

In 2016 Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) identified a need to adopt a learning content authoring tool that could be used by 200 assigned Authors within the organisation, in order to develop more than 2,000 eLearning courses. The chosen tool had to meet a stringent list of more than 100 key requirements.

HMRC is a non-ministerial department of the UK Government responsible for the collection of taxes, the payment of some forms of state support and the administration of other regulatory regimes including the UK's customs authority. The HMRC was established as a new department by an Act of Parliament in 2005, replacing the Inland Revenue and Customs and Excise.

The Project

The HMRC Learning and Development Team were seeking to modernise delivery of their learning programmes and consolidate the vast range of authoring tools they used to develop learning content. The overall objective of the project was to provide an improved user experience for delivery across multiple devices (including tablets and smart phones) as well as more intelligent tracking and reporting.

The Team produced a comprehensive list of key requirements for the new authoring tool. These included stipulations around security, functionality, software architecture and accessibility. Once these key requirements were documented, the HMRC Team conducted a market scan to assess what technology was available to meet these stipulations prior to releasing an invitation to tender mid 2016.

The tool would be used by an estimated 200 Authors across all HMRC departments, including the Tax Academy. The learning content that was to be developed using the new tool was intended for an internal audience within the department as well as potentially 1.5 million tax-paying UK citizens.



Managed
Hosting



Content
Development



Training



Support

The HMRC already had a Learning Management System (LMS) so it was important that any content developed could be deployed initially through the existing LMS, and later using xAPI to track and report.

As a UK Government Department, it was also critical that the chosen solution could be hosted within the UK and that security was high.

The Solution

Larmer Brown's tender response proposed the dominKnow Flow tool to meet HMRC learning content authoring requirements.

dominKnow Flow is a cloud-based responsive tool developed by Canadian company dominKnow Learning Systems, and is licensed via an annual subscription. Larmer Brown believed this was an ideal solution for HMRC due to its powerful responsive design and rapid authoring features. Using dominKnow, the HMRC Team could quickly build eLearning content for their learning community to access from any device.

In terms of cost, dominKnow Flow does not have an end user licence so this was especially attractive due to the potential size of the user community for HMRC. The ready-to-use templates and library of stock assets would also provide the Authoring Team with a central repository to share and re-use content across projects as well as real-time collaboration and review features.

Larmer Brown was invited to present dominKnow Flow to the HMRC Learning and Development Team in Whitehall, London on 5th and 6th October 2016, providing a demonstration of all the features meeting their key requirements.

In February 2017, Larmer Brown was awarded the contract to provide a Fully Managed Hosted Solution of the dominKnow Flow content authoring platform,

as well as consultancy, training and technical support. The intention was to follow a process of continual knowledge transfer to the HMRC Authors, ensuring that, in addition to offering ongoing support, the assigned Authors were trained and proficient in using Flow.

An experienced and qualified Team comprising Technical Support Specialists, System Administrators, Instructional Designers, Educational Consultants, Content Developers and Graphical Designers was assigned to the contract by Larmer Brown.

In order to train up the HMRC Authors on Flow, Larmer Brown delivered a series of facilitated Workshops which provided a deep dive into the features and functions of the tool. Rather than train all 200 Authors, it was agreed that Larmer Brown would train the 20 assigned Lead Authors who would then disseminate this training across the rest of the authoring community.

As is likely with any group of this magnitude, there were regular and frequent changes in Authors. This made it difficult to manage ongoing training to ensure that all Authors were trained to the same level. The Larmer Brown Team therefore developed eLearning courses consisting of 15 hours training and assessments on Flow. This eLearning was available to all new Authors as a pre-requisite to using the dominKnow platform. This approach ensured that all Authors achieved a level of proven proficiency in the tool before they commenced work on a live project.

Prior to commencement of content development, Larmer Brown held a Discovery Workshop with the HMRC Learning and Development Team to agree the Content Standards and Development Methodology. The Workshop defined branding as well as general look/feel and use of assets for all content. The methodology that the Authors would follow for development, QA, review and sign off

was also agreed. Larmer Brown then developed a prototype course called “Tax Master” using these agreed standards. The Tax Academy was going to be the biggest Author base for dominKnow Flow, so it was agreed that this tax-based course provided a meaningful exemplar for the HMRC Authors.

The Outcome

At the time of writing, more than 2,000 courses have been developed by the HMRC Authoring Team using dominKnow Flow (now domin**Know** | ONE). It is the main authoring tool used for developing and delivering online learning to more than 60,000 members of staff. There are over 160 Authors developing content, as well as 18 Administrators and 2,000 SME reviewers checking courses to ensure they reflect processes, best practice and legislative requirements in this highly regulated market.

In order to support HMRC Authors as they continue to develop eLearning courses, the Larmer Brown Team hosts regular knowledge sessions with the Lead Authors. These sessions enable Larmer Brown to provide updates and demonstrations on any new features in domin**Know** | ONE. They also provide an opportunity for the HMRC Team to discuss potential enhancements to the tool which Larmer Brown can feedback to the vendor.

The Future

In February 2020, HMRC committed to extending the contract with Larmer Brown, which includes hosting and support for domin**Know** | ONE, for a further three years.

As members of the HMRC Team have moved on to other roles in various Government departments, this has instigated new requirements where domin**Know** | ONE has been deployed.

“ We have been very happy with the ongoing support we’ve received from Larmer Brown, which has ensured any technical issues or questions from our designers have always been answered promptly.

Larmer Brown’s managed hosting service also ensures that we are informed and fully prepared for any planned updates to domin**Know** | ONE. ”

Andy Noble, Learning Partner | Learning Academy
HR People & Organisation Development | HMRC

About Larmer Brown

Larmer Brown has provided change management and learning solutions to corporate clients since 1984. Our primary objective is to help organisations with the implementation of learning initiatives through content development and training delivery programmes.

Larmer Brown is a Reseller and Services Partner for dominKnow Learning Systems offering the award-winning domin**Know** | ONE to support clients’ learning initiatives. For more information visit:

www.larmerbrown.com/products/dominknow-one/