

Introduction to Standards

The *eLearning Standards Guide* describes the standards for developing eLearning courses. This guide is a description of the standards for presentation methodology, screen design, types of interactions, testing, student management, visual and sound elements, multilingual and content collection requirements, naming conventions, implementation, and systems.

What Are Standards?

Standards are documented guidelines to which developers adhere when creating eLearning courses. Standards define the software tools and file formats used to develop and present the end user application, and the process by which all team members work together to create a presentation efficiently. Standards also address presentation components such as font size, color, image size, display conventions, and navigational options as well as the interactivities, testing methodologies, score tracking, and naming conventions.

Benefits of Using Standards

Standards provide the ability to produce effective eLearning presentations efficiently by structuring and defining the layout, navigation, and look and feel of applications. Because these aspects of course development are set, developers have standards on which to structure the presentation and flow of courseware and to ensure consistency. Creativity and time are spent on delivering high quality, cost-effective and timely training that meets identified needs and expectations.

With standards, developers reuse basic interaction screens. This achieves consistency not only within a course, but also within a suite of courses. Because all courses/modules use a defined structure based on standards described in this guide, the presentation of information from the beginning of a course/module to its final conclusion screen is consistent and easy to maintain. Subject matter experts (SME) can focus on content while having a shared understanding of the intended appearance and functionality of the presentation, and students taking courseware developed with standards appreciate the familiar look and ease-of-use achieved throughout.

Developing and Maintaining Standards

Standards are developed by a group of courseware developers who review and agree upon the visual and technical presentation of courses. These standards are documented and shared among all team members responsible for developing multimedia courseware. While standards are reviewed and updated as needs change and/or technology evolves, it is intended that every effort is made to anticipate future needs in order to avoid costly rework of development efforts.

Adhering to established standards requires discipline by all team members.