What is totara?
The Comprehensive Totara Learning Management System (LMS) Guide
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What is Totara Learn?

Totara Learn is the leading open-source enterprise LMS. Originally built off of the open-source Moodle platform, Totara takes learning and performance management to the next level for companies, associations, non-profits, government agencies, and healthcare organizations. Used by over 11 million learners worldwide across more than 1,400 organizations, Totara Learn is uniquely suited for corporate eLearning initiatives including employee onboarding, continued training, regulatory certifications, and succession planning.

Totara Learn is a flexible LMS solution that enables organizations to deliver learning effectively through individual learning plans which reflect your employees’ roles, training needs, and objectives. Totara provides a functionally rich learning platform which can be implemented quickly and at a fraction of the cost of proprietary solutions.
Why is Totara the leading enterprise solution?

There are numerous variables to consider when it comes to professional training or workplace learning, with most organizations consisting of many departments that require specific onboarding, training, skills, certifications, and continuing education necessary to perform roles. Not to mention, your eLearning program often needs to meet even more specific needs based on organization size, location, and other factors.

Totara’s flexibility and workplace-oriented functionality make it applicable for a wide range of industries and across organizations of various sizes and locations. Totara allows you to customize your site to align with your company's brand and specific organizational hierarchies to provide a streamlined eLearning solution that meets the unique needs across your organization.

Totara Learn has been used to train, connect, and develop personnel and organizations in various industries including:

- Business Services
- Financial Institutions
- Healthcare
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Education & Training
- Nonprofit
- Government
- Hospitality & Travel
- Sport & Lifestyle
- Technology & Media
- And more!
Totara is open.
What does this mean and why is it important?

Open source refers to the underlying technology that Totara is built on, primarily meaning that the core software is accessible to all. Alternatively, closed source learning platforms do not provide access to the code, which often ends up restricting the customization that is possible. An open code provides learning professionals with certain advantages, which we'll explore below...

The 4 Freedoms of Totara Learn

Totara demonstrates their dedication to transforming the learning technology marketplace with open technology by providing four core freedoms, which serve as pillars for ensuring versatile, secure, and scalable solutions that can transform traditional business learning.

Freedom to Innovate

Open-source allows you to create the ideal business LMS platform you want. Rather than being forced to compromise, Totara helps you provide innovative learning solutions for your team.

Open-source provides the flexibility needed to customize the look and feel of your site, incorporate branded content, innovative plugins and third-party tools, and adapt to meet changing learning needs, allowing administrators to stay on the cutting edge of the latest technologies and best practices to effectively meet eLearning goals.
**Freedom to Save**

Avoid expensive software licensing and locked-down contracts. Totara Learn’s affordable platform lets you save up to 80% of your total cost of ownership compared to other leading online corporate training platforms.

**Freedom of Choice**

When you combine Totara’s freedom, flexibility, and benefits with value-added expertise through a Totara Partner, you ensure that you get attentive, personalized service for your ideal eLearning solution. However, if you need to, you have the ability to take your code and move to another Totara Partner. Having choices in your vendor protects you from subpar service and vendor lock, meaning that you’ll always receive the high level of support that you require.

**Freedom to Learn**

Deliver seamless on-brand learning environments, improve teamwork, manage regulatory compliance, harness social learning, and create engaging learning experiences with Totara.

Request a demo & learn more about eThink at eThinkEducation.com
Advantages of Open Source

Additionally, outside of the scope of Totara’s four freedoms, open source offers the following advantages...

- **Security.** It’s a common misconception that open-source means less security. On the contrary, open and visible code allows the open-source community to find and note any security issues. This means security glitches are recognized much faster and patches are turned around almost immediately. So really, the more eyes on the code, the better!

- **Scalability.** As institutions or organizations grow and scale, it’s important that your LMS can grow with you and adapt to meet evolving needs. Open-source allows you to easily scale your online education and training programs.

- **Future-Proofing.** The ability to scale, customize and innovate means that you’re also able to future-proof your LMS investment by creating an eLearning solution that can adapt to meet changing needs. Additionally, as open source is modular in nature, you have the ability to integrate your LMS with other tools, technologies, and solutions in the market to create a future-proof and interoperable eLearning ecosystem. In this respect, open source protects not only your LMS but your entire learning infrastructure.

Learn how to **Future-Proof Your eLearning Ecosystem with Open Source** in this downloadable guide.

[Download](#)
Totara Advantages for Workplace Learning

Totara is created with workplace learning in mind, offering hierarchies, personalized learning paths, compliance, certification, and much more to help organizations better educate, train, and manage employees.

Totara’s flexible design allows organizations to configure and customize the look and feel of their training portal, creating a truly unique place for professional learning to happen. A fully responsive design that leverages HTML5 to adapt to different browsers and devices gives learning programs the flexibility to deliver the training modern learners want.

Synchronized Management

The Management tools in Totara are powerful and help manage employee learning performance, conduct appraisals, provide feedback and analysis, and align performance with personal and organizational goals. These goals can be set at the organizational level using objectives at the individual level.

Appraisals in Totara are designed to be flexible and make it simple to generate checklists or assign forms to users or groups with reminders if there are due dates. These tools allow for monitoring progress and allow managers to easily see how appraisals are being processed.

Personalized Dashboards and Learning Experiences

Totara allows you to develop employees using personalized or role-based Learning Plans. Dashboards make relevant data around learning, competencies, and learning objectives are easily visible and can provide important data around deadlines and what is mandatory or voluntary easily accessible at a glance.
Totara provides value and flexibility with its ability to publish your content to courses developed with third-party content creation tools and the native Totara tools. This can help create the user experience your organization needs through its ability to have elements of self-paced, instructor lead, and social learning in one course.

**Collaborative eLearning and Training**

Totara simplifies integrating synchronous and face to face training into your programs using the seminar manager. This tool organizes training, schedules, rosters, notifications, and attendance tracking.

Organizers can have custom fields for sessions for improved tracking and administration. Published training calendars and management approval workflows help to track and report on interest, registrations, and attendance for your events. Totara offers focused catalogs of learning opportunities with two interconnected catalogs making it easy to promote events and still manage learning efficiently.

Additionally, tools like the Seminar manager make it simple to organize training, schedules, rosters, notifications, and attendance for both synchronous and face-to-face training.

"Open technology coupled with business collaboration is the sustainable, strategic response to an unpredictable future. **Totara** is dedicated to transforming the learning technology marketplace."
_totara learn features_

**Hierarchies**
Mirror the organizational structure at your company and use hierarchies to assign learning plans and report on specific departments or segments in your organization.

**Personalized Learning Paths**
Totara Learn allows you to create personalized learning paths for staff based on organizational roles and groups, providing tailored eLearning to keep employees engaged.

**Performance Management**
Appraisals, goals, learning plans, and 360° feedback are available to monitor and assist employees in reaching developmental goals.

**Competency Frameworks**
Utilize competency-based learning and performance frameworks within your learning strategy. Competencies mapped to positions, organizations, and courses will automatically appear in learning plans assigned to those positions and organizations.
Powerful Reporting
Customizable dashboards and a robust and flexible Report Builder allow you to build custom reports on course progress, learner progress, and competency achievement across your organization.

Compliance & Certification
With structured certification and recertification paths, employees can be automatically notified when training is due. Compliance reporting also makes it easy to generate reports on the compliance status of every person in your organization.

HR Integration
HR Import allows organizations to sync their existing user base into their new Totara instance, ensuring an easy transition of employee roster and accompanying user data. This allows employees to immediately begin their training programs as soon as they are hired, and further streamline the training and onboarding process in one central hub.

Badges
Badging can promote learning through healthy competition between teams or team members providing visual recognition for performance and specialization that easily demonstrates an individual or groups knowledge and skills. Badges can be assigned based on many different criteria, but common examples are assigning badges for completion of courses, groups of courses, or scoring on a test or assignment.

Request a demo & learn more about eThink at eThinkEducation.com
Totara Community & Partner Network

Totara Learn is supported by a global community of partners, developers, and users who help support Totara’s mission. The Totara Community provides an environment for learning professionals to learn, share experiences and best practices, and develop their skills in utilizing technology for workplace learning.

Furthermore, there is an extensive network of Totara Partners that offer services to help organizations host and manage their open-source business LMS. By partnering with a Totara Partner, you receive expert support through every step of the LMS process including implementation, customization, integration, and every day management.
Honorable Mention: Moodle

Moodle is an alternative user-friendly open-source Learning Management System (LMS) that supports learning and training needs for a wide range of institutions and organizations across the globe.

Moodle is the most widely used Learning Management System in the world, with nearly 100k registered implementations worldwide supporting over 150 million learners. Moodle’s open source project is managed by a dedicated team at Moodle HQ with a head office in Perth (Australia) and satellite offices around the world. Moodle’s modular nature and inherent flexibility make it an ideal platform for both academic and enterprise level applications of any size.

To learn more about Moodle, get the Moodle Guide here.

Download Guide
About eThink Education

eThink Education provides a fully-managed eLearning solution for open-source Moodle and Totara Learning Management Systems, which covers all LMS needs including implementation, cloud hosting, integration, consultation, and management services.

eThink Education joined the Totara Partner network in late 2017 and, less than a year in, rapidly grew their Totara Learn client base to become a certified Platinum Partner, winning over clients such as Vistaprint, City of San Antonio, Southeastern Freight Lines, Powell’s Books and more. eThink Education has been named Totara Learning’s 2018 Global Partner of the Year, demonstrating their commitment to the Totara Partner network and overall success as a Partner in North America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

Utilizing a corporate-specific learning solution like Totara Learn, paired with a Totara Partner like eThink Education, allows you to effectively streamline your professional education to align with business objectives and future-proof your training program so that it can adapt as these needs evolve.

Totara by eThink Benefits:

**Fully-Managed Business LMS**

Not every organization’s IT team has the extra bandwidth to support their digital training and compliance platform. But with eThink as your Totara Learn partner, we do all the heavy lifting! We offer support and services for every aspect of the LMS including implementation, design, hosting, management, and customization.
A Customized eLearning Platform

eThink takes a consultative approach to help you design a functional and effective digital learning platform based on your organization’s specific goals. Our extensive library of eLearning partners help us choose from a wide range of solutions from content creation to reporting and analytics.

Unlimited Expertise & LMS Support

Whether you’re troubleshooting or need Totara Learn LMS expertise, our team, on average, is able to provide a thoughtful human response in just under an hour. We’re there to ensure a painless LMS and increased eLearning success!

Interested in learning more about Totara?
Speak with one of our experts.

Request a Demo