

65 TIPS

for **Getting
the Most
Out of Your
e-Learning
Budget**

Contributing Editor,
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Use Dimdim for Web conferencing (dimdim.com). It is an open source application that will allow you to hold virtual meetings of up to 20 people for free, and it is Web based so there is nothing to install on your computer.

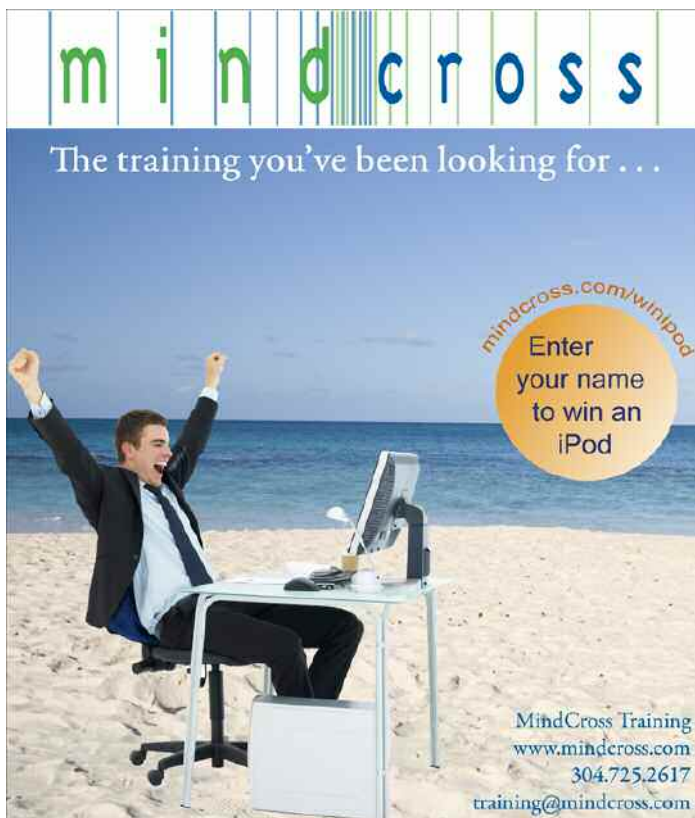
BRIAN YOUNG, INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER, STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

65 Tips *continued*

When you choose a development tool, consider that modules you create may need to be translated into different languages. Not all tools are equal when it comes to being able to translate contents later on. At the least, the tool should allow for easy export and re-import of all of the text in the module, including text on elements such as buttons, menus, icons, and hyperlinks. At best, the export format should allow translators to use tools, such as translation memories, spellchecking, and change tracking, that translators rely on to ensure translation quality and consistency. Exported content that can be worked with using a standard word processing program like Microsoft Word is best. Lectora, for instance, allows you export and re-import a .rtf file which retains the proper formatting.

Many e-Learning development tools result in Flash files. In those cases, the text content can be exported to XML files that savvy translators can work with. Keep in mind text that is part of a graphic will always require special handling. A graphic with English text will have to be edited in the application in which it was created, or in another graphic program and replaced in the module. Failure to take these considerations into account from the beginning can lead to extra time and expense in the future when you need to adapt e-Learning modules for an international audience. It is worth your time to talk with a tech-savvy language service provider before you choose a development tool.

—Myriam Siftar, President, MTM LinguaSoft



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