Chapter 1: Introduction

What is LEARN?

Company LEARN is a web-based, PHP application that allows Company's help-desk administrators and managers to create a user hierarchy that matches their organization's structure, create and manage courses and lesson plans to develop a training program, and administer training to help-desk personnel.

During the training process, administrators have full control over user permissions, and administrators, managers, and trainers have access to detailed progress reports for their students.

Feature Overview

Company LEARN is designed to meet Company's business and user needs.

Business Requirements

The Company LEARN application meets the following business requirements:

- Development of an organizational hierarchy of users and user groups

- Permissions management at the group, role, and user level

- Username-level support for Company User IDs

- Internal messaging and notification system

- Customized reports for trainers, supervisors, managers, and MAP coordinators

- Student-accessible transcripts and pending training courses

- Support for SCORM 1.3-1.4 and AICC courseware

- Test-building, including support for:

  - Questions organized into one or more sections (buckets)

  - Automatically-pushed remedial courses, by bucket

  - Optional, per-answer feedback

  - Optional, random sampling of questions from each bucket

- Revision control, testing, and Administrator approval of courses, tests, and lesson plans

- Use of a DHTML- and AJAX-enabled GUI

- Standards-compliance and cross-browser compatibility

- Highly-capable, highly-cacheable, and fast-loading back-end

- Complete and in-depth request logging

- Optional password expiration duration

- Secure transmission of passwords over HTTP using a multi-part MD5 hash code

Role-Based Requirements

Company LEARN also meets the following requirements for user roles:

Students

- Student registration is self- or administrator-initiated.

- Usernames are generated automatically if a Company UID is not available. The UID can be provided later.

- Students can view pending courses, pending requirements, test scores, and course performance information.

- Students can launch web-based training presentations and tests.

- Students can view system and manager/administrator notifications but cannot send messages.

Trainers

- Trainers have access to all features available to Students.

- Trainers can view their classes, schedule, students, and students' progress.

- Trainers can generate reports and view test transcripts.

- Trainers can generate reports and view assessment transcripts.

- Trainers can send messages to others.

Managers

- Managers have access to all features available to Trainers.

- Managers can generate reports on a per-group basis, or on a group and its subgroups.

- Managers can add and remove users from groups, and assign group leaders.

- Managers can schedule courses, assign instructors, and enroll users or groups in scheduled classes.

- Managers can set requirements for courses that students must complete.

Training Writers

- Training Writers have access to all features available to Managers.

- Training Writers can upload SCORM and/or AICC courses and create tests.

Administrators

- Administrators have access to all LEARN features.

- Administrators can approve or reject new courses and tests.

- Administrators can create, edit, and delete users and groups, as well as manage group membership and hierarchy.

- Administrators can reset user passwords and change user roles and permissions.

- Administrators can edit site configuration, such as the site's title and password reset intervals.
- Administrators can view real-time logs and log analysis.

System Overview

Company LEARN is developed on the open-source LAMP platform using PHP-driven logic. The LEARN data model is maintained in a MySQL database and accessed using the ADODB library, and the user interface is delivered by the Smarty template engine.

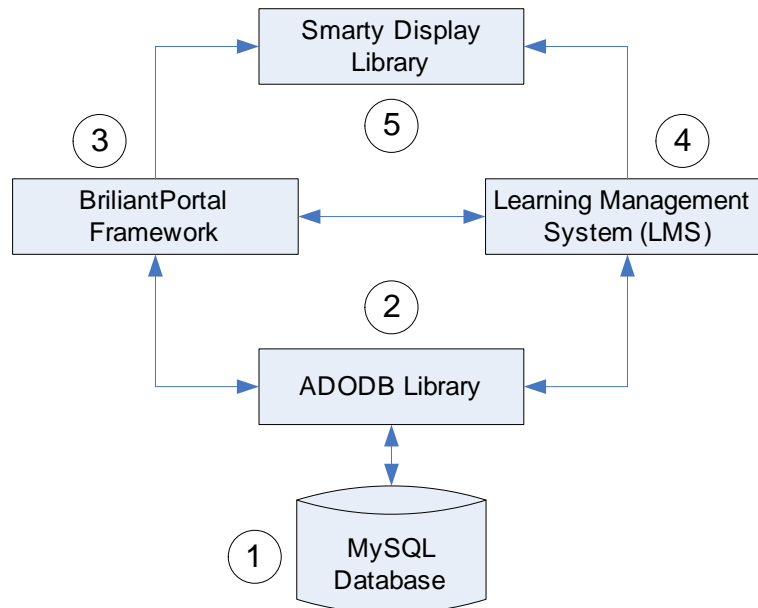The following diagram describes the components of the LEARN system:

Figure 1: LEARN Architecture

1. **MySQL Database** – LEARN is driven by a MySQL Database that contains user, group, course, and schedule information.

2. **ADODB Library** – The BrilliantPortal Framework and Learning Management System use the ADODB PHP library to interact with the LEARN database.

3. **BrilliantPortal Framework** – The BrilliantPortal framework provides basic LEARN functionality, including users, groups, personal messages, and user level permissions.

4. **Learning Management System (LMS)** – The LMS expands on the existing BrilliantPortal framework to provide course and test-building functionality.

5. **Smarty Display Library** – The BrilliantPortal Framework and Learning Management System deliver information and accept input using the Smarty template engine.

For more information about LEARN system architecture, refer to the Company LEARN Developer's Overview.

Chapter 2: Using LEARN

Company LEARN is designed to integrate with your existing help-desk structure. This chapter explains the overall training process and provides a guide to using the rest of this document.

Training in LEARN is divided into four basic steps:

- Setting up Users and Groups
- Creating and Scheduling Courses
- Taking Courses
- Viewing Student Performance

Setting up Users and Groups

Before you can use LEARN to train your personnel, you must set up your organizational structure and register all of your users. By using group hierarchies, you can reproduce your existing structure in LEARN. To set up LEARN according to your needs, perform the following tasks:

- Create Groups
- Register Users
- Assign Users to Groups
- Set User Permissions

Create Groups

Create groups that match your help-desk's departmental structure. For example, if your managerial structure includes a Management Team that oversees multiple Training Teams, then create a management group and a group for each training team. Then, assign your management group as a parent for each training group.

Administrators can create new groups. For instructions on creating a new group, see Create a New Group on page 84.

Administrators can edit group attributes to set a group's parent group. For instructions on editing group attributes, see Edit a Group's Attributes on page 51.

Register Users

All of your employees must have LEARN accounts. Provide each employee with a Company UID and Group Key. Then, direct them to the LEARN website to register an account. If you do not have a UID for a given user, they can still register and enter their UID later.

For instructions on user registration, see Registration on page 35.

If necessary, administrators can register users manually. For instructions on manual registration, see Manual Account Creation on page 89.

Assign Users to Groups

Once your employees are registered on the LEARN website, assign them to the groups that match their position in your organization. For example, assign all members of your DSL Training Team to the DSL Training group. Assign your managers to your Management group. By default, LEARN allows all members of the Manager group to manage the groups beneath them in the hierarchy. For example, a member of your manager group will be able to add members to any of your training groups.

For instructions on adding a user to a group, see Add a User to a Group on page 49.

You must also assign leaders of each group. A Group Leader has manager permissions within the group itself (not just the groups beneath the current group).

For instructions on promoting a group member to a group leader, see Change a Group Member's Rank on page 50.

You can automate group membership by providing new users with a group's Group Key. When a user enters the Group Key during registration, they are automatically added to that group.

A group's Group Key is displayed in the group profile. For instructions on accessing a group profile, see The Group Profile on page 47.

Set User Permissions

Assign the appropriate user level to each of your users. The user levels you should assign depend on the user's role within the system. For more information about user roles and permissions, see User Roles on page 19.

Creating and Scheduling Courses

Once you are ready to begin training, your employees must create and schedule courses and tests within LEARN. To prepare a curriculum, perform the following tasks:

- Create Courses
- Create Tests
- Create Learning Plans
- Approve Courses
- Schedule Courses

Create Courses

LEARN is designed to use AICC/SCORM courses. Training Writers must prepare this course material using the appropriate software and upload it when creating a new course in LEARN.

For instructions on creating a new course in LEARN, see Create a New Course on page 58.

Create Tests

The LEARN Test Builder allows Training Writers to create a series of sections that each contain multiple questions. When LEARN administers a test to a student, it will select a random number of questions from each section and prompt the user with a choice of answers. A training writer is responsible for providing multiple answers for each question and indicating the correct answer.

For instructions on writing tests, see Using the Test Builder on page 74.

Create Learning Plans

Learning Plans enable you to group related courses and tests into a single collection. A learning plan may include one or more SCORM modules and tests on the material covered in each module. You can use learning plans to schedule these courses and/or tests at the same time.

For instructions on creating a learning plan, see Creating a New Learning Plan on page 63.

Approve Courses

Before any course, test, or learning plan can be scheduled, an administrator must approve it. This enables you to review course material before it is delivered to your students.

Administrators can approve courses from the Course Catalog. For instructions on accessing the Course Catalog, see Using the Course Catalog on page 59.

Schedule Courses

Once an administrator has approved a course, test, or learning plan, a manager can schedule the course and assign a trainer (if the course is not self-led). When you schedule a course, you decide who must take it and when it will be offered. Once a course is scheduled, a student can take the course.

For instructions on scheduling a course, see Scheduling a Course on page 69.

Taking Courses

Once courses are scheduled, students are free to take them. Students can take self-led courses at any time before the deadline provided, but must attend trainer-led courses at the scheduled time.

The Company LEARN Student User Guide provides instructions for viewing courses and taking tests.

Viewing Student Performance

At any time, Managers, Trainers, and Administrators can view student performance statistics.

Trainers can view statistics for their students. To view performance by user, see Working with User Profiles on page 44.

Group leaders can view statistics for their group, and any group member can view statistics for groups beneath theirs. To view performance by group, see View Group Reports on page 54.

Trainers and managers can view statistics for their courses. To view performance by course, see View Reports for a Scheduled Course on page 73.