



WHAT IS SCORM?

Increasingly, people are receiving training and education through their computers. The Shareable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) is a technical specification that governs how this online training (or “e-learning”) is created and delivered to learners.

Two essential software systems are required to facilitate e-learning. The first is the actual instructional material, or “content”. The other is a Learning Management System (LMS) which is responsible for directing the learner to relevant training, tracking the learner’s progress (things like score and current location) and maintaining the learner’s transcript. The essence of SCORM is that any content that conforms to the SCORM specifications will work with any SCORM conformant LMS. SCORM is the “secret sauce” that operates behind the scenes to make things compatible.

SCORM is a lot like the VHS standard for video tapes. VHS specifies the standard size for a video tape and how fast the VCR should spin the reels. Similarly, SCORM dictates the technical specifications for creating e-learning (using software languages like XML and ECMA script). You can put any type of video on a VHS tape, comedy, horror, drama, home movies, etc. In the same way, SCORM allows you to create any type of learning content; it doesn’t specify instructional design, pedagogical methods, visual appearance or anything else that affects the educational experience.

SCORM was created in the year 2000 by a US Department of Defense organization called ADL. It is now widely adopted and is the de facto industry standard. To date, there are three released versions of SCORM, each building on top of the prior one.

- **SCORM 1.1** was essentially the first pass, and never gained wide acceptance. Some products still support it, but it is not widely adopted.
- **SCORM 1.2** followed on 1.1, and solved many of 1.1’s problems. It was and *is* the widely adopted version. As of May 2006, every major LMS continues to support it, and the majority of content vendors still produce content that meets the 1.2 specification.
- **SCORM 2004** (formerly known as SCORM 1.3) is the most recent release. It formalizes the 1.2 specification and provides a key addition known as Sequencing and Navigation. Adoption has been slow, to this point, but the number of vendors supporting SCORM 2004 is increasing greatly.

SCORM is a really powerful tool for anyone involved in online training. If you develop e-learning systems, you should definitely make them SCORM conformant, and before purchasing any e-learning system, you should insist that it be SCORM conformant.

ABOUT RUSTICI SOFTWARE

Rustici Software is the leading provider of products and services to assist organizations with SCORM conformance. Our primary business is SCORM consulting; it is what we specialize in and what we do best. Our products streamline the standardization of both content and Learning Management Systems (LMS) and our personalized consulting services will simplify and demystify the entire process. Basically, we make SCORM easy.

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