

PRODUCT REVIEW / ÉVALUATION DE PRODUIT

Product: LinkedIn Learning

URL: <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/>

Cost: Free 30-day trial. Standard subscription CAD \$34.99/month or CAD \$299.88/year (breaks down to \$24.99/month). Many academic institutions and public libraries subscribe to this product so there are various means to access the content free of charge.

Purpose and Intended Audience

LinkedIn Learning is an online educational platform focusing on learning in-demand skills, refreshing your knowledge base, and exploring new topics [1]. This on-demand library of instructional videos covers the latest business, technology, and creative skills [2]. LinkedIn Learning has a wide audience and is marketed to anyone looking to “learn new skills and stand out from the competition” [2]. Learners can select their own courses, or course paths, and review course content at their own pace.

Product Description

Previously Lynda.com, LinkedIn Learning uses expert-led course videos to guide learners through content. As the name suggests, this product is connected to LinkedIn, the social network for professionals. Learners can connect their LinkedIn account to LinkedIn Learning and certificates will be added to their LinkedIn profile when they complete a course. With more than 13,000 on-demand courses, and 25 to 30 new courses added each week, learners have a vast amount of content to select from [2].

Usability

To start, learners are prompted to choose a category to explore; integration with your LinkedIn

profile helps to direct learners to content that is most relevant for their given field. The homepage displays various courses that are: (1) trending for people in your industry; (2) recommended for you; (3) because you’re interested in X topic, for example, “because you’re interested in statistics.” Learners can also see content in progress and saved videos from their homepage, making it easy to continue learning where you left off and review content as needed. Learners can also search for courses focusing on specific skills, subjects, or software, using the search bar at the top of the page.

Once a learner has selected a course, the instructional video will begin. The video includes a side navigation panel that allows the learner to see the overview for the course, which includes a description of the course, objectives, instructor bio, and related courses. Given the social nature of this e-learning product, learners are also shown the number of “likes” from members and what other viewers do and where they work (according to their LinkedIn profiles). Learners can also view the contents of the video and jump to sections should they choose. Video transcripts are available for many courses which aids learner accessibility. Finally, learners can use the notebook within the video to make notes that are timestamped as the video plays, making it easy to return and review content. Many courses include exercise files and quizzes to help test learners as they progress through a course.

Learners can make their own collections of courses, essentially a video playlist. These collections can be shared with others at the same organization (if you are using an institutional login) or with the LinkedIn Learning community at large. Learners can also opt to explore a learning path. This is a pre-selected collection of courses that speak to the same skill and move from basic to advanced learning or speak to attaining a particular career goal, for example, “become a marketing specialist.”

Courses can be accessed using the online platform or using the mobile application (available for iOS and

Android). Further, many courses are available in a wide range of languages including simplified Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Portuguese, and Spanish.

Compatibility

Fully integrated into LinkedIn.com for easy display of certificates for completed courses. Mobile application, LinkedIn Learning, is compatible with both iOS and Android systems.

Currency

It appears that the content is updated as needed. For example, when Office365 launched, many of the videos centered on that platform updated their content to align with the new product and new features. Older courses do not appear to be removed from the course offerings despite newer courses being released on the same topic. For example, there are various iterations of how to use Microsoft Word available as far back as 2008. Learners can easily see when the course was released by going to the overview section of the video. Further, learners can easily sort by newest courses in order to access the most up to date content.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- Easy to use, very intuitively designed. Good self-directed learning option as learners can move through content at their own pace and the mobile application makes accessing content even more convenient.
- Provides personalized course recommendations.
- Excellent means to brush up on skills or explore a new topic, however in-depth content appears to be lacking for many subject areas.

Weaknesses

- Certificates are not accredited and really only have meaning for the LinkedIn community.
- Content is highly focused on business and marketing.
- Accessing content through the mobile app is not well promoted on the desktop site.

Conclusion

Overall, LinkedIn Learning offers a very accessible means for learners to develop new and existing skills. There are many strengths of the video courses and there is appeal in learning at one's own pace. There are several high-quality courses on technology topics that might be of interest to health sciences librarians and patrons. For example, there are several courses on statistical software, such as SPSS, as well as citation management software, such as EndNote and BibTeX. However, many of the courses are centered on business and marketing topics.

Statement of Competing Interests

No competing interests declared.

References

1. LinkedIn Learning – Overview [Internet]. 2019, April [cited 2019 August 28]. Available from: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/learning/suggested/71918/linkedin-learning-overview?lang=en>
2. LinkedIn Learning. How to Use LinkedIn Learning [PDF]. N.D. [cited 2019 August 28]. Available from: <https://learning.linkedin.com/content/dam/me/learning/en-us/pdfs/lil-guide-how-to-use-linkedin-learning.pdf>

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