

**THE PLTG GUIDE TO  
"TRAINING ON THE CHEAP"**



**PROFESSIONAL  
L E G A L  
TRAINERS  
G R O U P**



**JUNE 12, 2009**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document is the result of a working session held by the Professional Legal Trainers' Group ("PLTG") on Friday, June 12th, 2009. All references to websites and product names are believed to be accurate as of that date.

Although PLTG does not endorse any product or company, it is pleased to pass along its members' tips for preparing and delivering effective training when there is little or no money in the budget. Our members were asked to focus on the following four categories:

- Websites
- Software Applications
- Materials
- Motivational Techniques

This was intended to be a highly selective guide; please do not infer anything from the absence of your favorite free learning resources.

Some of the suggestions in this guide could have appeared in several categories, so if you do not see something where you expect to see it, please continue flipping through, or use the PDF search feature.

For more information about PLTG, please see <http://www.pltg.org>.

## **WEBSITES:**

### Microsoft Resources:

- Microsoft's " Help and How-To" Website, <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/training/FX100565001033.aspx>, offers free training resources for Office programs. Members reported better results using Google to search this site, instead of the built-in search engine.
- Microsoft's free Word 2003 to 2007 Website, <http://office.microsoft.com/assistance/asstvid.aspx?assetid=XT100766331033&vwidth=1044&vheight=788&type=flash&CTT=11&Origin=HA100744321033>, will show you where your Word 2003 commands ended up in Word 2007. You can also use it to get Word 2007 screenshots for pre-training.
- Mr. Excel, <http://www.mrexcel.com>, provides podcasts, articles and a message-board forum to answer all of your Microsoft Excel questions.
- Newsletters: Websites where you can subscribe to free newsletters with updates and tips for using Microsoft products include:
  - Woody's Office Watch: <http://news.office-watch.com/>
  - Allan Wyatt's Word Tips: <http://word.tips.net>

Blogs, Wikis and Podcasts: You can take advantage of Web 2.0 technology to make content available to your users whenever and wherever they need it. (For suggestions for free software to create the e-learning content, please see the "Software" section below.) Suggested websites include:

- Blogs: You can use <http://www.blogger.com> (free) to host a blog of training materials and tips & tricks, to which your users can subscribe with RSS Feeds
- Podcasts: You can use <http://www.podbean.com> (free), <http://www.blip.tv> (free) or <http://ourmedia.org/> (free) to host your training podcasts
- Wikis: You can use a wiki to create a searchable question and answer resource for your users, or to post the current version of rapidly changing policies or training schedules. Free wiki software providers include PBWiki (Basic Edition), <http://pbworks.com>, and Twiki, <http://www.twiki.org>.

### Screensharing and Web Conferencing:

- Adobe offers a free service, "Adobe ConnectNow" at <http://www.acrobat.com>, for web conferencing, file sharing, and screen sharing for up to 3 people.
- DimDim, [www.dimdim.com](http://www.dimdim.com), had mixed results as a free web conferencing tool, but members report that it is useful for free screensharing among up to 20 people.
- ShowmyPC, <http://www.showmypc.com>, is another free alternative to services like WebEx and GoToMyPC.

### Free e-Learning Websites:

- GCF Learn Free, <http://www.gcflearnfree.org/>, offers free, non-interactive e-learning on Office programs
- Common Craft's "In Plain English" series explains technology topics in short videos available for free on YouTube, <http://www.youtube.com> (search for "common craft"), and in unbranded versions for a fee at Common Craft's website, <http://www.commoncraft.com>.
- The Thiagi Group, at <http://www.thiagi.com>, offers free training games to help you energize your training classes.
- Training Magazine Network, at <http://www.trainingmagnetwork.com> (free registration required), allows you to provide your learners with access to a Web 2.0 social learning environment, which purports to allow one to "measure, track and prove the measurable impact of training."

Content Management: Joomla, <http://www.joomla.org/>, is a free, web-based content management system which, it was suggested, could be used as an LMS.

### Train the Trainer:

- The International Legal Technology Association provides free access to its archived webinars on cutting edge legal technology topics at <http://www.iltanet.org/MainMenuCategory/Archives/WebinarRecordings.aspx>
- Lynda.com, <http://www.lynda.com>, provides on-line classes you can use to improve your skills and stay one step ahead of the callers. Lynda.com offers monthly and annual subscription rates, as well as a free trial for its video tutorials.

## **SOFTWARE**

Blackberry Simulators: Research in Motion, Ltd., the maker of Blackberries, has free simulators available on its website at <http://na.blackberry.com/eng/developers/resources/simulators.jsp> that you can use in Blackberry training sessions. It can be a bit of a challenge to find the simulator for your model, but once you download and install the simulator you can use it to show a room full of people what the buttons on their Blackberries will do.

Creating E-Learning: Several free and cheap programs are available to help you capture and combine screenshots, video, and audio to create your own e-learning content. To distribute the content, please see the section on Web 2.0 technologies above.

- Screen Captures: Jing, available at <http://www.jingproject.com>, offers a free and a cheap (\$14.95 per year) version of its screen capture software, which can be used to create Flash video for e-learning.
- Audio Capture and Editing: Audacity, available at <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>, is a free program that will record sound from your PC microphone and let you edit sound files from your computer and other sources
- Video Capture and Editing: With Windows Movie Maker, which comes free with most new computers and can be downloaded at <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/updates/moviemaker2.msp>, you can record video from your computer's webcam and edit video and audio to create e-learning

VNC for Remote Control: Relatively inexpensive VNC software is available that will let you view and take control of learners' screens, so you can see what is going on in your classroom more easily (i.e., all users' screens presented as thumbnails on your monitor), or so you can help a learner without having to leave your office. Your firm's helpdesk may already have this in place, and they may be able to make this available to you. If not, one example is SmartCode VNC Manager available at <http://www.s-code.com>.

## **MATERIALS**

Electronic Training Materials: Several PLTG member firms are distributing new hire materials and other voluminous training materials electronically, either through an intranet or on CD. Not only does this save the cost of the paper and the staff time formerly needed to do the duplicating, but the materials are searchable and, therefore, more useful for the learners.

Go Low-Tech: Flip charts, Posterboard and other 3-dimensional materials are low cost ways to

- engage kinesthetic learners
- make ephemeral ideas more permanent
- make abstract ideas more easily understandable

Recycle Existing Training: Content you have already created can be sliced, diced, and repurposed for use on other topics or for delivery in other formats.

The "Help" Menu: Every now and then, the help file that comes with the software you use is actually helpful.

- You can often use the text and pictures in the help file as the basis for your own classes, "tips" e-mails, or handouts.
- Some users can even be convinced to learn how to use the help files themselves.

## **MOTIVATIONAL TECHNIQUES**

Wake 'em up!: Long training sessions can dull even the keenest minds. Several of our users suggested that a little humor will go a long way towards keeping learners engaged. Puzzles were also suggested, including "Wuzzles" word puzzles ([www.wuzzlesandpuzzles.com](http://www.wuzzlesandpuzzles.com)).

Bring the training to the users: Members have used "Training To Go" or "Room Service Training" to deliver short (10-15 minute) training sessions to users on their schedules and on the subjects that they want to learn.

### Competition:

- Friendly competition among users has been used to increase attendance and participation. Prizes for winners can be as free as a mention in the firm newsletter (see "Rewards," below).
- Where competition between users does not fit with the firm culture, you can encourage users to compete against themselves.
- "Stump the Trainer" sessions challenge people to bring their toughest documents in so the whole class can see how an expert approaches a challenging situation.

Rewards: You don't have to spend a lot of money to show users that the firm appreciates their efforts.

- Certificates: Find a PowerPoint template on <http://office.microsoft.com>, adjust it to fit the firm's color scheme, add the logo, scan in the managing partner's signature, swipe some nice paper from Marketing, and you're in business.
- Public acknowledgment: Mention high achievers' names in a newsletter, in a news item on your intranet home page, or in department meetings. Have a "Learner of the Month" trophy that rotates to the desk of the person who demonstrates the most commitment to learning each month, Stanley Cup-style.
- Have a "Denim Day" or find another way to relax the dress code for those who have reached a specified learning goal.

The PLTG is an organization of legal application trainers from law firms and consulting agencies in the metropolitan New York area. The PLTG is dedicated to exchanging cutting-edge information, ideas, and experiences to provide support to, and improve the performance of, the legal training community.

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