

# Matching Distance Education and e-Learning Technologies to Pedagogical Goals

**A Guide to When to Use What in Higher  
Education**

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## Executive Summary

This paper compares the use of eight existing and emerging collaborative technologies in higher education (HE). These are:

- Learning Management System (LMS) platforms
- Social Learning / social media
- Interactive whiteboards / clickers
- Tablets / Smart phones
- Web conferencing
- Videoconferencing
- Lecture capture
- Streaming video / iTunes U / YouTube

One of the greatest challenges for educators and Information Technology (IT) organizations is to understand when to use which technology for which pedagogical purpose. No one technology solves all academic goals, and the complexities associated with deploying many of these technologies creates an environment in which failure may occur due to lack of planning, socializing, training, and overall execution.

We group activities into three major areas: real-time instructional activities, real-time and on demand (blended) activities, and administrative activities. Overall, lecture capture and streaming video are the most frequently high value technologies viewed “across the board” of all possible activities, followed closely by LMS’s and web conferencing. One caveat, again, is that each technology is well suited to different applications. Thus videoconferencing may be ranked “high” for only a few purposes, such as live distance instruction, collaborative learner-to-learner work, and meetings. Yet in those instances it can be as useful and offer as strong a use case as any other technology. Social learning is so new we tend to rank it of “medium” or “medium to high” value, yet our expectation is that it may be adopted more quickly than any other pedagogical technology has been adopted in the past 20 years.

This document is offered as a specific response to Wainhouse Research clients asking for directional guidance, and will be updated periodically as we assess the evolution of adoption and best practices.

## About the Authors

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## About Wainhouse Research

Wainhouse Research, [www.wainhouse.com](http://www.wainhouse.com), is an independent market research firm that focuses on critical issues in the Unified Communications and rich media conferencing fields, including applications like distance education and e-Learning. The company conducts multi-client and custom research studies, consults with end users on key implementation issues, publishes white papers and market statistics, and delivers public and private seminars as well as speaker presentations at industry group meetings. Wainhouse Research publishes a variety of reports that cover all aspects of rich media conferencing, and the free newsletter, The Wainhouse Research Bulletin.