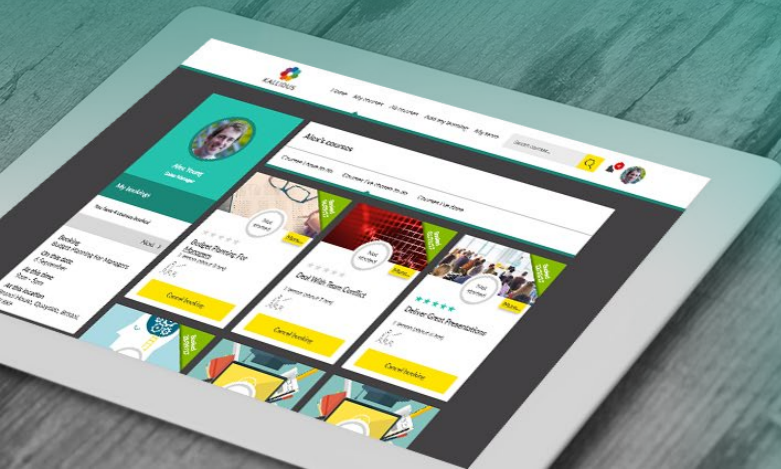# Mobile learning for a modern workforce

## How remote and field-based workers are changing the face of learning

# Introduction

A learning revolution is underway. Increasing competition, burgeoning organisational complexity and a digital-driven fourth industrial revolution are all contributing to an unstoppable reconfiguration of how workers learn.

Enterprises need their workers – and those in their supply chain and their networks – to be able to learn on the job. Wherever that job is: whether in an office or a supermarket, or on a rig or in down time travelling between client meetings.

Mobile devices have broken down the walls of the traditional classroom and learning can now take place literally anywhere. But that does not mean disciplines have disappeared along with the bricks and mortar classroom.

Indeed, with the remote, dispersed workforce, knowing what learning has been completed and how performance has been supported or enhanced is more important than ever.

That means remote devices need to be connected to the learning management system (LMS) to enable the delivery of learning and ensure the learning has been tracked and recorded.

This e-book explores how remote and field-based workers are changing the face of e-learning.
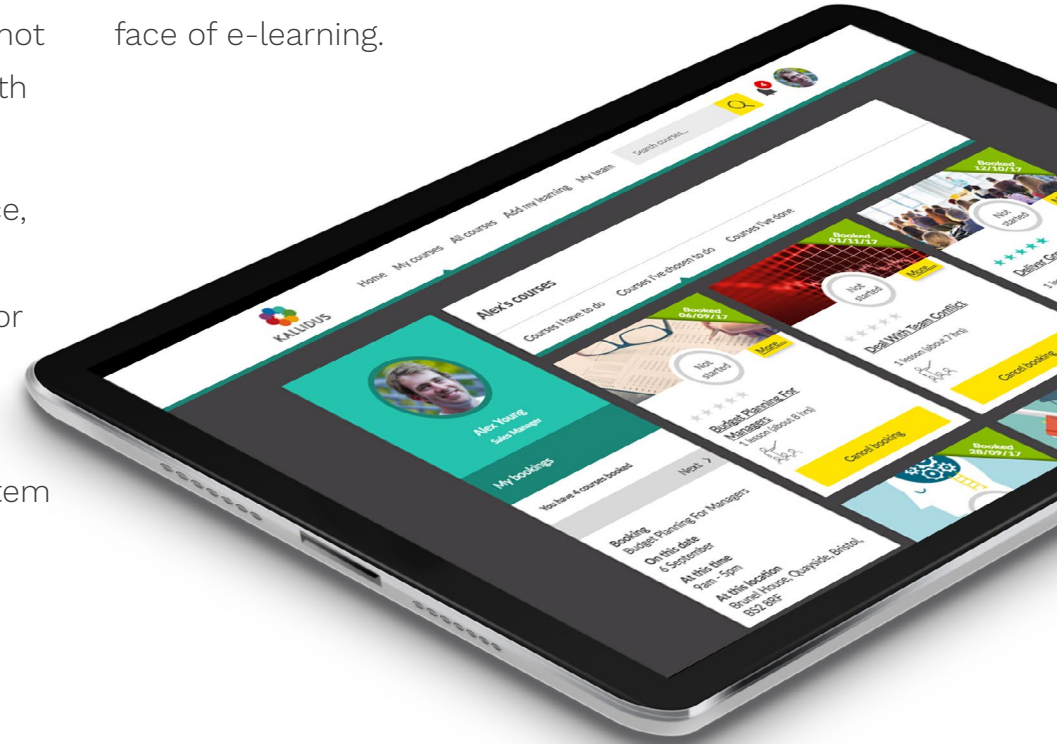
# The changing workforce is ripe for mobile learning

Remote workers are an increasingly dominant part of today's rapidly changing diverse global workplace. In today's information economy being able to train the growing number of mobile workers who require an ever broader range of skills is key for an agile workforce to be able to meet the challenges encountered today and in the future.

The global mobile workforce is set to increase from 1.52 billion in 2017, accounting for 39.3% of the global workforce, to 1.88 billion in 2023, accounting for 43.3% of the global workforce [1].

Globalisation will continue to drive the growth of mobile office workers in all regions. The latest mobile devices and technologies are increasingly able to meet the demands of mobile workers of all types.

**Remote workers fall into two distinct groups**

There are two distinct groups of remote workers. First there are those who used to be office-based workers but technology now allows them to work from anywhere. This is driving a culture where working from home is becoming more acceptable.

Organisations are determined to trust their workers more (forget the old adage 'shirking from home') with technology being seen as an enabler of greater productivity.

In the Upwork's Future Survey of 1,000 managers surveyed in the US in Q1 2018, 38% said that they expect nearly 40% of their full-time staff will be working remotely in the next decade [2].

## Part One | The changing workforce is ripe for mobile learning

This is partly driven by the fight for talent. If you want to hire the best people for your business why be constrained by geography if you don't have to be?

Hiring managers are increasingly reporting that having the right skills is more important than being able to work from the same location as the rest of the team. 53% of managers agree that companies are embracing more flexible teams compared to three years ago. For office workers remote working is becoming the new normal.

A study by IWG earlier this year shows that two-thirds of professional people around the world work away from the office at least once every week, while 53 percent work remotely for at least half of the week.

Technology has become the primary driver of changing perceptions around locations and working hours [3].

There are also mobile workers whose 'office' is an oil rig or engineering plant, or the company car or maintenance vehicle or a client's office, who increasingly need to be able to access company information to perform their jobs.

Whether that is to get hold of technical information to fix a problem; find the latest product information to share with a potential client; or access data for a consultancy assignment, remote access to company servers is a working necessity.
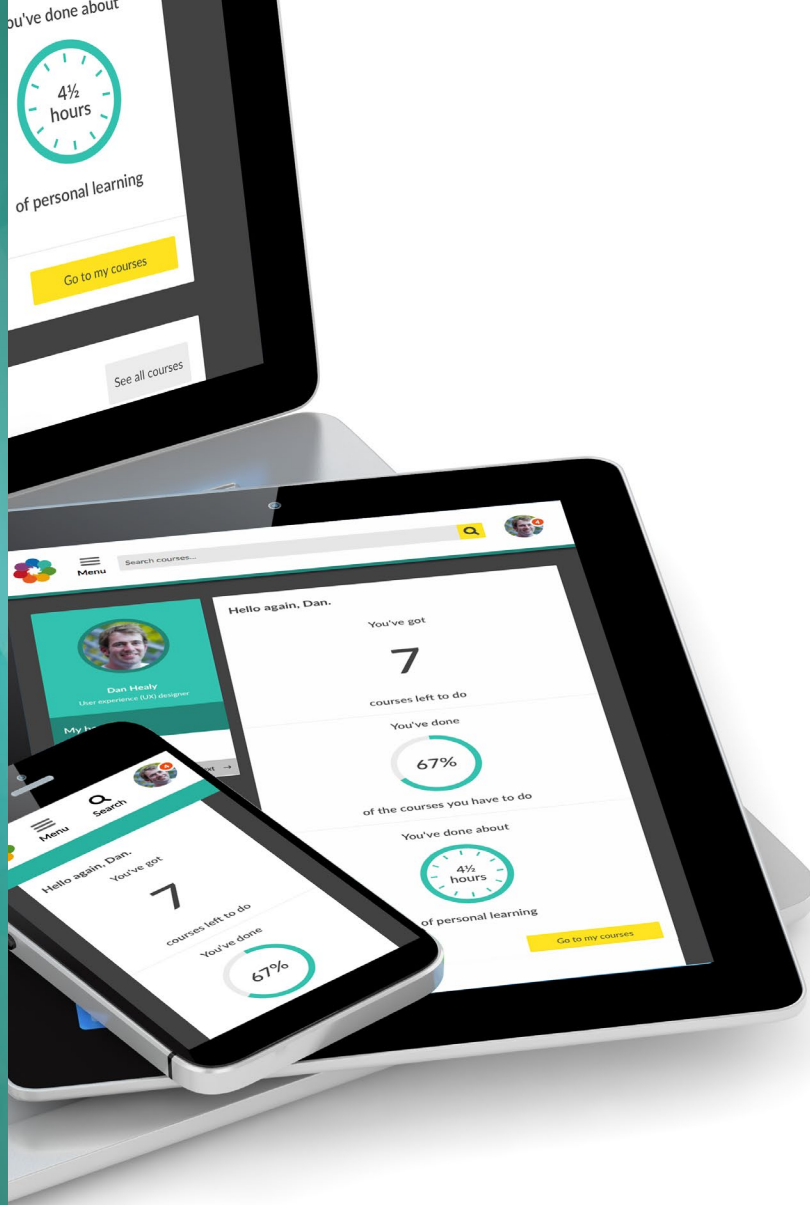
## The rise of mobile learning

With the rise in remote workers it can be no surprise that mobile learning is also predicted to rise sharply. Markets forecasts the global mobile learning market to grow from $7.98 billion in 2015 to $37.60 billion by 2020, at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 36.3% [4].

North America is expected to be the largest market in terms of market size, while Europe and Asia-Pacific are expected to experience an increase in market traction during the forecast period.

The more significant growth opportunities ahead will depend on the mobile internet, as it contributes to developments in the wider digital ecosystem. The factors driving this market are growing mobile and smartphone penetration across the globe along with the rise in demand for advanced and digital education.

Most of us now acknowledge that our smartphones and our tablets are an essential part of how we live our lives, whether that is in the working or the private sphere.

In 2018, 66% of individuals in 52 of the world's key countries will own a smartphone, up from 63% in 2017 and 58% in 2016, according to Zenith's Mobile Advertising Forecasts 2017 [5]. Western Europe and Asia Pacific continue to lead the world in smartphone ownership.

Tablet ownership is less common than smartphone ownership, partly because they are more likely to be shared within households, and partly because consumers in some markets prefer to use larger smartphones instead.

Globally, tablet penetration is estimated to be at 18.7% this year, with penetration levels of 19.5% forecast in 2018 and 20.1% in 2019.

# Part One | The changing workforce is ripe for mobile learning

Mobile devices (including both smartphones and tablets) are now the primary means of accessing the internet for most users, and will account for 73% of time spent using the internet in 2018, up from 70% in 2017 and 65% in 2016.

Smartphones are addictive. More than a third of consumers worldwide check their phone within five minutes of waking; 20 percent check their phone more than 50 times a day [6].

We use our smartphones to catch up on news and email, for watching videos and listening to music, and for taking photos. It's our go-to device for information and learning in our everyday lives via Google, YouTube and Wikipedia. So why shouldn't mobile learning be the way we learn in the workplace too? Mobile learning solutions enable the L&D function

to provide real-time interactive training and instructions to the end users through the medium of smartphones and mobile devices.

This helps to provide an interactive learning experience and frees learning from the classroom. Applications such as video lectures, audio and video course material and e-books bridge the time and distance gap between the learner and the L&D function.

Well-designed mobile learning courses place a lower demand on our time and recognise the distractions we face in work and out of it. We no longer have large chunks of time to devote exclusively to learning. Mobile learning fits perfectly with the way that many of us want to learn. It provides bite-sized, just-in-time learning that we can access when we need it most and that we can fit into our daily lives.

Mobile learning has arrived. Research outfit Towards Maturity says 47% of organisations now use mobile in their training programmes [7].

And analysis by research firm Fosway, suggests that video and mobile learning are the top two areas of growth in learning content and they are showing signs of increasing maturity in the way that they are used every day.

As smartphones and tablets have become ubiquitous, so learners are demanding that they can use these devices for their workplace learning.

The mobile learning revolution is underway, and with the change is the promise of greater learner engagement.

However let's not get carried away. The current landscape is not entirely filled with remote workers effortlessly completing well-designed, app-delivered, LMS-linked mobile learning on devices either provided by the business, or their own well set up functioning devices.

While Towards Maturity research shows that mobile devices are one of the most used technologies, with 74% of organisations using them, only 16% of organisations using mobile devices are using apps that specifically support performance at the point of need [8].

And connectivity can still be an issue; download speeds can be snail-like and WiFi can still be a patchwork of inconsistency.

Businesses are still learning to produce mobile-enabled learning as a matter of course. And even some well-designed mobile learning can be a struggle on a mobile phone screen compared to the bigger screens of iPads and other tablets.

Plus many workplaces still struggle to resource learners with the equipment they need.

Building sites aren't the friendliest of places for laptops; the stores of even the largest supermarket groups will often have one desktop 'out back' where training has to take its turn alongside all the other tasks; and small branches of businesses such as banks are often in a similar position with limited hardware as the constraining factor.
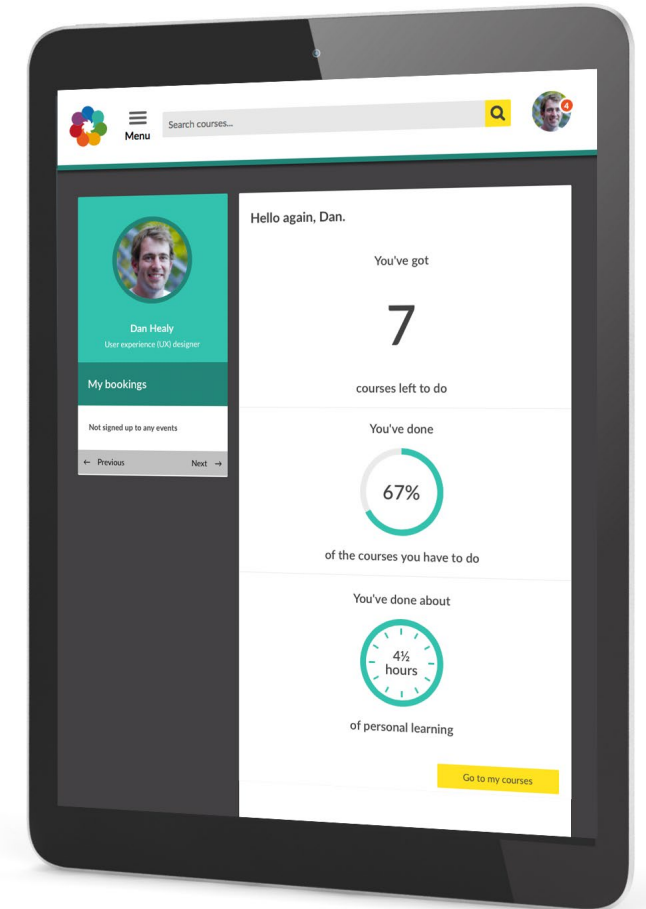
# Part Three | Why mobile without a learning management system (LMS) will quickly become immobile

Mobile learning has to be designed and executed to ensure it adds real value to the business and addresses the key objectives and challenges of the enterprise. To claim the benefits of learning of the future, organisations have to ensure that their approach is correct; both in terms of the design, content and engagement of the mobile learning and also in the way that the learning is delivered and the impact of the learning recorded.

Enterprises need learning systems which are as agile and versatile as the mobile learning they are asking their remote and mobile workers to use. They need to use learning systems which are configured to meet the challenges of a dispersed workforce who are facing rapidly changing needs.

And the technology needs to capture what learning has been done by whom and to what effect. The learning may be mobile but the data captured by that learning has to be tethered and grounded by the L&D function in order to ensure the learning and performance support meets the demands of the enterprise.

**Organisations need an LMS which is fit for the age of mobile learning.**

As workers have moved away from the desk and the classroom the LMS is being reborn as a vital platform to deliver relevant learning and record the outcomes of that learning. Online learning design itself has become more complex and complicated. Today L&D are having to grapple with data from many sources and new learning habits.

An LMS is key to pulling these data sources together to record digital learning and other learning experiences.

The LMS enables the enterprise through L&D to take full advantage of the benefits of mobile devices for on-demand learning and the delivery of learning anytime, anywhere, on any device, and performance support.

These days, learners, managers and administrators need to be able to work online - after all learners aren't the only ones who need to be mobile and who work remotely while travelling, away from their usual office, in the field or at home. The LMS needs to be intuitive, universally accepted and able to manage and support everybody who uses the system wherever they are.

It's becoming increasingly important to enable users to create content on the fly. With smartphones, user-generated content steps out of the text books and conference exhibition halls and becomes a reality. Learners can all produce videos and the LMS helps put the power of learning content creation into the hands of the subject matter experts (SMEs).

Social learning and collaboration is all about mobile. Today's mobile LMS enables people to learn through collaboration and by working together more closely.

The LMS has a fundamental role to play in enabling and managing mobile learning in the modern workplace, and an enterprises' online training effectiveness is only going to be as good as the LMS it deploys and its power in creating a learning experience where learning becomes a part of everyday life.

**For instance in Kallidus Learn:**

■ if a learner watching a video has to switch away from the learning and open another tab then the video will automatically pause;

■ the LMS can be configured to integrate with the enterprise's collaboration tool so learners can recommend resources and courses to their peers;

■ reporting is inbuilt. This allows learning to be tracked and the effectiveness of the learning to be measured. Key indicators include how long mobile learners were logged into the LMS; how long they spent on the learning; how long they spent on each screen.

The point of the reporting is to collect data to prove the effectiveness of the mobile learning and to give insights as to how and where the remote learning could be improved.

All data is important, perhaps even more so when the learning is mobile and the learners are remote and offering anecdotal face-to-face feedback is not likely.

LMS's like Kallidus Learn are designed for mobile use and are configured to maximise learning engagement.

## Part Four | Making it happen

Every organisation has its own learning culture. Mobile learning won't be a success unless the learning culture is right.

Barriers to progress can be related to organisation culture and restrictions on the use of mobile devices in the workplace.

Debate still continues over BYOD (bring your own device) policies with organisational concerns over security, IT integrity, licence issues and the extra workload on the IT department, and staff could push back over using their own devices for work-related tasks, especially if they are consuming their own data.

Sometimes in large organisations in particular, there can be a reluctance on the part of senior and line managers to encourage new ways of learning.

Mobile learning should not be seen as a standalone activity rather it should be embedded in the workflow and the processes of an organisation.

Mobile learning is learning at the point of need; that means workers need to find what they are looking for in pretty short order. Or they will stop looking.

## Part Four | Making it happen

Successful remote workers are self-motivated and can work for periods without supervision. If they work like that, they want to learn like that. Clearly organisations will wish to prescribe certain learning – such as compliance and health and safety – but mobile learning will work best where an organisation can grow a culture of self-directed learning.

Again this is an area where L&D has to start to trust learners to know their own learning needs, and along with organising their own learning comes practices and ideas such as peer-to-peer feedback and encouraging learners to share experiences and solve problems together.

So as well as deploying mobile learning technology companies must look to use social media tools in the workplace.

Mobile signifies the end of the era of learner dependence and ushers in a culture of self-reliance. Mobile well deployed – and backed by robust systems – promises learning transformation. It's the future of learning in the modern workplace and growing mobile workforce and provides a great opportunity for learning organisations that want to stay ahead.
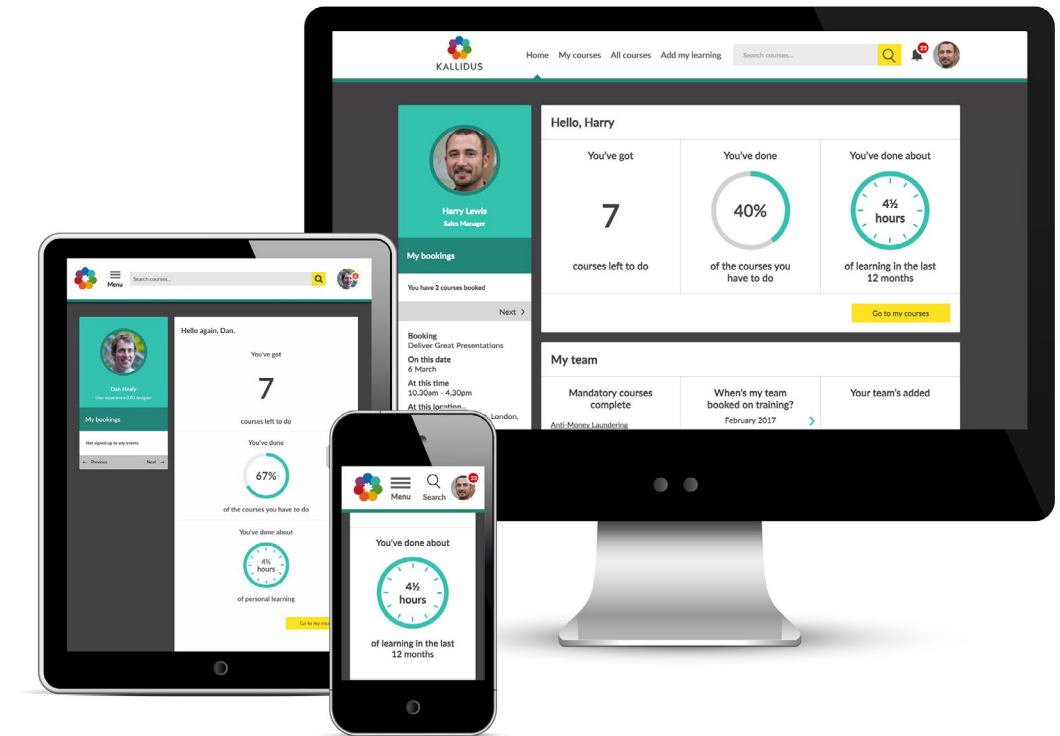
Industry statistics and the weight of evidence for the benefit of deploying mobile learning is impressive.

Equally, Kallidus has a growing body of evidence from its own experience working with clients on mobile-enabled solutions. For instance, quoted company Provident Financial Group is one of the UK's leading suppliers of personal credit products to the non-standard lending market.

Provident employs 4,940 staff serving 2.5 million customers through a network of branches, call centres and websites. Their L&D team wanted to work collaboratively and build credibility among key stakeholders to add value and provide the best learning solution for individuals and business improvement.

Provident was aware that its LMS was outdated and of increasing concern was the fact that it was not mobile optimised. They knew that they needed a system with more cutting edge features and with many colleagues working in the field, mobile-optimisation was fast becoming a key driver for a new LMS.

Kallidus worked with Provident on the launch which was judged a success due to extensive testing, the availability of sandboxes and the collaborative approach to support and feedback between the two organisations.

In February 2018, prior to the implementation of the new system, completion rates within a 28-day window were at 86% for the Head Office teams.

Go-live was in June 2018, when 5,000 people were enlisted on the initial 10 modules launched. 4,000 of those were mobile users – the remainder continued to use desktops or laptops to complete their learning.

Following go-live, Provident tracked completion rates within a 28-day window and these had increased to 96% for the Head Office team. This means it was only 30 or 40 colleagues away from 100% completion. Completion rates currently sit at 96% for the Field UK team, and 98% for the Field ROI team.

Dropout rates were not recorded on the previous system but since implementing Learn, dropout on completion rates are sitting at 3% – this means that 97% of learners are following the course through to the end.

## Mobile learners are happy learners

- 70% of learners are more motivated when training on a mobile device compared to a computer [9]

- Smartphone learners complete course material 45% faster than those using a computer and demonstrate significant improvements to knowledge retention [10]

- Mobile learners typically study for 40 minutes longer than learners using a desktop or tablet [11]

## The compelling case for mobile learning

- Mobile learning is a top priority for organisational learning - Mobile content 59%; Mobile platforms 61% [12]

- 87% of millennials say their smartphone never leaves their side [13]

- 90% of people in developed countries own a phone [14]

- Gartner predicts that 45% of businesses will have a BYOD policy by 2020 [15]

- Mobile device users will own three to four personal devices by the year 2018 [16]

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