interaction or if you plan to have gamification, video, podcasts and other social media to support this program.

This will feed directly into your eLearning standards.

In the past, I've been given a set of branding guidelines as eLearning standards and while this informs the instructional designer of the correct colours, fonts and language to use, they are not eLearning standards.

The standards I create are a pack of fonts, colour pallets, templates and guidelines that a designer can use to jump straight into creating learning using recognisable interactive learning objects that behave and look exactly the same as the rest of your online artefacts. This reduces your learners cognitive load measurably if they don't have to figure out what they need to click on, how they can view information and navigate through the new learning content.

So whats in the pack? Part of the pack does include branding guidelines – this is only part.

There are also:

- Build specification guidelines – this will inform your designer how you want the online learning to behave.
- Logos of varying tones for dark and light background
- Fonts used by your organisation for headings, body, quotes and links.
- A standard glossary of terms is used with a suite of learning modules
- An assessment tool template is an assessment measures the learning outcome.
- A word version of an online template shell
- An interactive version of an online template shell with pre built interactive objects
- Standard images that communicate your brand and align to your eLearning strategy.
- Most importantly – a submission checklist. This will ensure your designer completes the learning module to the standard you expect.

To help you to start your own collection, I've built a list of questions that I would ask a client to answer prior to working with them to define their eLearning standards. This will help you to define yours.

Overall eLearning standards queries

eLearning component	
<p>Player (SCORM surround):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How should the player look? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Colours ○ Buttons ○ Font and size (standard 6-8pt) • Do you want a menu at the side or attached to the top of the player or within a slide? • How would you like the glossary, supporting resources and menu icons to look (Colour and size) Would you like them in the player or within the slide? 	
<p>Navigation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should the learner progress freely through the online resource or is it fixed? (should the learner be prevented from viewing any slide or do you want them to travel through as its designed to). • Can a learner return to learning and travel freely through the resource once visited once? • Should their progress be tracked through the resource and fed into analytics? • Should their progress and summative assessment activities be graded and fed into analytics? • Do you want the next previous buttons displayed in the player or on the slide itself? • Do you require a progress bar on each slide? • Do you require a search? Can the learner search freely through a SCORM? (This cannot be implemented once the learner has viewed all slides). • How many layers is permissible before a progress bar for the slide be used? If so, what should that progress bar look like? 	
<p>General:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the rules about accessibility? Wc3 ready or less. (Check out www.wc3.org for what this entails) • What is the screen size for SCORM (standard 4:3)? • What is the QA process for eLearning and is there an educational technologist managing this online? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many formative assessment activities would you like per topic within each module? • How many attempts are learners allowed to have for summative assessment activities? • What is the policy on authenticity, would you like learners to submit an e-signature – how would this look like? 	
<p>Language: We use two forms of language online, approachable, warm communication and instructional language (e.g. slide the slider to view)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does your organisation want this worded and presented? • Are all interactions to hold instructional language (this will depend on the digital literacy of each learner) • Do we write the words your organisation™, each time we refer to the organisation or once at the start of a resource? 	
<p>Images and video:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can we use full screen images to use all teachable real estate and define clearly each section of the software the learners need to use? • Images and videos required of all interactions and views throughout covering the same data to allow learner recognition and build knowledge. • Is there a sensitivity or privacy issue around the use of software images? If so, is there a practise site that we could take images and video screen from? • What is the resolution size for images? • What is the standard size for images? Where should they be placed on the screen? • What is the border policy for images? Should it have a colour or effect? What is the pixel size of the border? • What states are allowed for images? • What size can a video have on screen? • Can there be a lightbox effect on videos and images? If so, what colour and transparency percentage can the background be? 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What icons be used for the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next slide • Previous slide • Completed section • Play • Pause • Resume • Tip • Next layer • Progress meter <p>What should the states colour, size, border, effects and animation be used for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Button hover • Button selected • Button down • Custom button • Interactive button • Disabled button 	
<p>Interactivity, layers and animations</p> <p>Animations within this SCORM carry out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Wipe from right to left (on layers from buttons on the right of the screen) ○ Wipe from left to right (on layers from buttons on the left of the screen) ○ Fade (to provide small pieces of information at a time and to allow a learner to digest that information) ○ Swipe from left (lists) ○ Swipe from right (lists) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a standard animation required? <p>Layers have two different looks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ White box with your organisation colour border 3 pixels deep around it and ○ Lightbox style effect with transparent box (white) in the background at 20% ○ grey or blue box with white surround at 5 pixels deep <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a standard layer colour, border, and transparency effect required by your organisation? 	

<p>Which of the following interactive learning objects are used throughout (please detail what interactivity you plan to use):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accordion (animation wipe left to right with layers right to left) • Rollover images (showing text as the mouse clicks on each section of an image) • Arrows pointing at items on maps and software screens (Arrows animated to wipe from left to right) • Tab screen (tabs fade in from left to right, in various your organisation colours throughout) • Tables (your organisation logo colour with white fill) • Slider (in a wipe animation from left to right) • Dial (rotation to show different layers) • Light boxing – a method of clicking on an object on the screen which grows to a larger size and possibly has a definition. The background is semitransparent in either dark blue or white – this is dependent on the image used. • State changes – this is a technique used to indicate to a learner that an object is interactive. There should be different states to each object for hover, down, visited, disabled. This provides the learner with focus on what they need to learn and not navigating the SCORM. <p>What is the branding policy regarding colour, size, border, effects, resolution and animation be used for interactive learning objects?</p>	

Interactivity outline plus eLearning strategy questions		
<p>Slide and interaction <i>*Sometimes during development, a slide will not 'sit right' to the eye. When this occurs, it is changed to ensure that it is aesthetically correct. The interactivity described below are outlines and may be changed slightly if they don't</i></p>	<p>Query</p>	<p>your organisation comment</p>

<p><i>appear correct or the interactive learning objects don't make sense.</i></p>		
<p>1. Title slide</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title band – is a primary colour correct for a title page? • Animation – band wipes from left to right – what are the correct animations? • Image required • What is the correct size of image required? Are we allowed to use a full screen image? • How many pixels space padding around images is required? 	
<p>2. Menu slide Three buttons used as main menu landing – these are two primary and one secondary colour. Each menu button has a hover state which shows an outline of the topic in a box in text</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are these the correct choice of colours for navigation buttons? • What shade of colour should the following states be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hover ○ Down visited ○ Disabled ○ Custom • What is the policy regarding borders – how many pixels deep? • What colours should borders be? Would your organisation prefer flat design interactive learning objectives? • What colour should a text box be where a learner has to complete? Should it have a border? • What colour text should be on each menu button? • What colour should the text on hover state be? • What icon should be used to indicate that a learner has completed learning from each topic (I usually use a tick) 	
<p>3. Topic title slide Title and outline of the topic. Image: From educational section – Uni students 1</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What colour should be used for textbox? • Can the title band be animated to wipe from left to, right? 	
<p>4. Quiz slides</p>	<p>How many attempts would your learner have? Do you want your learner to be redirected to the slide where learning has taken place if they get it incorrect?</p>	



This article was written by Louise Smith, lead instructional designer at Learning Designer. For more guidance on managing your online learning program, go to www.learningdesigner.com.au