eLEARNING IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ACELG
Australian Centre of Excellence
for **Local Government**

UTS:CLG
CENTRE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

About the Learning in Local Government Project

The 'Learning in Local Government' project explores the often unique and complex needs of education and professional development in Australian local government. It aims to inform and facilitate the development of education and training programs through the Australian Centre for Excellence in Local Government (ACELG). ACELG has committed funds to the project through its Workforce Development Program with a view to coordinating, commissioning or (in rare instances) delivering training programs to address priority needs.

Work and discussions continue to explore gaps in the content and availability of education and professional development specifically tailored to local government's needs. ACELG is advocating an integrated national approach that:

- is forward looking and reflects the changing environment and role of local government;
- addresses sector needs for essential skills now and into the future;
- focuses equally on people working in the sector and meets their personal needs to enhance their skills and develop their careers; and
- offers seamless pathways between vocational and higher education and ongoing professional development.

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Executive Summary

This is the third issues paper in the Learning in Local Government series, and it aims to describe and promote the use of eLearning technologies in education and professional development for local government. The material in this paper is also contained in the eLearning Portal, and can be accessed on-line at www.iken.net.au/e-learning.

Benefits of eLearning for Local Government

The use of technology offers many potential benefits for education and professional development in local government. The tyranny of distance, isolation of professionals within their organisations and across localities can be addressed through a range of online learning solutions. eLearning is also suited to people who are:

- Based in isolated, rural and regional locations
- Living with physical disabilities
- Living abroad or interstate
- Full-time employees
- Employees that are mobile rather than office-based

Current Use of eLearning in Australian Local Government

In September 2010, councils across Australia, as well as professional and training organisations were invited to distribute an online survey to their members and networks to canvass further training needs. The survey attracted almost 900 respondents.

Distance learning and eLearning had been utilized by almost half of the respondents with close to two thirds of those rating the experience 'very good' or 'good'. Distance learning was particularly favoured by those from more remote areas as the accessibility enabled them to obtain qualifications they would not have been able to otherwise complete. Other reasons for favouring eLearning included the ability to balance family and work commitments; variation in the access and response of tutors; and flexibility to manage study around responsibilities.

Benefits and Barriers of eLearning for Training Providers

There are both benefits and barriers which require careful consideration from training providers with regards to:

- New arrangements and skills needed for course administration, development and maintenance
- Opportunities to offer course content in new visually stimulating ways which can be stored and shared online
- Required technical skills and support
- Initially higher costs, but lower on-going costs for course provision
- Flexibility for very large or small class sizes

Benefits and Barriers of eLearning for Councils

Similarly councils need to consider both the benefits and barriers of eLearning with regards to:

- Potential savings in cost and time
- The need to provide adequate resources and time for staff members

- Perception that it is 'not real work' and the need to address negative views
- Class size

Benefits and Barriers of eLearning for Learners

On-line learning offers participants the following benefits and barriers:

- Flexibility around existing personal and professional commitments
- Portability of mobile technologies
- Self-paced learning at a convenient time and place
- Availability across localities, particularly for those in rural or remote areas
- The need for adequate technical skills and access to technology and technical support
- Limited face to face communication with teachers and peers
- The need for motivation and self-discipline in working unsupervised
- The ability to seek out learning opportunities which are most relevant
- The need to adapt to a new way of learning

eLearning Programs for Local Government

Local government training providers and councils across Australia are currently at various phases of implementing eLearning programs. While some training providers have only started looking into eLearning, others have begun developing, trialling and implementing eLearning as part of their education and professional development programs. Descriptions and examples of common types of eLearning programs currently adopted by local government training providers include:

- Web-based modules, units and courses
- Distance education for formal qualifications in VET or Higher Education
- Webinars
- eMentoring
- Online Council Inductions for staff and councillors
- Blended learning, also known as mixed mode, hybrid learning or flexible delivery

Appendices 2 and 3 provide examples and descriptions of eLearning programs for local government in Australia and Internationally.

Types of Learning Technologies

There is an extensive range of free and paid technology solutions available to address different types of learning and teaching needs:

- Learning Management Systems such as Blackboard, Moodle and Joomla
- Webinars
- Collaborative learning and sharing applications
- Web-based communication tools such as MSN Messenger, Skype or GoToMeeting
- Multimedia enabling text, graphics, audio, video and animation
- Web 2.0 and Social networking such as wikis and blogs
- Mobile learning through devices such as laptops, tablets, smart phones etc

Appendix 1 – Learning Technologies provides more detailed information about each type of technology.

eLearning Portal

The eLearning Portal is a web-based platform located at www.iken.net.au/e-learning. The platform aims to provide a range of resources on eLearning for local government training providers and practitioners as well as serve as an online space for the exchange and sharing of ideas, experiences and opinions of eLearning in local government. The portal includes

- Current Programs: A compilation of currently existing eLearning programs and initiatives in local government across Australia and internationally.

- Tools & Technologies: A list of potential web-based learning tools, software/applications, and other technological solutions to develop and deliver online material such as online portals, courses, webinars/virtual conferences, platforms for information sharing and communication, and programs to create multimedia.

- Discussion Board: An online forum for all IKEN members to share, contribute and discuss their experiences and opinions on eLearning in local government.

- Links & Resources: Links to relevant and useful resources such as articles, publications, websites, case studies, tools and guides to generating online content.

Introduction to eLearning

The use of technology offers many potential benefits for education and professional development in local government. The tyranny of distance, isolation of professionals within their organisations and across localities can be addressed through a range of online learning solutions. Many local government organisations and councils are beginning to develop eLearning materials such as web-based modules and courses, webinars, eMentoring programs and online inductions.

eLearning describes any form of learning and teaching that is enhanced, facilitated or supported by information and computer technologies (ICT). It is an electronic means of transferring skills and knowledge via the Internet, a network or standalone computer. The terms web-based training, computer-based training and online learning are also used to describe eLearning.

There are a broad set of eLearning applications, including web-based learning, computer-based learning, mLearning (using mobile technologies), virtual classrooms, streaming of content (eg. Webcasting and podcasting), and digital collaboration.   eLearning is also used for distance education, in-class teaching, and blended learning.

There are many ways that technology and online facilities can support learning and teaching, for example:

- Components of a course offered partially online and partially face-to-face (blended learning)
- To enhance face to face tutorials and workshops (in-class teaching)
- Entire courses or units offered online (web-based learning)
- Provide access to online information, resources and course materials
- Provide courses nationally and internationally
- Facilitate communication between students and instructors
- Online discussions and chat forums

eLearning content is delivered in different forms and formats, including the internet, intranet/extranet, audio and video recordings, interactive TV, and CD-ROM.

eLearning is suited to those:

- Based in isolated, rural and regional locations
- Living with physical disabilities
- Living abroad or interstate
- Full-time employees
- Employees that are mobile rather than office-based

Examples of ways a learner can be assessed online include online exams and quizzes, essays, written assignments, collaborative assignment work, portfolios, simulations, portfolios, case studies, online discussions, publication of student work, debates, reviews, journals, reflections and evaluations.

Users of eLearning in Local Government

In September 2010, councils across Australia, as well as professional and training organisations were invited to distribute an online survey to their members and networks to canvass further training needs. The survey attracted almost 900 respondents.

The survey questions asked about the respondent's role and length of service in local government, the location and type of council they were from as well as their membership of professional associations.

Generally, the respondents were long serving government staff and executive. Almost three quarters of the summary group have worked in local government for over five years with just over 50% having worked for over ten years.

Respondents came from across the range of locations with the greatest number of responses from metro urban areas and the least from remote areas.

The survey questions explored respondents' involvement in education and professional development (E&PD) while working in local government, their current level of education, modes of learning used, as well as the quality of the learning experience.

Distance learning and eLearning had been utilized by almost half of the respondents with close to two thirds of those rating the experience 'very good' or 'good'. Councillors varied most from the summary group with only 3% having utilised this form of learning:

eLearning	Councillors	Executive/ Senior Managers	Line Managers/ Supervisors	Professional Officers	Administration Officers	Trades	Total
Have participated in eLearning	1/31	53/106	132/248	89/195	43/91	17/32	**363/798**
% who rated their experience 'very good' or 'good'	100%	63%	65%	62%	62%	68%	**62%**

Distance learning was particularly favoured by those from more remote areas as the accessibility enabled them to obtain qualifications they would not have been able to otherwise complete. Other reasons for favouring eLearning included the ability to balance family and work commitments; variation in the access and response of tutors; and flexibility to manage study around responsibilities.

Factors for Consideration – Benefits and Barriers of e-Learning

A range of factors should be taken into consideration when determining the potential benefits and barriers of eLearning for the three relevant stakeholders: training providers, councils and learners.

An advantage of eLearning over other modes of learning is its ability to deliver accessible and cost-effective training that transcends distance and time. With geographical barriers removed, learners can undertake study from home or work which subsequently eliminates travel and accommodation costs. Time is also saved for learners and trainers who commute to campuses, and with shorter delivery time, eLearning reduces the time an employee is away from his/her job.

eLearning however, is not without its drawbacks. The term eLearning is a relatively new teaching and learning concept, and one that continues to divide opinions. Due to various reasons, some individuals tend to be quite hesitant or reluctant to trial eLearning, while in workplaces, eLearning is still struggling to be recognised as proper training.

Furthermore, in order to provide eLearning to employees, councils need to ensure they have substantial resources while training providers need to consider the availability of technical support and training for staff, trainers and learners when building an online course.

The overall success of eLearning implementation and delivery will depend on how well training providers, councils and learners can co-operate and work together to recognise, address and support each other's roles, responsibilities, issues, and training and learning needs.

Some of the factors affecting each stakeholder group are considered and discussed below.

Training Providers

1. Course Administration, Development and Maintenance
Management of learning activities and course materials can be made easy with the support of a centralised system such as a <u>Learning Management System</u>. Online learners can also be tracked, updated and managed via the system.

This however, may cost the time of an administrator to monitor, update and maintain course content, learner registrations, and schedule instructors for instructor-led learning or webinars and virtual conferences.

2. Course Content
With an extensive range of tools and applications now available to create and share multimedia, eLearning content can be more than just 'plain, boring text on a screen'. Multimedia can offer highly interactive and participative experiences through a combination of content forms including text, audio, still images, animation and video content.

eLearning has the potential to make learning activities and course content more exciting, engaging and fun. Difficult and complex topics or subjects can be made more appealing, and abstract

principles and concepts can be visually depicted or demonstrated in ways that otherwise cannot be produced in print. eg. Animations, video tutorials and simulations.

Course material can be read, edited, stored, downloaded and shared online, with the convenience of being able to revisit course material anywhere at any time. Large amounts of information and resources can be found online to support study, including websites, databases, videos, and online journals, articles and publications.

While online content can be quick and easy to update, and be shared and reused by other trainers from the same provider, some content of existing traditional courses may be difficult to simulate or transfer to an online learning setting.

3. Technical Skills and Support

The implementation of eLearning may require technical support and training for all relevant academic stakeholders such as instructors and course administrators to competently use new or updated systems, software or devices. Formal classroom training, on-the-job training or self-paced tutorials will need to be provided to ensure that staff meet or learn the minimum skills required to operate the new technologies. Furthermore, a Help Desk or resource centre may need to be established to address and assist ongoing questions and issues regarding the technology.

While this may be an initial challenge for those involved, there is the additional benefit for staff to gain hands-on experience with new technological equipments, as well as to improve computer and internet skills.

4. Cost

All logistical, development and deployment costs should be taken into consideration when determining the cost-effectiveness of online learning over 'traditional' learning.

There may be high initial costs to design and develop technology-based courses, as well as continued costs associated with course and system maintenance. However, costs associated with 'traditional' courses may be reduced or potentially eliminated.

5. Class Size

eLearning can be offered to as few or as many learners wishing to undertake the course. The course can continue to be offered even with one student.

Councils

1. Cost and Time

For councils requiring training for employees, online learning can potentially reduce costs associated with 'traditional' training and development, such as accommodation and travel costs. Simulation-based training also reduces material costs by enabling employees to learn and practice in an online environment.

Delivery time of most online courses is typically shorter than instructor-led training; hence reducing the time an employee is away from his/her job. The flexibility for employees to undertake eLearning at any time, pace and place means less interruption with work operations.

2. Availability and Supply of Resources

"*Computer –based distance education programs are usually only viable with 'indoor' staff or managers, because of availability or access to computers. Council firewalls also present some issues with eLearning strategies as councils generally have not really considered providing facilities to accommodate these delivery modes…*" (Comment from Learning Survey)

Councils need to ensure they have substantial resources to provide eLearning to staff members. This means providing facilities and equipments (such as hardware and software) to accommodate eLearning. Most online courses require high bandwidth, current browser versions and the basic essentials such as computers, servers and/or intranets.

While most infrastructures already contain these components, employees may not necessarily have the same resources at home. The organisation should explore available eLearning options and be able to select the appropriate form (and format) to address and accommodate an employee's learning needs. For example, employees without internet access can undertake a course via CD-ROM at home, followed by completing online assessments in the office. eLearning via mobile devices such as tablets and smart phones may accommodate employees without access to computers such as 'outdoor' staff.

3. 'Not real work' Perception

"*Our experience with the delivery of self directed distance education programs is that most staff find it a real challenge to undertake this training at work due to workloads and perceptions of managers and staff that it is not 'real' work. A separate study area and allocation of time needs to be factored in by the workplace to improve outcomes in this area.*" (quote from Local Government Training Institute submission)

Councils need to recognise that learning does not just occur in a classroom setting and that eLearning is another viable option of delivering the same critical training needed to build employees' skills and knowledge. The concern of accommodating flexible learning during office hours needs to be addressed by formally accepting or approving learning within allocated times of work schedules. Learners undertaking eLearning from home or outside of office hours should also be acknowledged.

From a learner's perspective, general comments from the survey suggested that eLearning was too theoretical with low level of interaction, not challenging enough, questioned the relevance to job, and overall, online courses were easily forgotten.

Training providers need to help overcome and challenge negative views expressed by disinterested learners by building quality courses that demonstrate the potential for eLearning to be an engaging, interactive and job-relevant learning experience. Councils should also play a role by raising awareness and promoting eLearning, motivating employees through positive feedback and reinforcing the appeal and relevance of course content to their work.

Learners

1. Flexibility
Busy lifestyles and fast-paced work environments mean education needs to be flexible and 'just in time' for individuals seeking to enhance their knowledge and skills. eLearning can offer professional development that is flexibly scheduled around an individual's personal and professional work.

A survey respondent intending to undertake study via distance education particularly favors eLearning for the flexibility to balance family, work and study commitments.

 "I'm planning maternity leave in the next two or three years, and I don't want to complete a degree only to have no hands on work in that field for up to five years after having children. I plan to pursue study via distance education whilst on maternity leave to coincide my graduation with my return to work."

2. Portability (mobile technologies)
Over the years, learning has moved from the classroom to desktop and recently, into the pocket. The portability of mobile technologies enables learners to access and download content at their own convenience. With similar capabilities and functions as a desktop computer, mobile devices are increasingly being utilised in areas of education delivery.

3. Self-paced
Online learning enable individuals to study at a pace and place convenient to them, with the option to speed up, slow down or go back over notes as many times as necessary.

4. Cost and Time
Online learning reduces or eliminates costs associated with 'traditional learning' such as fares, parking or fuel, accommodation, food, and childcare. Time is also saved from commuting to a campus to attend lectures and workshops.

5. Accessibility and Convenience
With geographical barriers removed, eLearning is accessible for learners across localities, particularly those based in rural and remote areas or overseas. Learners are able to undertake study in an environment comfortable and convenient to them. E.g. from home or work.

6. Computer and Technology

- *Technical Skills*
  At a minimum, a learner should have (*or be required to obtain*) intermediate computer and internet skills as well as basic typing skills. Before a learner can comfortably operate in an online learning environment, he/she must feel reasonably competent with the technology. Less tech-savvy students may be slightly disadvantaged in using online learning systems and will require the need to enhance their computer and troubleshooting skills.

- *Technical requirements*
  Learners will require appropriate equipment to undertake online learning. E.g. Internet, hardware, software, current web browsers and compatible systems. The minimum requirements are generally a computer, office software, and an internet connection. Depending on the type of

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eLearning undertaken, additional requirements may be needed. E.g. speakerphone, mic or webcams for video chat or virtual conferences, plug-ins and updates for software or applications.

- *Technical support*
  Learners who first encounter online learning systems may experience difficulty with using the interface or finding the information they need on the platform. However, self-paced tutorials and/or a Help Desk are usually available to assist the learner with any technical or troubleshooting issues.

7. Communication
Some learners feel that lack of face-to-face communication with teachers contributes to a lack of understanding between teacher and student. With a wide range of web-based communication solutions now available, this issue can be addressed to some extent. The limitations of some web-based communication tools however, are that learners may need to wait for feedback or responses from instructors and peers. E.g. posting a question on discussion board or emailing an instructor for feedback.

8. Social Networking and Peer Interaction

"I missed the face-to face and networking available to on-campus students."

Isolation due to lack of face-to-face interaction with other participants and instructors can also be a challenge. Some eLearners claim to miss out on networking opportunities, and the lack of a stable social support structure has led to a common view that eLearning excludes emotional interactivity.

However, the new and improved generation of World Wide Web (Web 2.0) has demonstrated new possibilities and ways of connecting with peers. Web 2.0 offers an extensive range of tools and applications which support collaborating, communicating and sharing of information, ideas and thoughts between peers. The increased popularity of social networking sites in recent years have also displayed new, unprecedented ways of building strong peer support structures and communities online.

9. Diverse learning styles and learner backgrounds
eLearning can offer highly personalized learning experiences by enabling learners to choose tools and content appropriate to their learning needs, interests and skill level.

In an online environment, eLearners are treated equally– work is judged solely on merits and not by an individual's background, age, gender, religion or race. Reserved or 'shy' learners who do not usually speak up in a traditional learning setting can also voice their thoughts, suggestions and ideas.

10. Motivation and Self-Discipline
Online study requires a level of self-directed motivation with the ability to work unsupervised. Unmotivated learners with poor study habits may fall behind.

11. Relevance to Job

"The distance education graduate diploma in municipal engineering and management…taught me aspects of my job which are local government specific, and has enabled me to find employment all around Australia."

"I would find online training very useful and would also consider completing a dregree(sic) in local government if there was one available."

Learning should be relevant and in context with their work environment. eLearning can offer training that is local government-specific and relevant to an organisation's and/or individual's needs.

12. Adapting to change

Learners may have trouble adapting to an 'untraditional' mode of education delivery, particularly one that is set in a new and unfamiliar learning environment. Many still see the classroom as the best option and setting for education and because eLearning is a fairly new mode of delivery, the operating of new technology and navigating of an online learning environment can be quite startling for some upon initial use.

e-Learning Programs for Local Government

Local government training providers across Australia are currently at various phases of implementing eLearning programs. While some training providers have only started looking into eLearning, others have begun developing, trialling and implementing eLearning as part of their education and professional development programs. Descriptions and examples of common types of eLearning programs currently adopted by local government training providers are outlined below.

For an extended list of local government eLearning programs, refer to Appendix 2a – Sample Profiles of eLearning in Australia.

Web-based Modules, Units and Courses

Web-based modules, units and courses are distributed over an intranet or Internet via a Learning Management System application, software or service. Once registered, participants are given a log-in to access the program. The duration of a web-based program can vary depending on whether it is an induction, module, unit or short course. Some web-based programs can be completed in less than an hour while others may take up to weeks to complete. Registrants are normally permitted to log in as many times as needed to complete a web-based program. Web-based programs can include multiple choice questions, quizzes, and tracking of progress. Blended learning and distance education commonly comprises of at least one web-based module, unit or subject.

> *Example: The LGA Education and Training Service developed six Online Training Modules to assist new Council Members quickly gain the skills required to function well in their new roles. The online training modules included topics such as the Roles and Responsibilities of Councils, Roles and Responsibilities of Council Members, Council and Committee Meeting Procedures, and Financial Management and Reporting. Each module consisted of information on the topic, quizzes and case studies, and was available to Councils via a Learning Management System.*

Distance Education – Formal Qualifications (VET/Higher Education)

Distance education, also known as off-campus education or external study, enable learners to complete a formal qualification while balancing work, family and social commitments. Learners can undertake study by accessing a combination of learning materials such as web-based units, learning portals, CD-ROMS/DVDs, textbooks or other reference materials. Support and communication between a teacher and learner is carried out through the use of education media and web-based communication, such as e-mail, forums, videoconferencing, and instant messaging.

> *Example 1: The Local Government Training Institute delivers a wide range of nationally accredited Certificate programs from Certificate II to Diploma level, offered via distance education. At the start of a distance education program, participants are given a Learner's Toolkit which contains learner's guides, reading materials, CD-ROM and web-based activities, work based projects, self-assessment checklists and assessment tasks, with phone and email support available at all times.*

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Example 2:

IPWEA National and the Centre for Pavement Engineering Education offer a <u>Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma in Infrastructure Asset Management (Distance Education)</u> through the University of Tasmania. The courses are conducted exclusively through distance education with specially designed, user friendly study materials including a comprehensive set of technical notes, readings, references, activities, case studies, assignments and sample examination papers.

Webinars

The term webinar, short for web-based seminar, refers to any live lecture, workshop, presentation or seminar transmitted over the Web. Webinars are generally one-way conversations conducted by a speaker to an audience as they watch the presentation on their own computer while listening to audio over the phone. Webinars enable information to be received simultaneously by a small or large group of audience.

Example:

The learning and development unit of LGSA, Local Government Learning Solutions recently developed a series of local government-oriented <u>Webinars</u>, featuring live audio, video and chat for elected members and staff. The webinar sessions are also recorded and available for viewing within 24 hours of the live session.

E- Mentoring

E-mentoring, also known as online mentoring, uses web-based tools such as email, instant messaging, and chat applications as the primary means of communication between a mentor and mentee. E-mentoring makes possible the delivery of individualised learning experiences for those that are unable to access traditional face-to-face mentoring due to obstacles such as geographic dispersals or time constraints.

Example: Local Government Professionals (LGPro) launched a cross-council <u>LGPro Mentoring Program</u> for professionals working in Local Government throughout Victoria. The program aims to bring together Council Officers from all levels to learn and share knowledge, expertise and skills. The program encourages the use of communication technologies such as teleconference or videoconference. Email, fax, and 'chat' applications such as MSN are recommended for less formal conversations for 'in between' meetings.

Online Inductions

eLearning is an efficient and cost-effective way to deliver inductions online to employees, contractors or visitors. Online inductions can be completed on or off site by the inductee, and course content, policies, procedures and compliance data can be easily managed, updated or customised through eLearning systems. Online inductions can be delivered through multiple modes such as CD or via Internet as well as in multiple languages to suit technical constraints and specialised audience types. Other features include assessments such as quizzes, tests with scoring, multiple choice questions, and certificates automatically generated upon successful completion of induction.

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Example: Local Government Training Institute offers an e-learning training package developed by a team of local government OH&S professionals to provide council operational staff with Work Activity induction training. Interactive assessments ensure that the participants understand and can apply what they have learned. The package features 12 separate training programs in both CD-based and web-based format, and can also be used as a trainer's aid for classroom training.

Blended Learning

Blended learning, also known as mixed mode, hybrid learning or flexible delivery, combines and utilizes the strengths of both traditional face-to-face learning and eLearning. Distance education courses often adopt the blended learning approach. A common blended learning model is delivery of 'theory' content via eLearning prior to actual attendance of a course or program. Classroom time is then dedicated to engaging students in interactive 'hands on' learning experiences by putting theory into practice.

Types of Learning Technologies

There is an extensive range of free and paid technology solutions available to address different types of learning and teaching needs. Refer to Appendix 1 – Learning Technologies for more detailed information about each type of technology.

Learning Management Systems

A learning management system (commonly abbreviated as LMS) is a software application for the administering, documenting, tracking, and reporting of training programs, classroom and online events, e-learning programs, and training content. Common examples of learning management systems include Blackboard Learn, Moodle and Joomla.

All materials and learning activities related to a course can be organised and managed within the LMS. LMS can also be used for discussion forums, file sharing, chat, announcements, and management of assignments, lesson plans and syllabus. 'Pre-class' exercises or readings prior to a face to face session can also be conducted through a LMS, and feedback and evaluation can be obtained at the conclusion of a course.

Webinars

The term webinar, short for web-based seminar, refers to any live lecture, workshop, presentation or seminar transmitted over the Web. Webinars are generally one-way conversations conducted by a speaker to an audience as they watch the presentation on their own computer while listening to audio over the phone. A presenter may conduct a webinar to an audience ranging from one to hundreds of attendees. Webinars can be used for meetings, seminars, conferences, lectures and presentations. Other uses include information sessions and collaborative work.

Webinar lecturers can display powerpoint presentations, track attendance, transfer files to participants and engage in live text chats for Q&A.

Collaborative Learning and Sharing

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves learners at various performance levels to work together in and as a group to achieve a common goal such as solving a problem, completing a task, or creating a product. There are a wide range of web applications that support collaborative learning and sharing in an online environment such as applications for sharing notes, documents and presentations, social bookmarking and collaborative mind mapping.

Collaborative learning and sharing applications can be used for shared group projects and assignments, knowledge and research sharing, study teams, shared files and resources, brainstorm sessions, joint problem solving, debates, collaborative writing, mentoring and online peer review.

Web-based Communication Tools

Web-based communication tools are used to provide further contact with peers or instructors, support group development, online mentoring, collaborative learning and exchanging of information. Communication tools are also used to plan work and allocate tasks, provide emotional support and negotiate and resolve conflicts. Forums can serve as a conversation documentation tool, enabling online discussions to be recorded, stored or downloaded.

Web-based communication tools include discussion boards, annotatable web pages and databases, chat rooms, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) and webinars. Popular examples include Yahoo and MSN Messenger, Skype and GoToWebinar/GoToMeeting. Web-based communication tools can create online spaces for learners to comfortably ask questions, voice their suggestions and ideas, and facilitate trust within groups. Regular visits to an online forum or network can eventually develop into a supportive community.

Multimedia

Multimedia is the integration of multiple forms of media such as text, graphics, audio, video and animation. Multimedia can create fully participative and interactive learning experiences, accommodate diverse learning styles, and present content in its most effective form for students to follow and remember.

An example of an integrated multimedia approach is outlined below:

Learning abstract concepts through text and diagrams, seeing the application of the concepts through visual. eg. animation or a video example, and then putting theory into practice through a simulated 'hands-on' learning experience.

Web 2.0 and Social Networking

The term **Web 2.0** was introduced in 2004 to describe a second generation of the World Wide Web. Web 2.0 does not refer to a specific or updated version of the web, but rather a series of technological and functional improvements. Web 2.0 is the transition from static HTML web pages to a more dynamic, interconnected Web with focus on providing new features and functions for users to collaborate, organise and share information online.

Features of Web 2.0 include blogs, wikis, social networking services and web applications.

WIKIS are great tools for collaborative activities between peers such as group assignments and building case studies, group debates, or maintaining a set of course materials with a team of academics.

BLOGS can be used as a tool for learners to establish a learning journal or digital portfolio, as a class portal for learners to access supplemental course materials, or as a peer assessment and review blog.

SOCIAL NETWORKING tools are used for communication, building companionships and maintaining

connections between peers and teachers. Social networking tools can also assist with knowledge sharing, mentoring and resource making.

Mobile Learning

Examples of mobile devices include laptops, notebooks, tablets, personal digital assistants (PDAs), personal digital media players (E.g. iPods, MP3 players) and smart phones. Mobile devices are flexible, portable, and generally more affordable than larger systems.

Mobile devices can support or enhance learning in all settings and modes of delivery. E.g. In the classroom, blended learning, outdoors (field trips), at work or at home.

Basic functions of a mobile device include audio, video and photo creation, communication (IM, SMS, emails) and information and applications sharing. Smartphones and tablets demonstrate new ways of using mobile devices for teaching and learning such as social networking and accessing web content, portable documents and interactive activities. E.g. Simulations, games, quizzes, and editing of documents. An extensive range of educational apps can also be downloaded and installed on smart phones.

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eLearning Portal

The eLearning Portal is a web-based platform featured on the Innovation and Knowledge Exchange Network (IKEN) website. The platform aims to provide a range of resources on eLearning for local government training providers and practitioners as well as serve as an online space for the exchange and sharing of ideas, experiences and opinions of eLearning in local government.

Key Features of the eLearning Portal:

Current Programs: A compilation of currently existing eLearning programs and initiatives in local government across Australia and internationally. The selected programs will provide an overview of ways that local government have begun to implement eLearning as part of their education and professional development programs.

Tools & Technologies: A list of potential web-based learning tools, software/applications, and other technological solutions to develop and deliver online material such as online portals, courses, webinars/virtual conferences, platforms for information sharing and communication, and programs to create multimedia.

Discussion Board: An online forum for all IKEN members to share, contribute and discuss their experiences and opinions on eLearning in local government.

Links & Resources: Links to relevant and useful resources such as articles, publications, websites, case studies, tools and guides to generating online content.

Further feedback or comments can be made to:

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Appendix 1 – Learning Technologies

For detailed descriptions and further examples of each type of learning technology, visit the link:
http://iken.net.au/tools-technologies

Learning Management Systems	
A **learning management system** (commonly abbreviated as **LMS**) is a software application for the administering, documenting, and tracking of classroom and online events, eLearning programs, and training content.	
Features and characteristics of a LMS:	• Used for web-based or blended course delivery • Features for instructors and course administrators include online assessment and grade reporting, surveys and quizzes, course backup and download, course announcements and calendar administration tool, web-based file management, learner group administration and tracking tools • Features for learners include self-evaluations, group work areas for collaborative web publishing, email and discussion groups, real-time time chat rooms and whiteboards, messaging and notifications, individual grade and progress status reports
Why use learning management systems?	• An LMS is a solution for planning, delivering and managing learning activities and materials within an organisation • Different tools and applications for running an eLearning course can be integrated in a single system • Content is quick and easy to update, and can be shared and reused by other trainers within the same provider • LMS content and activities can be delivered in tandem with other blended or face to face methods
Examples of uses for teaching and learning:	• Conduct 'warm up' or 'pre-class' exercises or readings prior to a face to face session • Provide course content in a variety of media (text and multimedia) • Monitor and maintain communication between learners • Provide links to external resources and websites • Learners can document or record their projects via a journal or publish online presentations • Archive voice tutorials conducted with learners in virtual classroom • Obtain feedback and evaluation of the course
Factors to consider:	• Learning management systems tend to be designed as management tools rather than learning environment tools. For this reason, the LMS interface is usually designed with designers and administrators in mind rather than end users (learners). Learners who first encounter an LMS tend to find the interface confusing and difficult to navigate.
Examples:	• Blackboard Learn: an education platform with a range of online learning tools for teaching and learning, community building, and content management. • Joomla LMS: a fully featured eLearning software package • MOODLE: an open source software and application for producing modular internet-based courses and websites. • Sakai CLE: A full-featured system supporting technology-enabled teaching,

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	learning, research and collaboration for education.
Webinars and Virtual Conferences	

The term **webinar**, short for web-based seminar, refers to any live lecture, workshop, presentation or seminar transmitted over the Web. Webinars are generally one-way conversations conducted by a speaker to an audience as they watch the presentation on their own computer while listening to audio over the phone. A presenter may conduct a webinar to an audience ranging from one to hundreds of attendees.

Features and characteristics of a webinar:	• Live streaming video • Powerpoint presentation • File transfer • Attendance tracking • Instant polls and surveys • Live text chat for Q&A • Live desktop share • Sharing hyperlinks with participants
Why use Webinars and Virtual Conferences?	• Simple and easy to use with no downloads required • An interactive medium to engage with audience • Ability to reach a large audience • Allows information to be shared simultaneously, across geographically dispersed locations • Cost-effective for both parties; no travel and accommodation expenses. • Webinars can be recorded and archived for future playback or distribution • Audience respond in an environment comfortable and convenient to them, over their own telephones and speaker phones at home or at work. • Facilitate real-time multimedia demonstrations over the Web
Examples of uses for teaching and learning:	• Training and online workshops • Meetings, seminars and conferences • Lectures and presentations • Collaboration • Information sessions
Factors to consider:	• *Attention:* Attendees in their work environment may be distracted by other staff, emails or phone calls. • Technical challenges prior to or during the webinar session such as experiencing issues signing in, forgetting passwords, using the software, Internet connectivity, audio issues via telephone, and system compatibilities. • Presenter: A strong presenter in a traditional setting may not necessarily be the same in an online environment. Because the presenter cannot see the audience, is may be difficult for the presenter to monitor how engaged the audience are. A trial run and rehearsal time prior to the scheduled event is recommended.
Examples	• Adobe Connect *A* web conferencing software that provides web meetings, eLearning and webinars solutions. • Blackboard Collaborate A comprehensive learning platform for web, video and audio conferencing, instant messaging, and voice authoring and collaboration. • GoToMeeting/GoToWebinar An online solution for web conferences and online meetings.

	• Web Ex *WebEx* offers collaboration solutions for online meetings, remote support, and webinars and online events.
Web-based Communication Tools	
Communication technologies are generally categorized as synchronous or asynchronous. Synchronous activities occur in real time and involve participants interacting and exchanging information at the same time from their own computing devices. Asynchronous activities involve participants providing input and responses at different times, which can be instant or delayed depending on an individual's availability to respond.	
Features and characteristics of web-based communication tools	SYNCHRONOUS • Webinars • Chat rooms • Videoconferencing • Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) • Instant messaging - the exchange of real-time direct text-based messaging between two participants. ASYNCHRONOUS • Emails • Discussion Boards • Social networking sites • Annotatable webpages and databases such as blogs and wikis
Why use web-based communication tools?	• Supports group development and facilitates trust within groups. • Reserved people who do not usually speak up in a traditional learning setting can voice their thoughts, suggestions and ideas • Forums can be used as a conversation documentation tool - online discussion can be stored, recorded, downloaded or revisited. • Participants can contribute when they are ready and have thought about the issue thoroughly. • Learner motivation - A space to comfortably ask questions or seek advice • Community-building - Regular visits to a forum by participants can eventually develop into a supportive community
Examples of uses for teaching and learning	• Provide further contact with other peers or instructors • Online mentoring • Collaborative learning: creating, sharing and exchanging of information • Plan work, allocate tasks, review drafts • Provide emotional support or advice • Negotiate and resolve conflicts
Factors to consider	• *No physical cues:* Lack of facial expressions and gestures can lead to the misinterpretation of text. However, this is becoming less of an issue due to the advance of voice and video conference technology. • *Quality of text and language:* The quality of language and typing skills vary across learners with different language capabilities. There also tends to be inconsistent use of text-based language such as abbreviated SMS style and broken English. Learners lacking language and/or typing skills may fall behind in a live chat context, but better suited to asynchronous activities such as discussion boards.

	• *Threads (in discussion forums)*: When multiple threads of discussion are created by users, the logical sequence of discussion is often broken by not sticking to the topic or losing focus due to side discussions. • *Time lag:* Students with slow internet connection may lag slightly behind in the conversation
Examples	• Skype: A real-time communication tool that allows registered users to make voice and video calls over the internet. • Windows Live Messenger: Instant Messaging and Video chat application • phpBB: A free and open-source forum software solution.

Collaborative Learning and Sharing

Collaborative learning is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves learners at various performance levels to work together in and as a group to achieve a common goal such as solving a problem, completing a task, or creating a product.

Why collaborate online?	• Develop team skills • Promotes critical and creative thinking skills through social stimulation and sharing of ideas • Requires active student involvement in the learning process • Provides an online social support system for students by conversing with peers • An opportunity to present, exchange and defend ideas, beliefs and viewpoints • Document versioning and file control: a central folder or location can be created to save and store recent versions of documents • Provides electronic records of team activity • Easier to plan and control work schedules
Examples of uses for teaching and learning	• Shared group projects and assignments • Sharing knowledge, research and resources online • Study teams • Brainstorming sessions • Joint problem solving • Debates • Collaborative writing • Mentoring • Online peer review
Examples	• Google Docs: A free web-based office suite and data storage service offered by Google that allow users to create, share and collaborate on documents, spreadsheets and presentations. • Slideshare: An online slide hosting service that offers users the ability to share Powerpoint presentations, documents and Adobe PDF Portfolios publicly and privately. • Diigo: A research tool and knowledge sharing community. Diigo Groups provides a collaborative research and learning tool that allows any group of people to pool their findings through group bookmarks, highlights, sticky notes, and forum. • Bubbl.Us: An easy to use application for brainstorming and mindmapping online.

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Web 2.0 and Social Networking Tools

The term **Web 2.0** was introduced in 2004 to describe a second generation of the World Wide Web. Web 2.0 does not refer to a specific or updated version of the web, but rather a series of technological and functional improvements. Web 2.0 is the transition from static HTML web pages to a more dynamic, interconnected Web with focus on providing new features and functions for users to collaborate, organise and share information online.

Features of Web 2.0:	• **Blogs** - (short for web log) is a website or part of a website often used as a personal journal and intended for public viewing, commenting and messaging. Blog entries include updated commentaries, description of events, and other materials posted by the individual. • **Wikis** - an online collaborative space where people can gather to build and edit content. • **Social Networking Services -** An online service, platform or site that enables users to create public profiles and form relationships with other users within a virtual community. • **Web applications** - a broad new range of applications make it possible for users to now run programs directly in a web browser. • Rich user experience and participation • User as a contributor - Users are no longer just receivers of information provided by site owners, but now able to contribute to information by evaluating, reviewing and commenting. • Web 2.0 contents are made available to edit, share, reuse, and redistribute.
Why use Web 2.0?	• Facilitates and supports collaborative learning - all academic stakeholders (eg. lecturers, students) can develop educational content • Enables an informal and personalised learning space for the individual • Provides a social support structure and enables peer review and tutoring (learning with and from peers) • Web 2.0 encourages learners to experiment with new and unique ways of articulating their thoughts and ideas • Creative and engaging approach to learning • Develops valuable communication and teamwork skills • Enables easy web publishing without prior knowledge of HTML or use of special web development tools • Social networking tools support the exchange of knowledge and material, and facilitates community building
Examples of uses for teaching and learning:	WIKIS • Collaborative activities between peers. E.g. group assignments, building case studies, and field reports • Group debates • Frequently Asked Questions for peers or instructors to answer • Authoring and maintaining a set of course materials with a team of academics BLOGS • As a tool for learners to establish a learning journal or showcase personal works and achievements. E.g. digital portfolios or personal reflections. • As a class portal for learners to access supplemental course materials, links, homework and assessment tasks, and other peer/trainer feedback.

	• A course subject journal to document and provide informational/instructional resources. • A peer assessment and review blog. SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS • Tool for communication between peers and staff • Build companionships and maintain connections • Knowledge sharing • Mentoring • Resource making
Factors to consider:	• Restrict editing access to prevent vandalism such as inappropriate content or automated spam. • 'Edit Wars': Two page contributors with opposing opinions may result in the repeated replacement of the opponent's content with their own. A mutually acceptable version needs to be established. • Social networking for learning must appeal to users from all generation - inexperienced web users or older users tend to be cautious and may 'distrust' the use of social networks. • Social network sites may be distracting
Examples	• <u>Blogger:</u> A free and easy to use webblog publishing tool from Google. • <u>Wordpress.com:</u> A sophisticated blogging tool and publishing platform. • <u>Wikispaces</u>**:** a collaborative tool used by learners to record their individual activities throughout a project. • <u>Twitter:</u> An online social networking and microblogging service.

Multimedia

Multimedia is the integration of multiple forms of media such as text, graphics, audio, video and animation.

Why use Multimedia?	• A fully participative medium - using our natural senses to take in and process information • Active and interactive participation • Easier for students to follow and remember content • Illustrates complex concepts • Multimedia accommodates diverse learning styles (visual, auditory, and kinaesthetic - three ways in which people take in information.) • Complete control over pacing and sequencing of information • Support information • Learning abstract principles through text and seeing the application of the principles through visual. eg. animation or a video example
Examples of uses for teaching and learning:	• Text: to explain, document or narrate • Diagrams, flowcharts and photos: To depict models, examples and representations • Concept maps, charts and graphs: demonstrate qualitative and quantative relationships • Animation, video and simulation: show changes over time • Animation and graphical analogies: to show hidden or complex concepts • Simulation: enable or depict direct practice

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Factors to consider:	• Keep up-to-date
	• To avoid information overload, graphics and narration works better than graphics, narration and on-screen text together.
	• Storage: Sound and video files can take up a lot of storage space. The higher the quality, the more space it will take to store the file. Larger files also take longer to download.
Examples of Tools	Multimedia Sharing/Hosting Websites:
	• iTunes: Audio and Podcast Hosting
	• Flickr: An online photo and image management, hosting and sharing application
	• YouTube: A video sharing website for users to upload, share and view videos.
Mobile Technologies for Learning	
Mobile Devices include:	• Laptops (Notebooks)/Tablets
	• Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs)
	• Personal Digital Media Players (eg iPods, MP3 players)
	• Smart Phones
Why use mobile technologies for learning?	• Flexible: Users can access lessons, video clips and audio libraries, and other information from anywhere at anytime (depending on type and capability of mobile device)
	• Portable: lightweight and compact - great for notetaking or creating and entering all types of data directly to the phone (eg. audio, video, photographs)
	• Affordable: Handheld devices are generally more affordable than larger systems
	• Student-centred learning
	• Enhance interaction between students and instructors
	• Can support or enhance learning in all settings and modes of delivery - ie. in the classroom, blended learning, outdoors (eg. field trips), at work or at home.
Examples of uses for teaching and learning	Mobile technologies can be used to access and deliver a range of formats for different learning strategies:
	• Creating and accessing audio, video and photographic files
	• Communication (IM, SMS, emails)
	• Accessing web content
	• Portable documents, eg. ebooks, docs, pdf, excel
	• Broad range of Interactive content and activities. eg. simulations, games and quizzes
	• Bluetooth for sharing information, files and applications
	• Social networking
Factors to consider:	Technical challenges include:
	• Screen and Keys Size: Small screens not suitable for long hours of studying - activities should be interactive and visual - minimal text if possible
	• Limited storage capacities
	• Short battery life
	• Absence of a common hardware - difficult to develop content for all mobile devices and systems (different screen sizes, hardware and operating systems)
	• Limited wireless bandwidth
	• Incapable of printing material directly from the phone

Examples	• Laptops (Notebooks) and Tablets
	• Personal Digital Assistants
	• Personal Digital Media Players
	• Smart Phones

Appendix 2a- Sample Profiles of eLearning in Australia

For an updated list of eLearning programs and initiatives, please visit http://www.iken.net.au/e-learning.

Organisation	Topics/Study Areas	eLearning Program and Features
Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD)	Finance; Superannuation; Essential Directors Update; Governance essentials for new directors.	AICD offers a range of online courses for board members and directors to enhance their knowledge of key directorship issues. A series of live webinars and presentations for members of AICD and facilitated by practicing directors with specific expertise in the webinar topic are also available.
Environmental Health Australia (EHA)	Food Safety; Food Preparation and Handling	The EHA website provides a set of online Professional Tools for members to use, including: FoodSafe Online, an online alternative to the original FoodSafe DVD Course, which provides personal food safety training on safe food preparation and food handling techniques. I'm ALERT Food Safety: a free online food safety training program. Local Governments (as well as State Governments and training organisations) can subscribe to I'M ALERT Food Safety On-line Training and have the program linked to their website.
Australian Institute of Management (NSW & ACT)	Compliance; Desktop; Frontline Management; Specialist Skills.	A growing range of online courses currently available.
Australian Institute of Management (QLD & NT)	Management; Project Management; Business; Human Resources; Marketing	AIMQ Online offers 31 online courses that can be completed as standalone courses or contribute to one of 10 qualifications ranging from Cert IV to Advanced Diploma level.
Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA)	Australian Library and Information Services	ALIA recently released a new range of one hour teleconferences on 'hot topics' to facilitate and encourage the sharing and discussion of ideas. ALIA also features an Online LIS Resources section containing LIS journals and eBooks for members of the LIS sector.
Chartered Secretaries Australia (CSA)	Corporate Governance and Risk Management	A selection of relevant compulsory and elective training programs is made available online, and can contribute to the completion of a Certificate course. Assessments are via online multiple choice questions rather than written exams.
Curtin University (CURTIN)	Development Planning; Urban and Regional Planning; Environmental Health	Curtin University offers a range of postgraduate courses related to local government, with a combination of study options available including on-campus, mixed (on- and off-) and/or fully online. Available online courses include: Graduate Certificate in

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		Development Planning, Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Health, and Master of Environmental Health
Engineers Australia/ Engineering Education Australia	Engineering; Project Management; Harvard Manage Mentor	Online courses and resources include Exponential Learning Toolbox, Harvard Manage Mentor, Preparing Engineering Reports Online, and an Online Diploma of Project Management. Webcasts - Online CPD: Over 500 webcasts covering all areas of engineering are accessible via the Engineers Australia website.
Griffith University (GRIFFITH)	Public Administration	Students undertaking the Master of Public Administration program are able to undertake the research methodology course fully online. Some courses in the program are also offered by Open Universities Australia.
Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia	Pavement Engineering; Infrastructure Asset Management; Fleet Management	IPWEA National and the Centre for Pavement Engineering Education offer a Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma in Infrastructure Asset Management (Distance Education) through the University of Tasmania. IPWEA also offers a Fleet Management Certificate Course via self study distance learning. Course material includes electronic workbooks and assessments on CD, as well as a series of webinars to provide additional support for the modules and assessment tasks.
Local Government and Shires Association of NSW (LGSA)	Training for Elected Members and staff	Local Government Learning Solutions have joined with online learning company, CPDLive to develop a series of local government-oriented Webinars, featuring live audio, video and chat. The website also lists current eLearning programs as well as other useful resources.
Local Government Association of South Australia (LGASA)	Training for Elected Members	The LGA Education and Training Service developed six Online Training Modules to assist new Council Members quickly gain the skills required to function well in their new roles.
Local Government Training Institute (LGTI)	Work Activity Induction	Local Government Training Institute offers an e-learning training package to provide council operational staff with Work Activity induction training. LGTI also provides the option of delivering a wide range of nationally accredited Certificate programs via distance learning.
Local Government Managers Australia NSW (LGMA NSW)	Integrated Strategic Planning	eConnect is LGMA NSW's new online elearning and information service, providing a comprehensive range of new online 'eBooks' and virtual classrooms for NSW Councils.
Local Government Professionals (LGPRO)	Mentoring for Council Officers	LGPro launched a cross-council Mentoring Program for professionals working in Local Government throughout Victoria. The program brings together Council Officers from all levels to learn and share knowledge, expertise and skills.

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		The cross-council program encourages the use of other forms of communication technologies such as teleconference or videoconference. Email, fax, and 'chat' applications such as MSN are recommended for less formal conversations for 'in between' meetings.
Open Universities Australia		Open Universities Australia offers a great range of fully online local government-related courses and units provided by seven Australian shareholder universities and other providers.
Planning Institute of Australia (PIA)	Certified Practicing Planner	Course units of the Certified Practicing Planner Program can be undertaken through intensive sessions, face-to-face sessions or online sessions, which uses 'threaded discussions' to allow people to share and contribute to a topic.
RMIT University	Local government innovation	Participants of the online Innovative Local Government course complete learning activities through the use of online learning materials and active participation in online discussions.
SAI Global	Standards & Compliance; Business Improvement; Risk & Governance	SAI Global offers a growing range of short, industry accredited and nationally recognised self-paced online learning programs.
The Association of Professional Engineers, Scientists and Managers, Australia (APESMA)	Frontline Management; Project Management; Workplace Training and Assessment; Workplace Effectiveness	An initiative of APESMA, Chifley Business School delivers certificates, diplomas and postgraduate programs in Management and Project Management via distance learning.
Western Australian Local Government Association / Workplace Solutions (WALGA)	Training for Elected Members	Local Government Workplace Solutions developed an online version of the popular 'Getting Started' training course. The Online Training - Introduction to Local Government module is free of charge and takes about two hours to complete.

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Appendix 2b - International Sample Profiles

Organisation	Topics/Study Areas	eLearning Program and Features
Association of Washington Cities (AWC)	Elected Officials Essentials	AWC's Elected Officials Essentials webinars cover a variety of topics for Washington's Elected Officials. AWC also offers webinars in other areas such as Online Drugs & Alcohol Supervisor Training, Wellness webinars, Lunch & Learn webinars and access to underlined archived webinars.
Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)	Sustainable municipal infrastructure; climate and environment	The FCM website contains free eLearning tools for municipal practitioners, elected officials and decision makers who play a critical role in the development of sustainable municipal infrastructure. FCM's Green Municipal Fund also provides online workshops (webinars) on the topics of Brownfields, Energy, Transportation, Waste, Water, Multi-sector, and Partners for Climate Protection.
Harvard Kennedy School of Government (HKS)	Executive Education	Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government introduced a series of Executive Education Online Programs designed for nonprofit and NGO managers around the world. Those who participate in three or more programs in the online series receive a special certificate of completion in the Online Leadership Series. The Executive Education Online Programs use a combination of streamed videos, online readings, discussions, and workbook exercises.
International City/County Management Association (ICMA)	Local government management and leadership	ICMA University hosts a series of online training workshops (live webconferences) which address one or more of the 18 core competencies essential to effective local government management. ICMA also runs the annual ICMA Virtual Conference, which takes place during the professional development conference to accommodate those unable to attend the event in person. ICMA broadcasts live over the Internet videos of 12 educational sessions and four keynote sessions, as well as 9 audio-only sessions (with Powerpoints).
Learning Pool	Training for councillors/prospective councillors	Modern Councillor is an online learning and support system for councillors, people considering standing for election, or those with an interest for local democracy. A subscription to Modern Councillor provides elected members with full access to a range of features including a course catalogue with 17 e-learning modules, guides and resources on local democracy, blogs and stories, and an online community.
LGG and Local Government Lawyer	Local government legal training	Local Government Law.tv is an eLearning facility created by local government training provider LGG and Local Government Lawyer. Local Government Law.tv provides a selection of webinars and podcasts across the full range of legal issues affecting local government.

National Association of Counties (NACo)	Leadership Training (Community Engagement; Media Relations; Misc); Energy, Environment & Land Use; Green Government; Health, Human Services & Justice; Transportation – Road Safety; Misc.	NACo's offers timely, practical web-based Education on a range of topics to county officials and staff around the country. Participants have the choice of listening to the webinar by phone or computer, with the presentation displayed on the computer screen.
National Association of Local Councils (NALC)	Training for Councillors	An initiative of the National Training Strategy (NTS), the Dynamic Learning Environment (DLE) offers online modules for councillors. In time, DLE hopes to provide a great range of online national training and development products for Parish and Town councils meet the quality standard through the Quality Parish Scheme (QPS).
National School of Government		Virtual School - eLearning hosts the National School of Government's portfolio of e-learning programmes, services and online communities of practice. Virtual School's online learning packages and networking tools are designed to enhance the skills, knowledge and ability of everyone across government. Click here to view Virtual School's range of online programmes and tools.
New Hampshire Local Government Center (NHLGC)	Finance; governance; health/safety; human resources; schools	The online and blended-learning platform, LGC Academy offers a range of complimentary online courses that are accessible at anytime of the day. The LGC also runs webinars that is topic-specific and hosted by LGC's Health and Safety Advisors.
New Zealand Society of Local Government Managers (SOLGM)	Various Local Government topics	SOLGM runs a Webinar Series on topics of interest in Local Government. SOLGM's upcoming webinar course 'How Local Government Works' has been designed as an introduction to local government for new employees.
Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities (PLCM)	Training for Municipal Officials	PLCM's Online Training Library offers a range of online training for Municipal Officials.
Public Technology Institute (PTI)	Various Local Government topics	GoGoTV Webinars is an online technology education and training series for local governments.
University of Portsmouth	Foundation Degree in Local Government (eLearning)	Created by the University of Portsmouth in partnership with local government employers, the Foundation Degree in Local Government (eLearning) is delivered via the University's Virtual Learning Environment which includes multimedia materials and online personal tutor support.

The World Bank	Urban management, economic growth and competitiveness, governance and leadership capacity, health systems climate change; public private partnerships	The global portal, e-Institute offers more than 45 eLearning courses which address complex real-world problems in priority areas such as governance, health, cities, climate change, and public private partnerships. Learners also have access to free monthly podcasts and webinars, video success stories, multimedia toolkits, and other resources.

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WORLD-CLASS LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO MEET THE EMERGING CHALLENGES OF 21ST CENTURY AUSTRALIA

ABOUT ACELG

ACELG is a unique consortium of universities and professional bodies that have a strong commitment to the advancement of local government. The consortium is led by the University of Technology Sydney's Centre for Local Government, and includes the University of Canberra, the Australia and New Zealand School of Government, Local Government Managers Australia and the Institute of Public Works Engineering Australia. In addition, the Centre works with program partners to provide support in specialist areas and extend the Centre's national reach. These include Charles Darwin University and Edith Cowan University.

PROGRAM DELIVERY

ACELG's activities are grouped into six program areas:

- Research and Policy Foresight
- Innovation and Best Practice
- Governance and Strategic Leadership
- Organisation Capacity Building
- Rural-Remote and Indigenous Local Government
- Workforce Development

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