



Story-based Learning

Customer Profile

Founded in 1999, WisdomTools was spun out of Indiana University's Center for Excellence in Education. They take a story-based approach to learning and design scenarios to address a range of business needs. These scenarios are customized, web-based learning tools that leverage the power of stories. Like movies or a good book, they have the power to transport users into authentic settings and into the lives of interesting, believable characters.

The works of authors in olden times were published in a serialized manner in newspapers. This is the e-version thereof, where scenes of a story (chapters) are sent to learners via e-mail. The frequency and number of e-mails depends on the nature and length of the story. Each scene ends with a question which explores what the learner would do or how they would act if they were in the character's shoes. There is a link to a discussion forum where learners can then share their interpretations and learning from the scene, and evaluate alternative actions.

Business Needs

The approach to learning may vary, but there is no doubt that a story-based approach will grab and hold the learner's attention. Add to that an element of suspense, and you have aroused the learner's curiosity. The learner is kept in anticipation until the next installment, or scene, of the eStory is received.

Client Speak

"We wanted to implement a new approach to our traditional story-based learning by pushing our stories to the desktop via e-mail in a quick and engaging format. We contacted Upside with this requirement and the partnership yielded a couple of sharp demos. We are now moving into production with several projects. We have high hopes for future collaborations."

Michael Shermis
VP, Client Services/Senior Producer
WisdomTools

WisdomTools was looking for an innovative approach to designing and presenting their e-stories. Their objective was to bring stories to the desktop by presenting the learner with a rapid succession of e-scenes to provide an interesting and engaging, yet suspenseful, learning experience – the equivalent of a book that you just can't put down.



The Solution

Upside created a Graphical User Interface (GUI) that reflected the subject and tone of the story: serious, crisp, and clean.

A set of practical yet user-friendly controls was provided in the bottom bar, allowing learners to control the pace and flow of their viewing experience. Learners can drag a slider bar to move to a specific point of the scene or can skim through the scene viewing text (including speech bubbles) and graphics in progression, without any animation or audio.

The flow of the story was planned and presented in such a way that the visual focus shifts between the narration text shown and the scene animations. To cater to a wide target audience, a cast of realistic, no-frills, multicultural characters was created, ranging in age from the mid-20s to the mid-40s. Character profiles were made available on click at the end of the scene.

Highlights

- GUI and layout relate instantly to comic strips
- Progress slider bar allow learners to control pace
- Manual advance buttons for skimming
- Realistic characters