

Platform	What it is good for	What it is not so good for	Cost
Learning Management System eg Moodle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specifically designed for formal education</li> <li>• Assessed learning</li> <li>• At its best where there are compulsory elements which need to be completed within the online environment</li> <li>• Self-contained units</li> <li>• Education-focused</li> <li>• Keeping an archive of resources</li> <li>• Keeping a closed/registered/logged-in community</li> <li>• Incorporating quizzes, schedules etc</li> <li>• Educator-led learning</li> <li>• Tracking progress</li> <li>• Customised learning programme for individuals</li> <li>• Creating online extension of classroom environment</li> <li>• Content-centric</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• User-interface can feel clunky</li> <li>• Less dynamic for interactions etc</li> <li>• Requires expertise in setting it up well</li> <li>• Fitting into folks' daily lives</li> <li>• Sharing widely</li> <li>• Hearing voices from outside the course set-up</li> <li>• Learning styles other than formal courses</li> <li>• Can quickly become dated as technology advances rapidly</li> <li>• Educators and users need to learn the specific systems/environment</li> <li>• Being where people are, i.e. learning is in a separate discrete area, rather than being in amongst the other things of daily life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Moodle software is open-source (ie free); the cost is in hosting; in having an expert set it up for you; and in add-ons.</li> <li>• Anything from free (eg Freemoodle) to £££ custom-designed online worlds.</li> <li>• Note: likely to be worth the investment in setting up the platform effectively for the needs of the course</li> </ul>
Content Management System eg WordPress, Joomla	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal learning</li> <li>• Can be made to do almost anything using plugins etc</li> <li>• Relatively easy to use, both inside and out</li> <li>• User-interface focused</li> <li>• Interaction</li> <li>• Keeping an archive of resources</li> <li>• User-led learning</li> <li>• Offering content widely</li> <li>• Selling courses</li> <li>• Integration with other platforms e.g. social media</li> <li>• User-centric</li> <li>• Website-based environment rather than extension of classroom-based environment</li> <li>• Collaboration</li> <li>• Most folk are familiar with using websites, e.g. online shopping, bank, etc, so as long as built well, can provide a familiar-feeling interface, helpful for learners who are not tech-savvy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensuring formal completion of compulsory elements</li> <li>• Assessment, marking, feedback</li> <li>• Ensuring learning/content is contained within the closed/registered/logged-in community</li> <li>• Tracking learners' progress/enabling educators to manage learners</li> <li>• Can be difficult to find the right tool e.g. plugin for a specific functionality</li> <li>• Slightly higher risk of security vulnerabilities</li> <li>• Educators need to learn how to use the set-up effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A lot of the software e.g. WordPress is open-source (ie free); the cost is in hosting; in having an expert set it up for you; and in add-ons.</li> <li>• Anything from free (eg <a href="http://WordPress.com">WordPress.com</a>) to £££ custom-designed online worlds</li> <li>• Note: free options offer only very limited functionality. Likely to be worth investing in self-hosting to allow access to plugins etc. Other upgrades e.g. specialist themes tend to cost more.</li> </ul>

<p>Social Media eg Facebook, Pinterest</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal</li> <li>• Conversation</li> <li>• Interactive learning</li> <li>• Peer-to-peer sharing</li> <li>• Picking from broad range of online material</li> <li>• Media sharing</li> <li>• Learning being part of folks' daily &amp; social lives (e.g. through FB app notifications, groups etc)</li> <li>• Conversation-centric</li> <li>• Familiar interface for lots of people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not really suitable for more formal teaching styles</li> <li>• Easy to get distracted/drop</li> <li>• Keeping an archive of resources</li> <li>• Feels very temporary/can feel ephemeral</li> <li>• Not everyone is on - or wants to be on - these social platforms</li> <li>• Can feel particularly scary, especially for older learners, esp. given presence of ads, links etc</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Usually free, with option of paying more for 'upgrades' e.g. ads</li> </ul>
<p>Web conferencing &amp; webinars etc eg GoToMeeting, Skype</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When a group needs to see each other or hear voices</li> <li>• Presentations</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Screen sharing</li> <li>• "Live" events</li> <li>• Immediacy-centric</li> <li>• Can be used in very dynamic ways</li> <li>• User chat alongside session without disturbing the flow</li> <li>• Homework, quizzes, questionnaires</li> <li>• Engagement level feedback (so you can tell which bits were boring)</li> <li>• Can record sessions for later use/publication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If technical set-up is anything less than great</li> <li>• Covering a lot of information all at once</li> <li>• Different teaching style - will only work if the leader is able to adapt to the medium</li> <li>• Different systems work differently and offer different functionality - need to find the right tool for the job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anything from free (eg Google Hangouts) to £££ professional systems (eg Adobe Connect; GoToMeeting)</li> </ul>
<p>Content sharing platforms, e.g. YouTube, SlideShare</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many people already use YouTube as go-to platform for online learning e.g. search for a tutorial video on specific topic</li> <li>• User-led learning</li> <li>• Short tutorials</li> <li>• Crowd-sourced content</li> <li>• Local specialist-centric</li> <li>• Huge and broad resource base available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal learning</li> <li>• Longer courses</li> <li>• Less interactive</li> <li>• Presenters are not always as expert as they purport to be</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Free</li> </ul>