Here are some ideas to think of when choosing an LMS.

**Informal/Social Media**:

How does an organization currently capture social media information? Are people using search engines (Bing, google), social websites (LinkedIn, Yammer, Facebook, and Twitter), video aggregators (YouTube, Vimeo), online forums, wiki’s, blogs, etc. to learn information? How do organizations or students know the information is accurate? Is the LMS used as the main launching point for learning or does it start with other sites (twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Yammer) API’s?

**Mobile:**

Is it necessary to have mobile learning? People are now using Mobile learning. Many company employees work at home and are not located in an office. Employees may not have access to desktop computers and can bring your own device (BYOD) i.e. retail. Many companies have basic mobile devices. Is your company using mobile devices (Windows Phone, IPhone, Android, Tablets, etc.) and is it necessary for students to view training content. Mobile can also mean that people don’t have access to the internet because of their location. Mobile LMS systems can be placed on a USB stick and distributed to learners.

**xAPI / Tin Can API**:

Is it necessary to have informal learning through other websites like YouTube, instructables, Wikipedia, etc. or corporate intranet websites or iPhone, Google and Windows apps? If tracking of informal learning is necessary, xAPI/Tin Can API is a good way to track this information and save it to a learning record store. I think this can bridge a gap between informal and formal learning, but it’s still to be proven as to how useful this could be in a corporate environment.

**SaaS:**

Is it important? How important is security. Not all SaaS is the same. What is the LMS’s SaaS data security: SaaS 70 or ISO 27001 certification? How can user data be accessed? Can the database be accessed? Are there any API that work directly with the data?

**Regulation Compliance:**

Is compliance needed in the organization? Compliance is usually used in highly regulated industries. However, compliance is a major driver of features in a LMS. Compliance may be critical for Franchise’s in non-regulated industries. Employees working in other countries may be required to have different levels of compliance VS in the United States. Example: 21 CFR Part 11 in UK.

**Tracking and Reporting:**

How robust is reporting? Can the administrator directly access the database? If unable to access the database, are the built in reporting tools adequate. Do custom reports need to be made?

**Talent Management:**

Does the system support talent management? Is it important to have a talent management system to be integrated into the LMS?

**External Customers:**

Do you have external customers? Does the system provide separate internal vs. external users? Can courses hosted on the LMS be purchased? Can coupons be used to redeem courses?

**Portals:**

Can portals be made by the LMS? Is branding the LMS necessary for the learner? Is it important to have the LMS integrated seamlessly into a website? Can the LMS host and launch courses from other LMS servers, websites, sub domains, companies, etc.?

**Connectors:**

Is it easy to modify the existing course tracking code? For example, if a video hosted one site is moved to another hosting site, can the tracking code be updated on the LMS to support the new video?

**Working with other software systems:**

Does the system work with other API’s like Twitter, LinkedIn? Is it necessary for the LMS to work with other server software (security servers, HR servers, etc.)? If so, what is the process to make those updates?

The following information was gathered by using the LMS systems, and watching videos of the system in use. While some of the companies are non-corporate, they do provide examples of what could be done with an LMS.

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| SCORM Cloud | | | | |
| Description | | Website | Example | Price |
| Web based LMS. Has the latest Tin Can API, supports learning record stores, and 3rd party software. Integrates with WordPress, Drupal, Google apps, Moodle, YouTube, Sakai, Dokeos, and Ilias. Geared towards selling courses.  **Students:** Course display for users (“Realms”) is very basic. Launching the course UI in desktop mode is not helpful and confusing. UI interface is basic, but clear. Maybe a little too simplistic?  **Administrators**: Adding course is basic, but good. Reporting is VERY limited. No ability to add custom reports.    **The Good:** Great Tin Can API “I learned this” integration in browser favorite’s bar. Basic ability to add courses, and launch. Can integrate with a merchant account to charger per course. Easy to setup and add courses.  **The Bad:** Besides the Tin Can API support, nothing was really unique. Most features of the LMS were rudimentary and basic. Was unable to add a credit card merchant account. Unable to access database in other programs. SaaS hosting.  **Mobile:** Tested on Android table and works. However, the UI is not tailored for mobile when viewing on mobile device. UI does not scale dynamically for mobile solutions.  **Additional Services:**?  **Recommendation:** Not recommended as an enterprise LMS solution. However, this could be useful for consumers and small companies looking to sell course. As the number of users increase, the value of this LMS and price could be prohibitive. | | http://scorm.com | https://cloud.scorm.com/sc/user/Home | <http://scorm.com/scorm-solved/scorm-cloud-pricing/>  About $1 a user per month. |
| Screen Shots |  | | | |

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| Blackboard Learn / Blackboard CourseSites | | | | |
| Description | | Website | Example | Price |
| **Students:** Main page is clean, well designed, uncluttered and basic. Course built with the LMS are wiki like. The course content can get lost in the UI.  **Administrators**: System Admin is robust. Adding courses is easy. The process is basic, but well structured. Easy to add assessments. Content is nicely organized. Modern Web UI. Quick course setup is very good.  **The Good:** Notification panel is a good way to give a quick snap shot of all courses. User interface is intuitive and professional looking. Discussions, journals, wikis and other informal social media works well.  **The Bad:** Without having used it extensively, this appears to be a good modern LMS. More for teachers and classroom. No xAPI. Doesn’t scale UI to mobile. Designed to use Blackboard authoring tools. Course run in iframe instead of opening new windows.  **Mobile:** Content does not dynamically resize for tablets and phone. Was able to view the site on Android Tablet and it worked, but required a lot of moving screen to right or left.  **Additional Services:**  Has a number of services that include sales force integration, custom consulting services, program planning, etc. Online support site is good based on the online support, forums and sample training content.  **Recommendation:** I like this LMS/CMS. While it may not be made for a company, the design and features make it very professional. The design in particular is much better than other LMS systems out there. A lot of thought had gone it making this system. | | https://www.coursesites.com | Free Demo – Takes one minute to setup.  <https://www.coursesites.com/webapps/Bb-sites-signup-BBLEARN/signup.form> | FREE  Blackboard Learn |
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| Desire2Learn Version 10 | | | | |
| Description | | Website | Example | Price |
| Company is focused on the non-corporate education sector.   **Students:**  Basic display of information of students on main page. Course listing and completion status is generic. User interface is dated. Announcements and user related alerts are displayed in generic.  **Administrators**: Content area is straight forward. Course are considered modules. Easy to upload files.  **The Good:** Displays lists of updates in the course.  **The Bad:** Course launching and display is clunky and requires student to click multiple times. Comments on websites are not very supportive  **Mobile:**  **Additional Services:**  **Recommendation:** | |  | <https://rrcc.desire2learn.com>  username: train01 password: train01  http://www.YouTube.com/watch?v=WhK\_zgdbv5c |  |
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| Moodle | | | | |
| Description | | Website | Example | Price |
| Open source LMS system. Check out Wikipedia for more information: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moodle>  One of the largest sites to use Moodle is <http://www.open.edu>   **Students:**  Very basic UI. Too much information and widgets on one page. However, this can be updated and customized. Hard to concentrate on the courses. Course launching is basic, and dated.  **Administrators**: Adding content is basic. Uses a lot of drop downs to access content, but works. Uploading a file is easy with drag and drop functionality. Text formatting has really been streamlined. Reports are pretty limited, but good.  **The Good:** The LMS can be tailored to make it look better, but it’s pretty basic. Gets the job done. Lots of 3rd party widgets for free. No SaaS. Has a lot of features by default. Easy to navigate.  **The Bad:** Too much content on the page. The administration area has a lot of drop downs so it requires a little more work. Maintenance is done by your company or 3rd party who likely didn’t create the software. Requires a lot of testing and internal resources. Requires hosting, although this can be provided by 3rd party. Enrollment is not done automatically and requires custom programming.  **Mobile:** UI works nicely on tablets and phones. Although, there is still a lot of scrolling, it does provide all the information.  **Additional Services:** None  **Recommendation:** No. Customizing Moodle for the needs of a medium to large company would require a lot of 3rd party or in house work. No real savings due to the need to hire programmers, artists, database admins, etc. For a small company, this could be useful, but would still require a lot of work. | | <https://moodle.org/> | <http://demo.moodle.net>  <http://www.open.edu/openlearn/science-maths-technology/finding-information-information-technology-and-computing/content-section-1.1.1> | FREE |
|  | http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/36/Moodle_2.0_on_Firefox_4.0.png | | | |

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| Kaplan | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
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| Skillsoft SkillPort LMS | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
|  | http://www.skillsoft.com/business-solutions/skillport.asp |  |  |

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| NetDimensions | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| NetDimensions has been around since 1999. I remember using their first LMS and it was good. They were a small company and now their large for the eLearning industry. The have a number of different learning portals that include: Learning, Performance, Exams, and Anayltics   **Students:**  **Administrators**:  **The Good:**  **The Bad:**  **Mobile:**  **Additional Services:**  **Recommendation:** | http://www.netdimensions.com/ |  |  |

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| SumTotal Learn | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| **Students:**  **Administrators**:  **The Good:**  **The Bad:**  **Mobile:** Has a iphone and Android App  http://vimeo.com/63805287  **Additional Services:**  **Recommendation:** | http://www.sumtotalsystems.com/enterprise/learning-management-system/ |  |  |

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| Saba | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
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| Meridian Knowledge Solutions | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
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| SuccessFactors | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| Many big companies use success factors. Have been unable to find working demo to test. | http://www.successfactors.com |  |  |

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| Oracle Learning Management taleo/learn.com | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
|  | http://www.oracle.com/us/products/applications/ebusiness/human-capital-management/053815.html |  |  |

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| Canvas Learning Management System By instructor.com | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| Made with Ruby on Rails. Open source. Seems more open than other lms. Oriented towards public school. Cloud based. OAuth used to access information from social media sites. Amazon cloud services.  http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instructure | http://www.instructure.com | <https://richland.instructure.com/login?canvas_login=1>   * Username: rccstudent (all lowercase) * Password: richland (all lowercase) | ???? |
| Sakai taleo/learn.com | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| Made with JAVA. Used by colleges an public schools. Work together to create an open learning environment. Sakai CLE is free. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sakai_Project> | http://www.sakaiproject.org | <https://testdrivesakai.com/portal/xlogin>  username: night password: night2112 | ???? |

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| Mind tap Cengage Learning | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| Very similar to Sakai and Canvas, but has better integration with 3rd party tools. Note taking, video. Interesting Mind app bar. | http://www.cengage.com/mindtap/index4.html | <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rlbGVkfgu24> |  |

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| Absorb LMS http://www.absorblms.com/ | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| They seem to be a very open company and have a lot of information available on their website. The community seems to be involved a lot. People say nice things. Content is easy to view. I think if the site is highly customized it could have a lot of potential. This is the consumerization of the LMS.  Mobile UI looks good. Much better than other competitors. Simple and clean. I could see this being used a lot! In fact, I could see the Mobile versions being used more than the desktop version? http://absorblms.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/thumbfriendly.png  Features branding is nice, but seems to be consistent from company to company. So, I’m not sure how much modification could be done. UI is simple. Nothing jumps out as spectacular, but is very good for a LMS. Branding on dashboard has a lot of potential. Toggle menu view is very cool. Nice integration of social sites.  Websites using Absorb <http://rolls-roycemotorcarslms.com/user/default.asp>  Administration  Did not see an Administration console. This is very important and could be a deal breaker. No information.  <http://www.capterra.com/learning-management-system-software/spotlight/61763/Absorb%20LMS/Blatant%20Media#reviews>  found these people with reviews of the company. They seem to have very good “user stories”. I would suggest contacting them to see what their thoughts are.   * Greg Goodale, Marketing Manager at HealthMEDX * Fred Pinkett, VP Product Management at Security Innovation * Linda Witherspoon, VP, HR at Century Payments   Cons:  The clients on Absorb seem to be small. So, I’m not sure their needs would be in-line with large companies.  Not really liking how courses are listed. Too much content on the screen when a lot of course are displayed. The UI seems to be relying on screen captures of the course to convey information. While nice, I could see that as a problem with a lot of similar courses.  Some content seems to be in Flash. Not sure if this is older sites, but would want to avoid for a UI.  Would be nice to have a way to go back to the courses listing when showing a course. The picture below shows me in a course. There is no obvious way to go back. It requires opening the toggle button. This UI is very Mobile centric.    http://absorblms.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/biglinks.png | http://blog.absorblms.com/ | http://www.absorblms.com/try-now | ? |

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| Cornerstones | | | |
| Description | Website | Example | Price |
| Cornerstones Learning Cloud  Review with tons of info. This review isn’t good, but appears old. May be biased and using old technology. <http://elearninfo247.com/2011/12/12/product-review-cornerstone-on-demand/>  Lots of marketing/advertising on website, but not a lot of substance. I was unable to find a working demo to check out the features. Unfortunately, not a lot of reviews are good so I would want to use the software to learn more.  Neiman Marcus is listed as a client. I would try getting a Neiman Marcus contact name. Here’s one:  Dana DevlinManager, Learning & Development at Neiman Marcus  I could not review the site. | http://www.cornerstoneondemand.com | Was unable to find one. |  |

Websites that have an LMS where courses are listed and students can take for free or for a fee.

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| Product Name | Description | Website | Example | Price |
|  |  | https://www.opensesame.com |  |  |
|  |  | http://bbcacademy.com/ |  |  |