WebMentor LMS v8.0 – New Features

The WebMentor LMS version 8.0 release focuses primarily on usability and performance improvements. Customers of Avilar's hosted learning management service receive the updates automatically as they are deployed on the hosting servers. Licensed customers may contact Avilar Customer Support to arrange for upgrades to their installations.

This document describes the most important new features of this release.

NEW USER INTERFACES FOR ALL USER ROLES

All user roles now provide a modern dashboard after login, with streamlined and updated screen layouts throughout the system. Note that any Organization that wishes to continue using legacy user interfaces is free to do so.

Benefit: WebMentor LMS has always been browser-agnostic and easy to use. Users now have even easier access to product features on all types of browsers and platforms.

SEQUENCED SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions (course bundles) may now optionally specify the order in which students must take the courses within the subscription. The LMS will auto-register students in the next course in the sequence as they complete prior courses.

Benefit: A student's learning progress can be controlled within a subscription in much the same way it can be controlled in a curriculum, but without the full curriculum overhead.

"MANDATORY" VS. "OPTIONAL" COURSES AND SESSIONS

A course, or a subset of specific sessions, may be defined as being either "mandatory" or "optional" for an Organization's students. If a student is registered in any "mandatory" courses, those are made more prominent in the Student Main Menu or Dashboard (depending on the user interface style in use). By default, all courses are now "optional" unless specifically declared to be "mandatory".

Benefit: Organizations gain more control over the presentation of mandatory vs. optional courses to their students. Mandatory courses are identified as such and presented more prominently to students.

CLASSROOM "CATEGORIES"

An Organization may now define one or more arbitrary "categories" for their courses, and then use those categories to organize the presentation of courses in the Student Main Menu or Dashboard (depending on the user interface style in use). For example, an Organization might create a category called "New Hire Training" and put courses relevant to new employees into that category. Students then see the New Hire Training category in their dashboards containing the appropriate courses.

Benefit: Organizations gain more control over the presentation of courses to their students. Courses may be grouped together by topic or some other organizing principle.

VARIABLE COURSE PRICING BASED ON STUDENT ENROLLMENT FIELD

An Organization may now specify different prices for courses based on the value of a particular Student Enrollment Field. When the Course Catalog is presented to a Student, the Student then sees the prices appropriate for him or her.

Benefit: An Organization may now charge different prices for a course to different types of Students.

STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR PROFILE IMAGES

The Student Profile and Instructor Profile now support optional photographs or images. If the Student or Instructor uploads an image to the LMS, that image is displayed on various Dashboards and screens.

Benefits: (1) The Student Dashboard is more personalized and welcoming. (2) Students may see photographs or images of their Instructors.

ADMINISTRATOR AND INSTRUCTOR PROFILE EDITING

Administrators and Instructors may now edit their own profiles. In previous releases, only the Organization was allowed to modify Administrator and Instructor profiles.

Benefit: Administrators and Instructor gain the authority to manage their own profiles.

ADMINISTRATOR AND INSTRUCTOR PROFILE EXTENSIONS

Administrator and Instructor profiles may now be extended with custom fields. In previous releases, Administrator and Instructor profiles contained only Name, Password, Phone, Fax and Email fields. Profiles may now be extended with additional fields to meet the needs of an Organization.

Benefit: Organizations may now create and use any number of extended fields in Administrator and Instructor profiles for data collection and reporting.

STUDENT LOGON LOCKING

Administrators may now block a Student from logging into the LMS without affecting any of the Student's records, registration status, etc.

Benefit: A Student may be blocked from using the LMS until such time as access needs to be restored.

"RESET" OPTION ON COURSE INSTALLATION

When the Course Provider reinstalls a course that is already installed in the LMS, the Provider may now "reset" Students in that course. In previous releases, the options were: (1) to DELETE the previously installed course, which also deletes existing sessions and deregisters Students taking the course, or (2) to REPLACE the previously installed course, which left all course sessions and student progress tracking intact. REPLACE was only safe when a course's structure had not changed. If the course's structure changed after being reinstalled, then student progress tracking became unreliable, and safer option was to DELETE the previous version of the course and start fresh. Unfortunately, DELETE also deleted course sessions and deregistered students, so an Administrator would have to manually re-register students into the newly reinstalled course.

The RESET option automates that process by resetting student progress in the reinstalled course. Students who are registered in a course whose structure has changed as a result of reinstallation are forced to restart the course from the beginning so that their progress is tracked correctly.

Benefit: Administrators are no longer required to re-register Students manually into reinstalled courses whose structure has changed.

HYBRID ILT/WEBMENTOR AUTHOR COURSES

Instructor-led training (ILT) courses may now be paired with WebMentor course components for delivering online tests and surveys, and other online content created with WebMentor Author. Such a "hybrid" course is presented as a single course in the Course Catalog. When a Student registers for the course, a link to launch the online content appears in the course Syllabus.

Benefit: ILT courses may now offer companion online components.

WEB SERVICES API ENHANCEMENTS

WebMentor LMS now supports several new functions that may be invoked by other web-based applications using the Web Services API. See the *WebMentor LMS v8 API* document for more information.