



Curation

**Content & tools to support
continuous learning**



www.brightwave.co.uk

Foreword

Curation in digital learning promises to be a really effective way of enabling learning that is a) sustainable and more cost-effective than current approaches and b) taps into the simple fact that an unprecedented amount of content already exists, is published, shared and consumed in ways that must surely shape the way we design and deliver training in the workplace.

But for many of us - commissioners and suppliers of corporate e-learning - this curated approach represents a new way of doing things and one that it is emphatically contingent on a shift in how we look at content.

As Nielsen reports, consumers continue to spend more time on social networks than on any other category of sites. There's no doubt that the recent proliferation of mobile devices and connectivity is helping fuel the continued growth of social media.

So, for learners, the shift has to be away from the idea of linear one-off courses or modules to a more flexible model where content is aggregated and curated in a variety of digital formats in portals or learning sites. These are targeted at particular groups of learners and are kept alive over time partly by curation - editing and refreshing the content - but also by a colleague-to-colleague social dimension where learning communities aggregate, create, share and rate their own content to achieve improved performance levels.

In this practical guide, we explore the changing nature of learning content, how we interact with it and review five curation tools available to support corporate learning.

James Cory-Wright - Head of Learning Design at Brightwave

Consumers continue to spend more time on social networks than on any other category of sites - roughly 20% of their total time online via personal computer (PC), and 30% of total time online via mobile.”

Nielsen

Context

In terms of training and performance in the workplace all the above present organisations with a unique opportunity to:

- Foster a learning culture
- Deliver sustainable training
- Train with greater cost-efficiency
- Integrate learning and work

How to achieve this may require a shift in thinking...

A shift in design thinking

6 steps towards achieving a dynamic, work-relevant learning experience

Step 1 - Move on from the one-off course

Forget the tradition of e-learning being about one-off linear courses/modules having to be developed 100% from scratch. Courses that are one-off events, done once then quickly forgotten should never have been the norm in the first place. Ebbinghaus's forgetting curve that says knowledge retention is only about 20% one month after a learning event is as true today, if not more so, than it was in the 19th century! But now it really is time to do the right thing by learners and tap into and reflect what's happening in today's workplace and the world at large.

Here's an example of how we could approach this: the 80/20 content model. For any given training course, as a rule of thumb, start by assuming 80% of the content already exists in one form or another inside, or possibly outside, the organisation - for example on YouTube, websites and blogs, or internally as pages, PDFs and PowerPoints on the intranet.

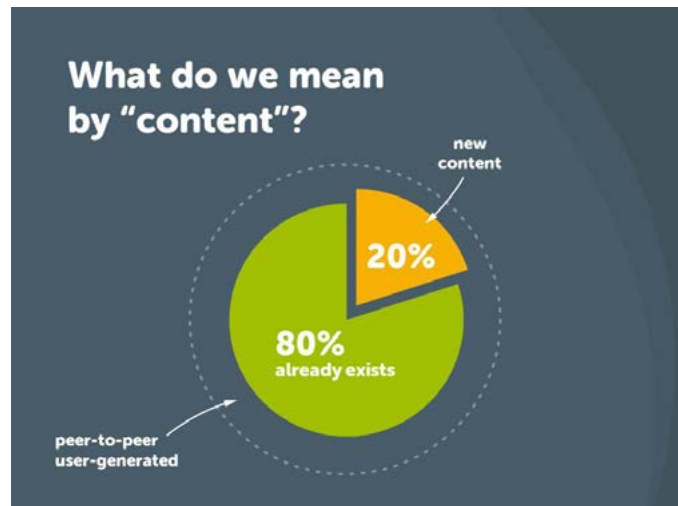
The 80% may need a bit of tweaking to get it into shape, bring it up to date or adapt it by using only selective parts of an old e-learning course, smartening up or editing a PDF or shooting a video of the expert to embed in their PowerPoint.

But doing this will very cost-effectively leave us with only 20% of the content needing to be created from scratch, as opposed to 100% with the old model. The 20% could be about filling in knowledge gaps with short e-learning topics on new content, or impactful overviews or positioning key messages, for example a change in business practices or priorities. A new piece of content might be used to position the training - perhaps a video of the senior stakeholder, a trusted opinion leader or a short animation to explain a new concept or way of doing things. Start to think how peer generated content could work: whether that's new stuff or simply colleagues steering colleagues to useful sources of learning or sharing learning experiences.

Think Wikipedia, Spotify, Foursquare and any other online social sites that have a clear focus. They work! Should learning delivery now include a social dimension to facilitate this in your organisation?

Consider your aims. Sometimes only a formal course and meaningful rigorous assessment will do. For others, design training for informal, self-directed approaches - think resources not courses. Even when you need to prove knowledge formally, a more self-directed approach leading to an assessment can be a more effective learning experience.

And finally think about using all means at your disposal to get the learning out there and to promote it for initial and ongoing uptake over time!



Step 2 - Build mosaics of learning

All the above suggests quite a different approach to learning design. Instead of one-off courses, people go to one place online - a site, a hub or a portal - where the learning in a particular subject area, or for a particular community of learners, sits, most likely in a mosaic of different formats from video clips to e-learning, PDFs, animations, quizzes, webcasts, virtual classrooms and links. And this learning page, which each learner can personalise, may also include a colleague-to-colleague social dimension so they share stuff with people in the same area of the business or area of learning such as induction or sales capability.

This may seem all very good but in the first instance someone has to ensure the content is:

- Useful
- Relevant
- Trustworthy
- Up to date

Then when it's published, someone will need to keep fine-tuning the content so it stays useful and relevant and supports performance. That someone is a curator.

Step 3 - Aggregate, edit, create

In the first instance the role of the curator is to aggregate content, pull it together, organise and maybe edit any existing content - the 80% - which, as we discussed earlier, may need tweaking or tidying up, improving its presentation.

It may be necessary to create any new stuff that's required to complete the learning experience - anything from e-learning modules to videos, documents or setting up live webinars.



To summarise: so far we've put together a learning site using a curation approach and it is now up and running. It's a flexible learning resource - a cluster of learning materials around a particular subject or subjects suited to a particular group of learners - for example, the learning community might be in sales, HR, management, R&D or supply chain management.

Step 4 - Form a curation team

Like a garden the learning site needs to be planted, weeded and kept alive with flowers and vegetables so it's a rewarding place to spend time.

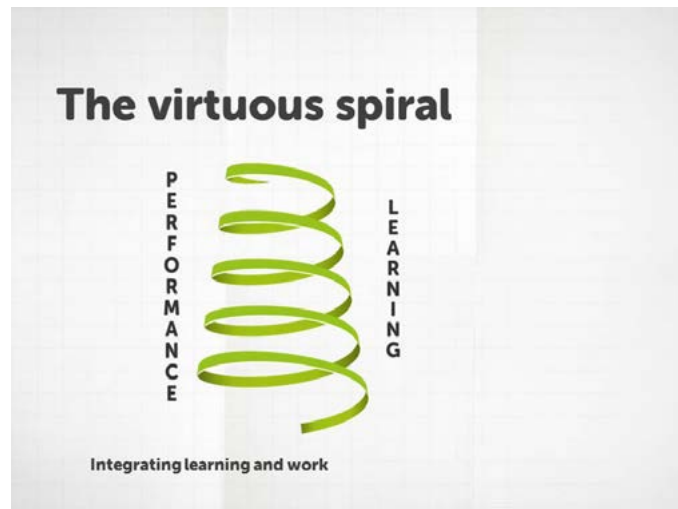
And this is where a curation team will really earn its corn. We say team because we believe that's what it has to be - a joint effort, and an enduring one, between supplier and client - or an internal team fulfilling the same functions throughout the year:



- Curator 1: supplier side - likely to have learning design skills who collaborates in the editorial maintenance of the learning and can create a range of new stuff swiftly as required
- Curator 2: client side - with their finger on the pulse, access to stakeholders, experts, business measures and resources

Achieve a virtuous spiral

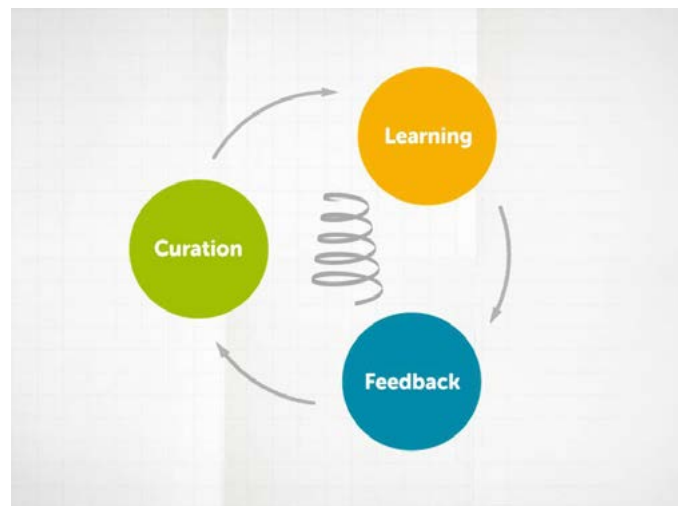
The overarching aim for the curation team will be to manage the content in such a way that a virtuous spiral is achieved where the work they do in analysing, reviewing and refining the content makes sure the content gets ever more useful, relevant and close to what people really need to support and improve their work performance. Tin Can API and Learning Analytics have a key role to play here.



Step 5 - Follow the curation cycle all year round

This diagram illustrates a process that can deliver the virtuous spiral! The first part of the diagram - learning - refers to the release of the content that's now out there and which (hopefully) people are making good use of over the coming months.

The next stage is to refine, improve and refresh the content based on feedback gathered, such as:



- **Analytics** - data/management information about usage: anything from what's been clicked on/selected to drop-out times in e-learning modules, or questions in an assessment that most people seem to be getting wrong.
- **User feedback** - gathered using online questionnaires such as Survey Monkey, focus groups or chat strings.
- **Performance levels and business measures** - likely to be easier to measure in some areas of the business such as sales than others, but worth pursuing where possible. For example, are performance management scores/ratings improving in areas that match content areas? Ditto with customer satisfaction data, or has the number of customer complaints needing to be dealt with, or the time spent handling them, reduced?

- **Anecdotal** - likely to be very valuable either in general terms of gathering comments and opinions but also because the curators should engage with any online social dimension, colleague-to-colleague, where the value of the learning site and how it can be improved can be openly discussed by all.

Refine and Improve

The curation team collaborate to:


1. Analyse the feedback
2. Consult subject matter experts, stakeholders, colleagues
3. Refine - the 80/20 piece of editing that's already there and creating any new stuff that's required. Don't rule out live events from this mix such as webcasts by influential, or even entertaining, people that will chime with learners which can be advertised accordingly...



Step 6 - Promote

Last but by no means least, the curation team needs to keep promoting the site and its key messages, any updates and new stuff, including live online events. The curators should use all means at their disposal, from creating little viral animations or videos sent out as links in an e-mail campaign, to pushes on mobiles and/or through social media.

And so we have what should be a continuous cycle of curation which helps to ensure the whole learning experience is as much about ongoing performance support as it is about training events and that the content on offer is ever more relevant and applicable to the job.

A young woman with dark hair is looking at a stack of colorful folders (red, purple, green, yellow, and white) in a library or office setting. The background shows bookshelves with books.

**What are the best
curation tools for
corporate learning?**

There are literally hundreds of freely available curation tools on the web, so which one is right for you? When choosing a curation tool for corporate learning, consider these questions:

- What's your topic? Focus on a subject that's important to your organisation and meets a learning need.
- Who is your audience? Are you happy to share curated content with the world? Or do you need a private space for trusted colleagues?
- Are you sharing or broadcasting? Are you the voice of authority on a specialist subject? Or do you want your audience to take part in the conversation? Decide on whether you need a closed or collaborative learning space.

Here's a roundup of some of our favourite web-based curation tools. All of these are free to use (but some services offer premium features for a fee) so why not try them out and make up your own mind?

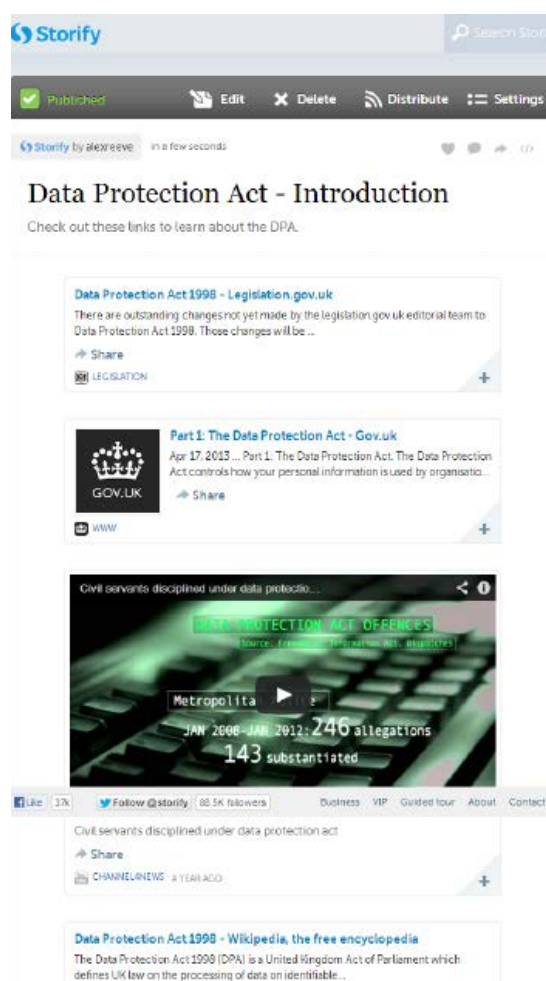
1. Storify

Storify is a "social media curation and publishing platform" which works in a similar way to blogging sites like WordPress and Blogger.

Within minutes of signing up to the site we'd published our first 'story' (on the Data Protection Act) with a mix of curated and original content. Storify's powerful search tools combined with the ability to contextualise each story make this a great platform for fostering a community of interest around a specific topic.

And if you want to keep your stories and conversations out of public view, sign up to Storify Business so that colleagues can access your site via a secure link.

<https://storify.com>



The screenshot shows a Storify story interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Published', 'Edit', 'Delete', 'Distribute', and 'Settings' options. The story is titled 'Data Protection Act - Introduction' and includes a sub-header 'Check out these links to learn about the DPA.' The story content consists of three main items:

- A text block from 'Legislation.gov.uk' titled 'Data Protection Act 1998 - Legislation.gov.uk' with a share button and a 'LEGISLATION' tag.
- A video player from 'GOV.UK' titled 'Part 1: The Data Protection Act - Gov.uk' with a share button and a 'WWW' tag.
- A video player from 'Metropolita' titled 'Civil servants disciplined under data protection act' with a share button and a 'CHANNELNEWS' tag. The video content shows a keyboard with text overlays: 'DATA PROTECTION ACT OFFENCES', 'Metropolita', and 'JAN 2008 - JAN 2012: 246 allegations, 143 substantiated'.

At the bottom, there's a social media sharing bar with 'Like' (17k), 'Follow @storify' (88.5k followers), and other options like 'Business', 'VIP', 'Guided tour', 'About', and 'Contact'.

2. Paper.li

Paper.li automatically finds and promotes articles, photos, videos from your chosen subject area in an online newspaper format. For example, you could start a weekly paper about your business sector to keep colleagues up to date with market trends and expert views. All you have to do is search for the sources you want Paper.li to grab from and define the frequency and update times for your paper.

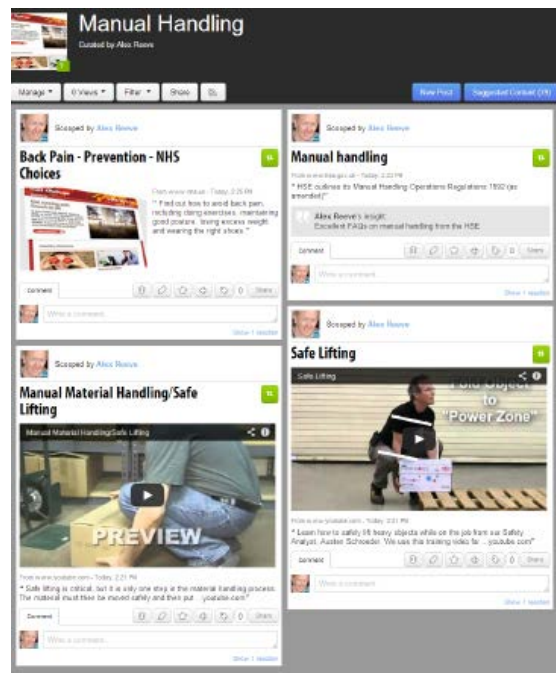
So if you're looking for automatic aggregation of news stories on a particular subject, Paper.li could be the perfect choice.



<http://paper.li>

3. Scoop.it

Scoop.it lets you edit and publish curated content in an engaging magazine format. A great feature of this service is the Scoop.it bookmarklet, which lets you publish interesting content directly from your browser to the magazine at the click of a button. The Pro and Business versions of this platform also offer analytics packages to help you grow and measure your audience.



<http://www.scoop.it>

4. Pinterest

Pinterest, “a content sharing service that allows members to ‘pin’ images, videos and other objects to their pinboard”, took the web by storm after its launch a few years ago.

With its modern and immersive layout, Pinterest is designed to help you discover and explore new visual content. This is a fantastic space to showcase inspirational design work, but, because of its focus on the visual, is less well suited to more structured learning initiatives.



<http://pinterest.com>

5. BagTheWeb

Like Storify, BagTheWeb lets you quickly and easily curate web content on any topic. A great feature of this site is that you can build networks of related content by linking to other users’ ‘bags’, thereby providing a rich and comprehensive route through your chosen subject area. This site has a strong focus on teaching and learning which makes it attractive to education and L&D professionals.



<http://www.bagtheweb.com>

To find out more on Personalising Learning, download our free practical guide:

[Click here to download](#)

You can also request a demo of tessello,

Brightwave's new web-based learning service which allows learners to capture, manage and share experiences - including more informal learning.

[Click here to request a demo](#)

