What is 🎓moodle?

The Comprehensive Moodle Learning Management System (LMS) Guide

eThink

moodle
Partner
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Contents

What is moodle ?

Moodle stands for **Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment.** Founded and developed by Martin Dougiamas in 2002, Moodle was designed to provide educators, administrators, and learners with an open, robust, secure and free platform to create and deliver personalized learning environments. Moodle is a user-friendly Learning Management System (LMS) that supports learning and training needs for a wide range of institutions and organizations across the globe.

Today, Moodle is the most widely used Learning Management System in the world, with well over 100,000 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.

Why is Moodle the World's Most Popular Learning Platform?

Moodle delivers a powerful set of learner-centric tools and collaborative learning environments that empower both teaching and learning. Because of its flexibility and scalability, Moodle has been adapted for use across education, business, non-profit, government, and many other community systems of all sizes.

Freely available for all users, Moodle can be self-hosted (if you have the time, ambition, and talent) or you can trust a Certified Moodle Partner to provide top-notch hosting and support for your Moodle environment.

Designed with a simple and flexible user interface and well-documented resources, Moodle can be easy for educators and learners to use. Moodle is web-based and features a mobile-compatible interface, making it accessible from anywhere in the world across different web browsers or devices. Moodle has been translated into more than 120 languages and is designed to comply with open and accessibility standards.

Additionally, Moodle's modular and interoperable design allows developers to build plugins that can integrate external applications to enhance system capabilities and extend what is possible with the core Moodle product. There are more than 1,400 plugins in the Moodle plugins directory that are freely available for the Moodle community to use, and Moodle's open code base encourages users to create their own as needed to share with the open-source community at large.

moodle

Empowering educators to improve our world

Moodle is Open-Source:
What does this mean and why is it important?

Open source refers to the underlying technology that Moodle is built on, primarily meaning that the software, or Moodle code, is freely available to download, use, customize, redistribute and modify.

As an open source project, Moodle is a collaborative effort that is supported by a strong global community, including the Moodle HQ team as well as developers, Moodle Partners, and users around the world.

The advantages of open source...

- **Free.** Open-source code is freely available with no license fee. Instead, those funds can be allocated to service and support for your LMS. When you are only paying for service, you ensure the highest level of support possible.
- **No vendor lock.** Closed-source solutions often make the customer dependent on a vendor for products and service. With closed source, if your level of service deteriorates, you have no other options for support. Only that closed-source company can maintain the proprietary product. With an open-source LMS, you have the freedom to not only customize your solution to meet your needs, but you can easily take your code (which you own, not the vendor) and move to another vendor if you aren't getting the level of support you require.
- **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!

- **Customization.** As mentioned above, open source offers users complete flexibility to create a custom, tailor-made eLearning platform to meet a specific organization or institution's needs.
- **Innovation.** Open-source software provides the flexibility needed to customize 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.
- **Scalable.** 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-Proof.** 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 changing needs. Additionally, as open source is modular in nature, you have the ability to integrate your LMS with complimentary 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.

Open-source platforms give learning professionals full access to their Moodle site's code, giving them the freedom to customize the look and feel of their site and incorporate branded content, innovative plugins, third-party tools, and eLearning best practices into their learning strategy to create a custom learning solution tailored to meeting their specific learning needs.

Learn how you can **Future-Proof Your eLearning Ecosystem with Open Source** in this whitepaper.

Download

Open-Source Learning for Various Industries and Needs

Some people think of Moodle as solely a K12 or Higher Education LMS, but this is not true. Moodle functions support and track learning of all types. Basic Moodle functionality includes features that can be used for learning in any industry such as discussion forums, chat rooms, wikis, quizzes, assignments, gamification and much more. Moodle's robust functionality and flexibility lends itself incredibly well to meeting a variety of learning needs for organizations across all industries and sizes, from Education to Government, Healthcare, Nonprofit, Associations and more.

🎓 Moodle for Education

As technology's role in society as a whole continues to evolve, a flexible Learning Management System is critical to meeting the needs of today's modern learner. Moodle provides a central learning hub to connect eLearning tools and simplify the teaching and learning process.

With its functionality and plugin capabilities, Moodle offers an engaging and effective eLearning experience for students of all ages. Moodle allows for unique learning methods such as gamification, competency-based education, mobile learning, accessible gradebooks, interactive online classrooms, and much more.

Additionally, due to its inherent flexibility and easy-to-use interface, Moodle can be used to reach a wide range of needs. In fact, many learners that are introduced to Moodle in primary, secondary, and higher education find themselves using Moodle again later in life when they enter the workforce, which we'll explore in the next section. That said, Moodle has the added benefit of providing easy adaption for both instructors and learners who may have experienced the platform elsewhere previously.

💼 Moodle for Workplace Learning

In today's fast-paced work environments, providing a streamlined onboarding process and effective continuing education is integral to a good business strategy. Well-trained employees help move businesses forward toward meeting company goals and objectives. eLearning ensures employees are prepared by facilitating collaboration and providing personnel with anywhere, anytime access to the educational resources they need to excel in their positions.

Moodle provides a flexible learning solution to help educate and empower employees.

Use cases for Moodle in the workplace include:

→ Compliance & Workplace Safety

→ Competency-Based Training

→ Role-Based Employee Onboarding

→ Product & Service Launches

→ Communities of Practice / Culture of Learning

→ Onboarding

→ Continuous Education / Professional Development

→ Certification Programs

→ Hiring & Retainment

→ Internal/Upward Mobility

→ eCommerce
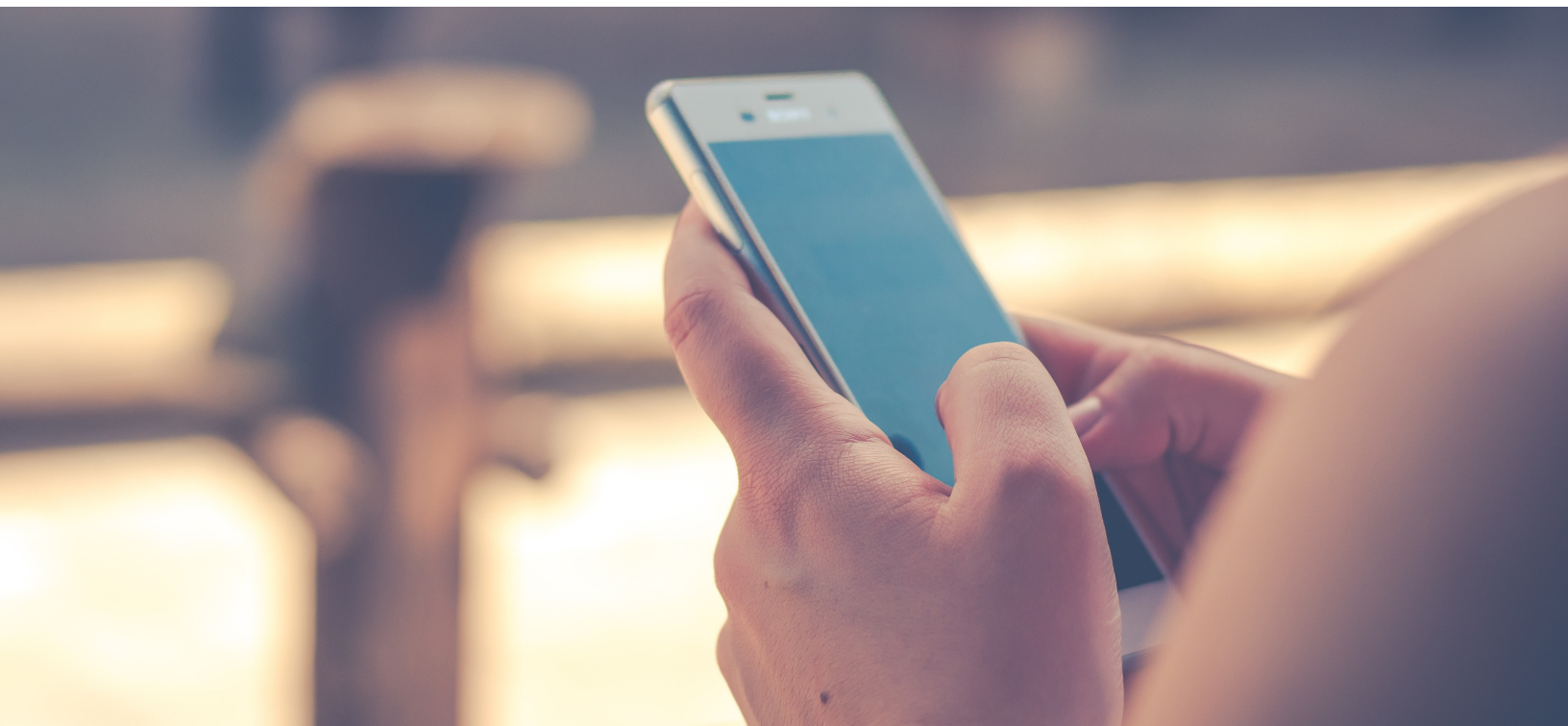
→ Extended Enterprise Training

Moodle Mobile:
Learning on the Go

Moodle also allows for remote learning and easy access to courses and eLearning content anywhere, anytime, and even when offline through the Moodle Mobile app (which is available for both core Moodle and Moodle Workplace).

Available for both Apple iOS and Android-based devices, Moodle Mobile allows learners to access course content; upload images, videos, and other files; receive notifications; send messages to fellow classmates and educators; attempt quizzes; participate in forums and much much more all from their mobile devices.

With Moodle's mobile capability, learners can easily access their learning content whenever they need it.

Moodle Hosting Options
& Best Practices

Because the Moodle code is freely available, Moodle offers multiple hosting options to choose from, including the ability to self-host or work with a Certified Moodle Partner (or non-certified vendor).

Self-Hosted Moodle

Self-hosting Moodle means your team completely owns and manages your site's code. You have complete control over every aspect of the LMS, from implementation to design to the themes and plugins you decide to install.

While this sounds like the most affordable and convenient way to host your LMS, it is typically not the best method when you lack bandwidth or expertise. Often, it takes extended resources to not only support and manage such a complex yet powerful solution, but ensure it meets learning needs, reflects your organization, or performs the way you want it to. Many organizations who self-host Moodle have a team of well-compensated experts dedicated to supporting the platform.

The decision to self-host should not be made lightly. For most users, Moodle will become an enterprise level application with hundreds of users depending on its daily availability to complete their tasks. Without internal expertise capable of maintaining, upgrading, and supporting end users, self hosting can quickly become an overwhelming task.

Managed Moodle/Cloud Hosting

As mentioned, managing Moodle and utilizing its robust functionality is not something every L&D team has the time or expertise to take on. Many seek additional help through cloud-hosting partners to ease the burden of the LMS.

With a Moodle Partner, you're able to spend less time focusing on the management of your system, and more on providing engaging eLearning to your constituents.

Self-Hosted vs. Managed Moodle Services

1. Dollars and Sense. Self-hosting is free; however, managed Moodle services typically save in terms of staff and productivity. Self-hosting requires tremendous in-house expertise and manpower (and hours) to maintain your Moodle site. A Moodle Partner can alleviate the workload by becoming the extension of your IT team responsible for your LMS maintenance, so that your administrators can focus less on maintenance and more on delivering engaging eLearning to end users.

2. Data Security. Organizations that self-host often house the data that Moodle produces in their own data centers. This includes intellectual property, private student data, and even medical records. Putting this data "on the cloud" can seem like too much of a risk. However, working with a Moodle Partner provides you with added security, as your host will have their own security measures in place around servers to ensure maximum uptime and total LMS and data protection. Additionally, studies have reported that cloud hosting is, in fact, more secure than self-hosting.

3. Scaling Infrastructure. A Certified Partner can assist with the adjustments and improvements necessary for your LMS to scale as your organization grows and evolves.

4. Customization and Consultation. When partnered with an expert, you get recommendations on the best solutions to meet your specific eLearning needs. Each organization is different, which means that every LMS needs to be configured with an organization's unique end goals in mind.

5. Integrations. Organizations that self-host Moodle often integrate with other campus systems such as Student Information Systems (SIS), ERPs, CRMs, and other self-hosted products such as Big Blue Button, Kaltura, etc. A Moodle Partner can help you integrate your LMS with these systems to provide a seamless flow of information between your most important systems.

6. Updates and Backups. Self-hosted Moodle users hold the responsibility of scheduling, planning, and testing their Moodle site updates. Many institutions also have to plan upgrades around their busy academic calendar. A hosting partner plans updates according to an organization's schedule, researches the new features, and thoroughly tests new versions, enabling learning professionals to instead concentrate on exploring how the new version will improve teaching and learning methods and the user experience. Additionally, organizations can be assured that backups are taken regularly and are accessible when needed.

7. Staying Up To Date. Working with a Moodle Partner allows you to not only stay current on product versions by managing upgrades, but makes it easier for you to stay on top of the newest trends, technologies, security updates, and innovation in the eLearning market. Experts in Moodle and eLearning, a hosting partner can help you navigate the overwhelming process of managing your LMS while also staying up to date on the latest technologies and best practices. With that in mind, your Moodle Partner help you to create a custom LMS and provide recommendations on how to build out your extended learning ecosystem.

What's a Certified Moodle Partner and Why Should You Work With One?

While we mentioned Moodle's various hosting options including self-hosting or working with a Moodle host, it's important to note that there are many Moodle vendors in the market but only a qualified few that are Certified Moodle Partners.

That said, there are many benefits to hosting with a Certified Moodle Partner in particular, including:

Reliability

Moodle Partners are certified by Moodle HQ, the organization that develops and maintains the Moodle platform, to provide services in support of the product. Each Certified Moodle Partner offers different types of Moodle support and has varying areas of expertise. However, the common denominator is that Moodle Partners are Moodle experts. They've received the seal of approval from Moodle HQ for the Moodle support they offer to Moodle users worldwide. Moodle HQ only invites companies with demonstrated knowledge, skills, and experience in supporting Moodle to join the Partner Program. This ensures clients receive a high level of quality and expertise when choosing a Certified Moodle Partner.

Help Fund the Open Source Project

Moodle Partners contribute a portion of their revenue to Moodle HQ. They provide critical funding that supports the development of the open-source project. The continued development of the Moodle platform, including the

introduction of new features and functionality, is dependent upon revenue collected from the Partner Network. By choosing a Moodle Partner, you are supporting the open-source project's continued advancement and success.

Have a voice in the direction of the Moodle product

Moodle's roadmap outlines the development goals for the platform and previews what is to come in future versions. The Roadmap is maintained by Moodle HQ with input from the Moodle Partner Network. As a Certified Moodle Partner, eThink is able to communicate what our clients need and want to see in the product to Moodle HQ. We help ensure your feedback reflects on the Roadmap as a Moodle host. This direct line of communication with Moodle HQ gives our clients a voice regarding the direction of the product that can only be had by choosing a Moodle Partner.

Closer ties to the Community

Another advantage our clients see from working with a Moodle Partner is a closer tie to the Moodle Community. The open source Moodle community is incredibly active, with Moodle forums, Community sites, and annual MoodleMoots hosted across the globe. Certified Moodle Partners help support these community initiatives by sponsoring events where Moodlers can meet, network, and share resources and ideas that help support Moodle users and the Moodle project as a whole.

Click here to learn more about the Moodle Partner Network and the advantages of working with a Certified Moodle Partner.

Honorable Mention: totara

Originally built off of the open-source Moodle platform, Totara is an alternative open-source platform that is specifically tailored for meeting corporate learning needs. Used by over 11 million learners worldwide across more than 1,400 organizations, Totara Learn is the leading open enterprise solution and is uniquely suited for corporate eLearning initiatives including employee onboarding, continued training, regulatory certifications, succession planning, extended enterprise, and more.

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 functionality-rich learning platform which can be implemented quickly and at a fraction of the cost of proprietary solutions.

To learn more about Totara, check out
the **Comprehensive Totara LMS Guide** below.

View Guide

totara
Freedom to Learn

About eThink Education

eThink Education provides a fully-managed eLearning solution including implementation, cloud hosting, integration, consultation, and management services for open-source Moodle and Totara. We are the largest Certified Moodle Partner in the world, a Platinum Totara Partner, and the 2018 Global Totara Partner of the Year. We do all of the heavy lifting for your LMS at the highest possible level of service.
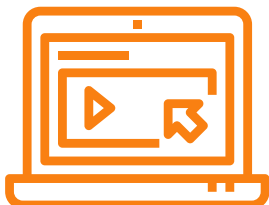
Managed by experts, eThink's total solution provides a dynamic and customizable platform to meet specific institutional and organizational needs.
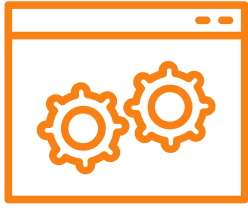
With clients in various industries including Healthcare, Education, Government, Corporate, eThink can help all types of organizations to maximize the effectiveness of their eLearning programs for improved business outcomes. eThink also offers LMS and eLearning trainings through eThink Academy, as well as custom content solutions.

Moodle by eThink Benefits:

Fully-Managed LMS

Not every organization's IT team has the extra bandwidth to support their digital training and compliance platform. But with eThink as your Moodle 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 helps us choose from a wide range of solutions from content creation to reporting and analytics.

Unlimited Expertise & LMS Support

Whether you're troubleshooting or just need to do some Moodle brainstorming, our team is able to provide a thoughtful human response, on average, to support inquiries in just under an hour. We're there to ensure a painless LMS experience as well as increased eLearning success!

Interested in learning more about Moodle?

Speak with one of our experts!

Request a Demo