



VOICE-OVER IN E-LEARNING

THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

UNI-Learning

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Things you need to know when using voice-over in e-Learning

In e-Learning, the visual aspect is key. Which graphics do we use? What about the layout's user-friendliness? This doesn't mean that we should neglect the importance of sound and voice. Let us tell you what you need to know when using sound – with a specific focus on voice-over – in e-Learning.

Hear hear!

Above all, voice-over in e-Learning is useful. We don't claim that, it's science that has taught us this. A person is much more likely to absorb information when this information reaches him both visually and audibly. This is called the **dual-channel theory**.

Another thing science has proved: if the voice-over message is not identical to the on-screen text, but somehow differs, the learning effect is even stronger.

Example: If the message on screen says: "Always wear Personal Protective Equipment when working", the voice-over might say something like "Keep in mind that you have to wear PPE gear during works onsite". *Catch my drift?*



“ **Voice-over actively helps the learner to acquire the information** ”

'Call of Nature' vs. 'Fitter Happier'

The most widely known type of voice-over is – of course – natural voice: voice actors who make voice recordings with appropriate intonation and an impeccable pronunciation. As a company, you can still decide if one of your colleagues is the voice actor or if you use an external voice-over company that has flawless recording conditions and has all the proper material.

Another method for voice-over is synthetic voice. This term may remind you of the heavily computerised voices back in the olden 90s days. Everyone who has ever used [Fruity Loops](#) or who knows the [Radiohead song 'Fitter Happier'](#), knows what I'm talking about. 😊



Nowadays, thanks to advanced speech technology, synthetic voice is a quite worthy, cost-effective alternative for natural voice.

Example: Let's compare the same message, [spoken by a real human voice](#) on the one hand and [processed by text-to-speech software](#) on the other. *Not bad, innit?*



*If you need clear instructions for your **e-Learning**, synthetic voice is a cost-effective **alternative** for natural voice*

Alert: white noise!

Don't expect miracles, though. If you need clear instructions for your e-Learning, synthetic voice can do the trick. If you have a situation that has to be explained in detail,

natural voice, with its ability to add appropriate nuance and intonation, is more efficient, if you ask us. Furthermore, our own experience teaches us that clients that preferred synthetic voice, become quite frustrated or even disgruntled about its quality: computerish blips, the incidental lack of intonation, etc.

After all, [man is still kraftier \(sic☺\) than machine](#). Next to voice-over, you can also use other sounds in e-Learning, for both functional and aesthetic reasons.

The Sound of...

Music! Music can be an interesting and cost-effective alternative for voice-over in an instruction video. Even more: if you don't do it, you're confronted with annoying background sounds or just uncomfortable silence. Background music as a [newly improved silence](#), so to speak. There are plenty of online databases for (free) background music.

Noise! Do you want to tell a story about something that happened in your company? It might be captivating to add adequate sounds for your story: industrial or mechanic sounds, tinkling coins or rustling payment cards, the muffled sound of people chatting, software sounds (Incoming email! Social media notification!). There are plenty of online databases for both music and sounds.

Example: A story about IT security told by a [synthetic voice-over 'embellished' with sounds](#).

Nuff said:

- The practicality of voice-over is no hearsay; it has scientific backing. It has an active role in e-Learning and helps the learner to acquire the information.
- Natural voice is still the standard, high quality option. Professional voice-over actors are skilled at using proper intonation and pronunciation, with an impeccable accent.
- But if you need short, concrete instructions, synthetic voice is an interesting, cost-effective alternative. Experience has taught us, though, that the final result might cause frustration if you expect the world of it. In the end, we prefer no voice-over over to a voice-over you're not happy with. Of course, another e-Learning approach is then required.
- Finally, the internet harbours an unfathomable amount of (free) sound effects and background music that might work just great to ornament your e-Learning or to avoid vast, disagreeable silence.

Conclusion

Thanks for reading this whitepaper! For more great e-Learning information, check out uni-learning.com. The UNI-Learning team would also like to thank our contributing authors for sharing their voice-over knowledge and experience for this whitepaper.

About UNI-Learning

UNI-Learning develops effective, custom-made e-Learning that is based on the latest technologies and is accessible everywhere. Our team works together with companies and organisations on a daily basis to create modern learning solutions. UNI-Learning focusses on your goals. Train new colleagues? Introduce a new code of conduct? Improve safety? We make sure that everybody pays attention. For 25 years, UNI-Learning has provided strategic consultancy and technology to help our clients achieve their learning challenges and business objectives. The UNI-Learning group is active in three cities in the heart of Europe: Paris, Ghent and Eindhoven.

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