

portional to the effectiveness of the knowledge management program.

- *Shifting marketplace.* The competitive advantage conferred to the corporation by knowledge workers with specific knowledge can suddenly diminish because of changes external to the company, such as the release of a new operating system standard or a shift in federal or state laws, or the introduction of a disruptive technology in the marketplace. For example, the knowledge assets of a photo processing chain that deals in developing and printing conventional photographic film is devalued daily as digital photography and digital image processing consume a larger segment of the consumer and professional imaging market. In addition, federal legislation regarding disposal of toxic chemicals used in the production, development, and printing of the traditional film-based photography is accelerating this industry-wide move to filmless photography and a decrease in the value of knowledge of conventional processing techniques.

Fortunately, educational technologies can reduce the cost of education. One of the major advances in knowledge worker education is the use of e-learning (distance learning or computer-based education), which is the use of the web, intranets, wireless computing, and other digital means of educating knowledge workers. This means of dispensing knowledge is expanding rapidly in corporate America primarily because of its lower cost. E-learning combines asynchronous, anytime access with consistent delivery of information to be learned.

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, a variety of enabling technologies, including portable digital imaging and sound playback tools, are now affordable and applicable to e-learning. A rapidly growing amount of content also is available. Custom digital courses do not have to be created for generic tasks, given that a wide variety of courses are avail-