

SharePoint-based LMS Total Cost of Ownership

An LMS-SharePoint combination offers low SaaS costs with crucial security, compliance, and administration benefits you demand from SharePoint

“The deeper you dive into SharePoint, the better you will like a SharePoint-based learning management system.”

For organizations that are committed SharePoint users and those that have decided on SharePoint as their corporate Enterprise Content Management Solution, a SharePoint-based LMS is the learning management system (LMS) of choice.

This Total Cost of Ownership (TCO) review examines the value proposition of a LMS-SharePoint fusion from the perspective of a committed SharePoint adopter considering non-SharePoint SaaS and non-SharePoint on-premises LMS solutions.

A SharePoint-based LMS is the clear winner from both value and functionality perspectives. Among LMS-SharePoint combinations, ShareKnowledge is a corporate LMS category leader that belongs on any purchaser's acquisition shortlist.

Author

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Key Findings

Adding an LMS to work as a part of SharePoint gives users a holistic Enterprise Content and Learning Management solution with benefits much greater than the sum of its parts. Benefits, organized into Strategic, Enterprise System Integration, Information Integration, and Operational Ease of Use, are discussed following.

An LMS-SharePoint Fusion Means Strategic Benefits for Your Enterprise because it...

- Delivers low user-per-month total costs of ownership that compare favorably to SaaS solutions but ShareKnowledge offers the manageability and security of an in-house solution.
- Leverages the existing SharePoint infrastructure, with no extra infrastructure costs.
- Provides tight SharePoint integration that means no incremental costs for hiring a dedicated ShareKnowledge administrator, and no special training costs for SharePoint technical support staff to support ShareKnowledge.

A SharePoint-based LMS Means Enterprise System Integration Benefits because it...

- Increases the use of your SharePoint investment with your Learning Management and Enterprise Content Management integrated in one system.
- Offers SharePoint's version control and workflow features to manage content for regulated industries like Pharmaceutical, Financial, Manufacturing, and Services.
- Manages content published from SharePoint libraries directly and uses SharePoint distribution to disseminate the content according to SharePoint security and authentication rules.

An LMS-SharePoint Combo Means Information Integration Benefits because it...

- Leverages existing Single Sign-on (SSO) using Active Directory (AD) and SharePoint profiles already implemented for SharePoint. Integration of your organizational unit hierarchy is included with our set-up fees.
- Simplifies migration from obsolescent systems, including historical data of past training records that are critical for audits of legal and regulatory compliance.

An LMS Incorporated with SharePoint Means Operational Ease of Use Benefits because it...

- Eliminates additional LMS training costs for administrators and end users. This has already been covered in normal SharePoint training.

Analysis

Learning in the work environment includes a myriad of events that range from attending formal classroom instruction through collaborating with peers and seeking independent training opportunities. To increase the likelihood that employees and contractors have timely participation in mandatory training and make the best use of optional learning, it makes sense to have training available where prospective learners spend much of their time. For many organizations, this means SharePoint.

On-Premises Installation and SharePoint Integration Deliver Enterprise Benefits

Enterprise SharePoint-based LMS users enjoy low user-per-month costs comparable with non-SharePoint SaaS solutions. However, an on-premises LMS-SharePoint combination offers clients the same manageability and security that they expect and receive for their SharePoint assets. In-house installation means information risks associated with SaaS vendor hacking, bankruptcy and business cessation, and cross-border data issues with proprietary training content are eliminated.

The amalgam of SharePoint and LMS technology maximizes use of existing SharePoint investments. SharePoint administrators and technical support staff will manage the SharePoint-based LMS with no additional training. Infrastructure hardware and SharePoint asset usage both increase with no extra infrastructure investment, or administration training and staffing costs incurred.

Enterprise users appreciate the SharePoint Features of an LMS-SharePoint Fusion

- An LMS-SharePoint fusion means **a simple and familiar environment** for SharePoint users. For example, a SharePoint-based LMS would use SharePoint's version control and workflows features to manage content for regulated industries like Life Sciences and Pharmaceuticals.
- A SharePoint-based LMS uses SharePoint integration **to accept content published from SharePoint libraries**. In addition, an LMS-SharePoint combination uses SharePoint distribution to allocate content using SharePoint's built-in distribution capabilities. So, there is no need for users to manually transfer critical information from SharePoint to a non-integrated LMS solution, and no need to waste time in redundant LMS training.
- An LMS-SharePoint fusion will make **the best use of relevant new SharePoint functionality** as it is released. When new SharePoint capabilities are released, the LMS-SharePoint fusion's deep integration means those features become available to the LMS' users. For example, an LMS- SharePoint combination would embrace social learning by making the best use of SharePoint's popular social features.
- When an LMS is incorporated into SharePoint, the combination **uses Active Directory (AD) Single Sign-on (SSO)** and SharePoint profiles already implemented for SharePoint. In addition, certain SharePoint-

based LMS solutions allow you to integrate your organizational unit hierarchy as part of a SharePoint-based LMS set-up.

- An LMS-SharePoint amalgam **reduces legal and regulatory compliance audit risks**. Regulated industries require proof that current employee and contractor training takes place and that evidence of past training is available for audit review. Aside from the training ease that a SharePoint-based offers, SharePoint integration simplifies migration of historical data of past training records from obsolete legacy learning management solutions. Rather than maintaining a legacy implementation solely for audit compliance purposes, the LMS-SharePoint amalgam is the “Single Source of Truth” for evidence of compliant training delivery.

Features of non-SharePoint on-premises and SaaS LMS to ShareKnowledge

ShareKnowledge is an industry-leading LMS-SharePoint combination that offers SaaS-like costs and SharePoint value, as shown in the feature/cost review, following.

Table below: comparison of non-SharePoint on-premises and SaaS LMS to an LMS-SharePoint combination (ShareKnowledge) reviews key one time and ongoing expense criteria for three classes of LMS solutions.

		On-premise LMS	SaaS LMS	ShareKnowledge On-premise
		<i>Stand-alone installation</i>	<i>Cloud</i>	<i>Adding to existing SharePoint farm</i>
Assumptions	LMS Feature set	Equal	Equal	Equal
	LMS Licenses cost	Equal	Equal	Equal
	LMS Administration cost	Equal	Equal	Equal
Hardware & System Software (one time)		Required	Not required	Not required ¹
Standard Implementation (one time). Complexity and time spent.	Setup (including system software, LMS, backup etc.)	High	Not required	Low ²
	Single-Sign-on authentication	Average	High	Not required
	Integration with System of Records	Average	High	Not required
System Administration		High	Not Required	Low ³
TCO, 3 year		100%	up to 30% less expensive	Up to 40% less expensive
Additional (non-TCO) factors to consider:	Risk & Compliance Management, Security	Strong	Weak	Strong
	Customization & Integration	Unlimited, Customer-centric	Limited, Product-centric	Unlimited, Customer-centric

¹ If your company has SharePoint, you don't need to purchase additional hardware/software for ShareKnowledge.

² ShareKnowledge is added to your existing SharePoint farm.

³ ShareKnowledge administration is performed by SharePoint administrators.

Review Checklist for Learning Management System Purchasers

Enterprise Learning Management System purchasers will focus on key cost elements of implementing and operating an LMS. Aside from an LMS-SharePoint combination, purchasers may consider other on-premises non-SharePoint LMS solutions and non-SharePoint SaaS offerings. What are the most useful cost elements to consider?

Key Questions for Pre-Purchase LMS Evaluation

1. What are the costs for additional server hardware and operational software?

(E.g. database technology, document management, and workflow solutions) to support commercial LMS systems – Those incremental costs are -0- for enterprise SharePoint users adopting a SharePoint-based LMS.

2. What are the license costs for a SharePoint-based on-premises LMS vs. non-SharePoint-based on-premises LMS and non-SharePoint SaaS offerings?

An LMS-SharePoint combination's per-user-per month costs are competitive and LMS-SharePoint combo adopters avoid the additional costs of retraining systems administrators and end users, and the risks of off-premises data storage.

3. What are the one-time LMS implementation costs?

These costs include software installation and related activities, Single Sign-on (SSO) setup, and LMS integration with systems of record. – An LMS-SharePoint amalgam uses Active Directory user data for SSO and user system of record integration already in place for SharePoint so there are no extra costs.

4. What are the ongoing LMS support costs?

These costs include applying updates to underlying platform and database software, training of administrators, administration of users, and management of server hardware and software. – A SharePoint-based LMS offers low ongoing support costs because it integrates directly to SharePoint and benefits from all software, hardware maintenance, administrator training, and user administration already provided for SharePoint.

5. What are the costs and challenges of supporting end-users with new LMS?

New software always requires significant end-user training, help-desk support, and hand-holding to ensure sustainable adoption. – An LMS incorporated into SharePoint avoids the cost of and resistance to new LMS software because it looks and feels “right” to SharePoint users, and fits into help-desk support organizations of existing SharePoint communities.

An LMS-SharePoint combination offers compelling implementation, operational cost, and ease-of-use advantages over competitive non-SharePoint-based LMS installations and is cost-competitive with non-SharePoint-based SaaS LMS solutions. At the same time, a SharePoint-based LMS offers all the familiarity, security and manageability that users appreciate most in their existing SharePoint environment.

Among SharePoint-based on-premises LMS offerings, ShareKnowledge is the industry leader for corporate learning management.

ShareKnowledge offers every benefit of SharePoint-based on-premises LMS solutions, and now offers integration with popular webinar services and course schedule integration with your Outlook calendar. Whether maximizing your SharePoint usage, relying on your trained SharePoint administrators, streamlining LMS roll-out with Active Directory integration, or easing LMS adoption with the familiar SharePoint look and feel, ShareKnowledge is the SharePoint-based on-premises LMS that delivers maximum quality and value.

Recommendations for LMS Purchasers

Evaluate the challenges of introducing a non-SharePoint LMS solution into a SharePoint world. End-user and administrator familiarity and comfort with SharePoint suggest that an LMS-SharePoint combination would avoid the difficulty, additional costs, and resistance associated with introducing a non-SharePoint solution into a SharePoint-committed enterprise.

Analyze the advertised benefits of a SaaS LMS against the reality of off-premises solution challenges, potential detrimental reliance on SaaS vendor's security and availability for training material, auditable training records and results.

Review the additional costs of hardware, system software, Single Sign-on (SSO), and user data integration for a non-SharePoint LMS installed solution or a non-SharePoint SaaS LMS implementation when compared to a SharePoint-based LMS' native SharePoint integration.

Remember that ShareKnowledge is a vital, successful LMS solution with a robust product roadmap. For example, organizations facing sun-setting of their current LMS should consider ShareKnowledge for its upcoming "Tin Can" interoperability capabilities that will ease migration and ensure the value of any ShareKnowledge investment.

Consider ShareKnowledge as the SharePoint-based LMS of choice for organizations committed to SharePoint as their Enterprise Content Management system. Factors ranging from maximizing use of existing SharePoint investments to ease of end user adoption and sustenance mean ShareKnowledge offers the best mix of value, security, and manageability.

Conclusion

ShareKnowledge as an LMS-SharePoint amalgam offers the cost-effectiveness of a SaaS LMS solution and lower hardware, software, integration, administration, and user adoption costs than a non-SharePoint-based on-premises alternative. SharePoint adopters will also appreciate the risk avoidance and compliance management offered by an on-premises solution like ShareKnowledge, which cannot be matched by a SaaS LMS solution.

About ShareKnowledge

ShareKnowledge is a corporate learning management system built on top of the Microsoft SharePoint platform. ShareKnowledge exposes every benefit of SharePoint for learning professionals as well as integration with popular webinar services and course schedule integration with your Outlook calendar, or other e-mail clients that support iCalendar. ShareKnowledge was designed to integrate directly and completely with SharePoint, and builds on all existing SharePoint administrative efforts such as Active Directory integration for permissions and security.

To find out more about SharePoint, ShareKnowledge, and how they work together to deliver the best learning management available today, contact us:



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