

hiCreo SaaS Lowers the Barrier to eLearning

White Paper 2019



HiCREO SaaS LOWERS THE BARRIER TO ELEARNING

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every industry needs corporate training and professional development, and one of the most effective ways to accomplish this is through eLearning. In comparison to traditional instructor-led or classroom training, eLearning is more time-efficient, more cost-effective, and leads to higher knowledge retention rates. Yet, while there are long-term cost savings in eLearning, the initial development costs are high. To create eLearning, an organization needs an internal development team of educational experts or must outsource the project for tens of thousands of dollars.



hiCreo closes the gap between instructor-led training and eLearning in initial development costs. hiCreo is an eLearning design and development tool that enables organizations to turn any content into engaging, interactive, and cost-effective eLearning or mLearning. As a fully powered Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), hiCreo itself acts as the computer programmer, graphic artist, and video and audio producer so that an organization can create eLearning content without an internal development team. A key component of SaaS is its ease-of-use by non-experts. hiCreo requires no software installation and configuration, no in-house server requirements, and no cybersecurity issues to address on our users' end. Through hiCreo's authoring system, non-programmers can easily build modules and incorporate interactive components, quizzes, and pages as storyboards. hiCreo provides a unique collaborative approach that allows for rapid courseware creation and maintenance.

The barrier to eLearning is the significant amount of money, time, and people needed to initially create it.

But not offering eLearning is not an option anymore. eLearning is where training is increasingly taking place, and all organizations need to leverage the power of the cloud to continue their success.

hiCreo lowers the barrier to eLearning by empowering businesses to build their own training. You don't need your own internal development team either. hiCreo's ease-of-use software and subscription service for support mean that you have all the tools and content to build your own eLearning, with extremely low sunk cost.

In this white paper, you will learn more about the value of eLearning, the barrier to eLearning, and how hiCreo SaaS can help you overcome this barrier with its unique benefits and properties.

Reading this white paper will help you understand:

- The eLearning landscape.
- How eLearning can help your organization be successful.
- How your organization can create eLearning by using hiCreo.

2. THE VALUE OF ELEARNING

2.1 Long-Term Cost Savings

Corporations save between 50% and 70% when they replace instructor-led training with eLearning because they reduce or eliminate the costs of travel and accommodations, meals, classrooms and equipment setup, venue rentals, hard copy materials, and salaries for instructors and other support staff. In fact, 85% of every dollar spent on classroom training is spent on delivering it (**Figure 1**).

Cost Breakdown of Classroom Training

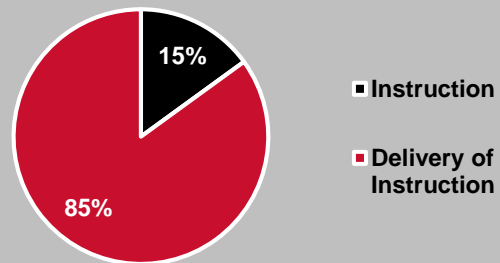


Figure 1

Time Efficiency in eLearning vs. Classroom Training

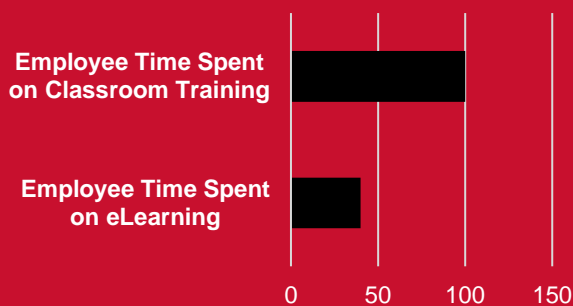


Figure 2

According to a Brandon-Hall Study, eLearning usually requires 40% to 60% less employee time than learning the same material in a traditional classroom setting (**Figure 2**). With eLearning, employees can learn asynchronously whenever they want, which means they do not have to interrupt their work schedules for unwieldy or inconvenient blocks of time.

Studies have shown that revenue generated per employee is 26% higher for companies that offer training using technology, like eLearning, because companies are able to train much more frequently (**Figure 3**). Knowledge translates directly into revenue. According to market research firm Ambient Insight, 42% of companies surveyed about the learning market say that eLearning has led to an increase in revenue.

Higher Employee Revenue with eLearning Training

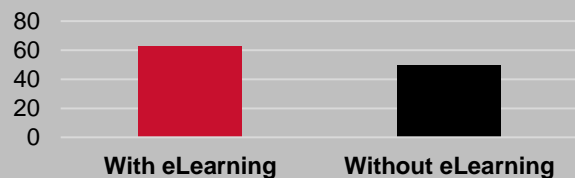
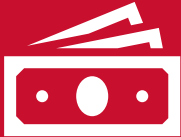



Figure 3


For every dollar IBM invested





in online training,

the company gained \$30 in productivity.



CASE STUDY:

The information technology company IBM implemented an eLearning program at its company which imparted nearly five times more material than traditional instructor-led training, without increasing the employee time spent in training. So, employees spent less time in training and could go back to work faster, reducing costs. In total, IBM saved approximately \$200 million after pivoting to eLearning.

2.2 Employee Benefits

eLearning matches its cost savings with employee benefits. With eLearning, employees can learn at their own pace, set their own schedules, conduct training virtually anywhere (at home, at work, in transit), and spend less time learning the same material. The flexibility and convenience of eLearning is a huge bonus to employees. When polled, 90% of employees think that online learning is the same or better than traditional classroom experiences.

The benefits of eLearning are not just in convenience but also in quality of training. The Research Institute of America found that eLearning actually increases knowledge retention rates from 25% up to 60% (in comparison, retention rates of classroom training are low at 8% to 10%) (see **Figure 4**). When learners can control their own pace, schedule, and environment, they retain what they learn and re-visit topics whenever necessary. Higher retention rates lead to better return-on-investment (ROI) for training and helps convert training to on-the-job skills. Companies that use eLearning realize an 18% boost in employee engagement.

Higher Knowledge Retention Rates in eLearning vs. Classroom Training

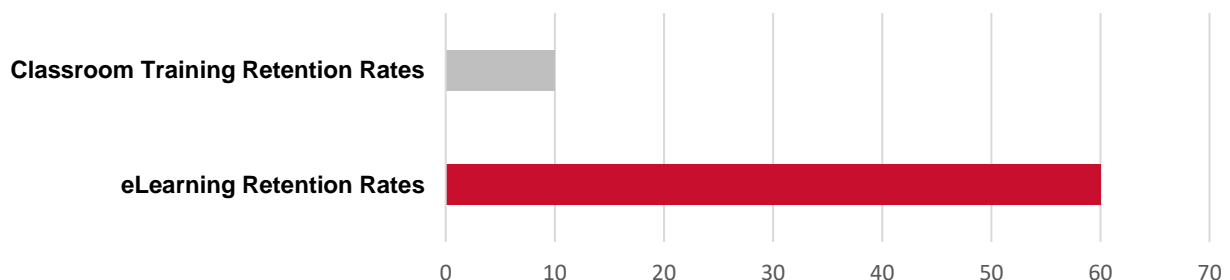


Figure 4

Finally, by investing in eLearning, you are investing in the professional development of your employees. The National Research Business Institute found that 23% of employees leave their jobs due to the lack of development opportunities and training. Losing talent has many costs, including:

- Search firm or internal Human Resources (HR)
- Interviewing costs (travel, hotel, meals)
- Interviewing time spent by manager and team members
- Work put on hold until replacement is onboarded
- Overload on team, including overtime during recruitment and training periods
- Orientation and training time for replacement
- Lost customers
- Lost contracts or business
- Lowered morale and productivity
- Sign-on bonus and other perks
- Moving allowance
- Loss of other employees

By providing eLearning as part of a professional development program, your organization can proactively reduce employee turnover and retain your talent.

2.3 Competitive Edge

Within the past twenty years, eLearning has grown by 900%. To remain competitive in today's landscape, organizations are increasingly turning to eLearning, with 98% of all companies planning to use eLearning by 2020. According to Global Market Insights, the eLearning market size was valued at \$190 billion in 2018 and is projected to grow to \$325 billion in 2025 (**Figure 5**).

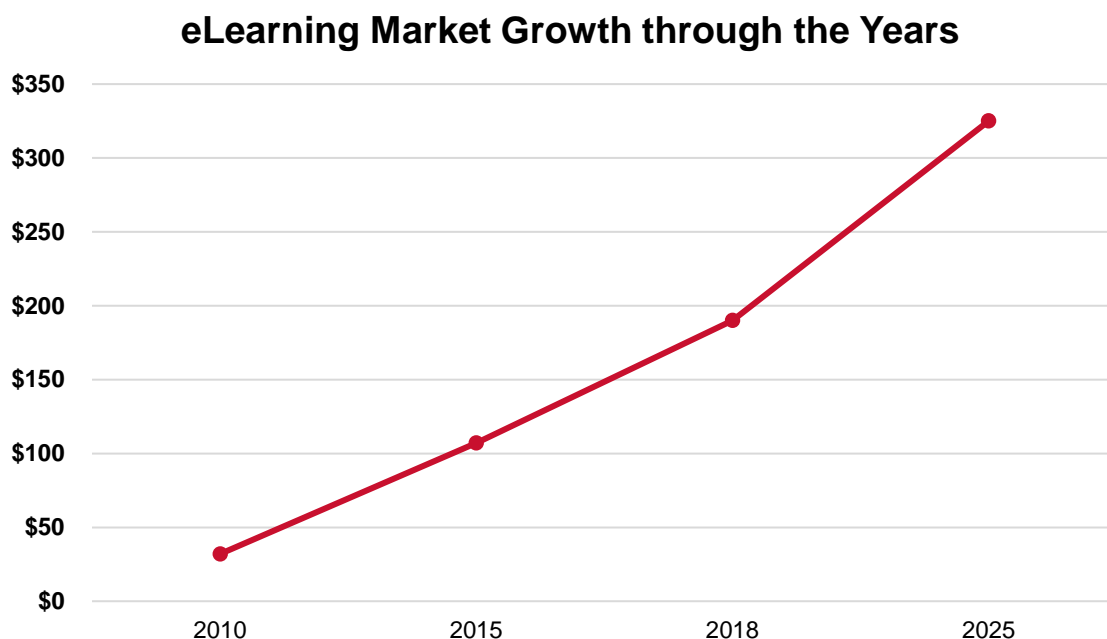


Figure 5

When polled, 72% of organizations believe that eLearning helps them increase their competitive edge by enabling them to keep up with changes in their markets. Towards Maturity, an independent industry research firm for learning organizations, reports that learning innovation delivers over 9% improvement in organization growth, transformation, profit, and productivity. Furthermore, organizations with high-performing learning cultures are 5x more productive and 8x more likely to report organizational agility.

With nearly 100% of organizations investing more money into training and professional development via eLearning, your organization cannot handicap its growth by falling behind the times. eLearning is an optimal way for your organization and its employees to remain current in your industry through training on new technologies, new regulations, and new methodologies. With eLearning, close employee skills gaps and optimize your organization's performance.

3. THE BARRIER TO eLEARNING: HIGH INITIAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Many organizations cannot take full advantage of eLearning due to the high initial development costs. **Table 1** shows the comparison between eLearning Level 2 initial development time and cost vs. classroom training, as surveyed by Chapman Alliance, a research-centric consulting company for innovative learning initiatives. eLearning Level 2 includes content pages, text, graphics, multimedia (audio, video, animations), and interactive exercises. Level 2 is considered an "intermediate" between basic and advanced eLearning.

During initial development, eLearning is 4x as costly and 4x as time-consuming as classroom training.

While eLearning leads to long-term savings, its high starting costs make it prohibitive to many organizations.

	eLearning Level 2	Classroom Training
Average Time of Development Per Finished Hour of Instruction	184 hours	43 hours
Average Cost of Development Per Finished Hour of Instruction	\$18,543.00	\$5,934.00

Table 1

Creating eLearning content is a long and tedious process, making costs high and turnaround times lengthy. For example, to build eLearning, you need an instructional systems designer (ISD), programmer, graphic artist, and subject matter expert (SME); for more complex eLearning, you may also require voice talent, a Section 508 specialist, an audio specialist, a video specialist, and software and authoring tools with licenses. Few organizations have all the talent in-house or the budget to out-source, leaving them with the short-term solution of classroom training or buying off-the-shelf training that is not tailored to their workforce or its needs.

4. HICREO SOFTWARE-AS-A-SERVICE (SAAS): THE ELEARNING SOLUTION

hiCreo SaaS lowers the barrier to eLearning by acting as an eLearning authoring tool for organizations without internal development teams or large budgets for external help. With hiCreo, you do not have to be a seasoned eLearning developer to convert information into engaging eLearning content. Instead, your organization can subscribe to hiCreo and have access to an ever-expanding library of templates that are thoughtfully designed and meticulously crafted by industry experts. With hiCreo, anyone can share knowledge efficiently and inexpensively. Any employee within an organization can now create eLearning courses about localized lessons in which he or she is an expert, without the need for a team to develop and manage eLearning projects.



Figure 6

hiCreo is an eLearning design and development tool that enables non-industry experts to build eLearning content themselves, at very low costs. hiCreo uses the SaaS model to cut costs for our customers and reduce risk. hiCreo SaaS is an on-demand, cloud-based application delivered via the internet. Using a SaaS model, hiCreo shoulders the burdens of security, availability, and performance. On average, SaaS reduces information technology (IT) responsibilities and costs by more than 15%. Small businesses, in particular, do not have to invest in additional in-house server capacity and software licenses, establish IT infrastructure, or be responsible for maintaining and updating the application. One of the biggest advantages to hiCreo's SaaS subscription model is that your organization can adjust its subscription on a monthly basis. This flexibility allows you to scale consumption requirements up and down, based on project demands.

5. BENEFITS AND PROPERTIES OF hiCREO

5.1 Ease of Use

5.1.1 Template Building

Converting information into engaging eLearning content can be a daunting task, even for a seasoned eLearning developer. With hiCreo, the user can choose from an ever-expanding library of templates (**Figure 7**) that are thoughtfully designed and meticulously crafted by the industry experts. Template-based content design significantly accelerates the development process and is a great way to rapidly create meaningful and engaging eLearning content.

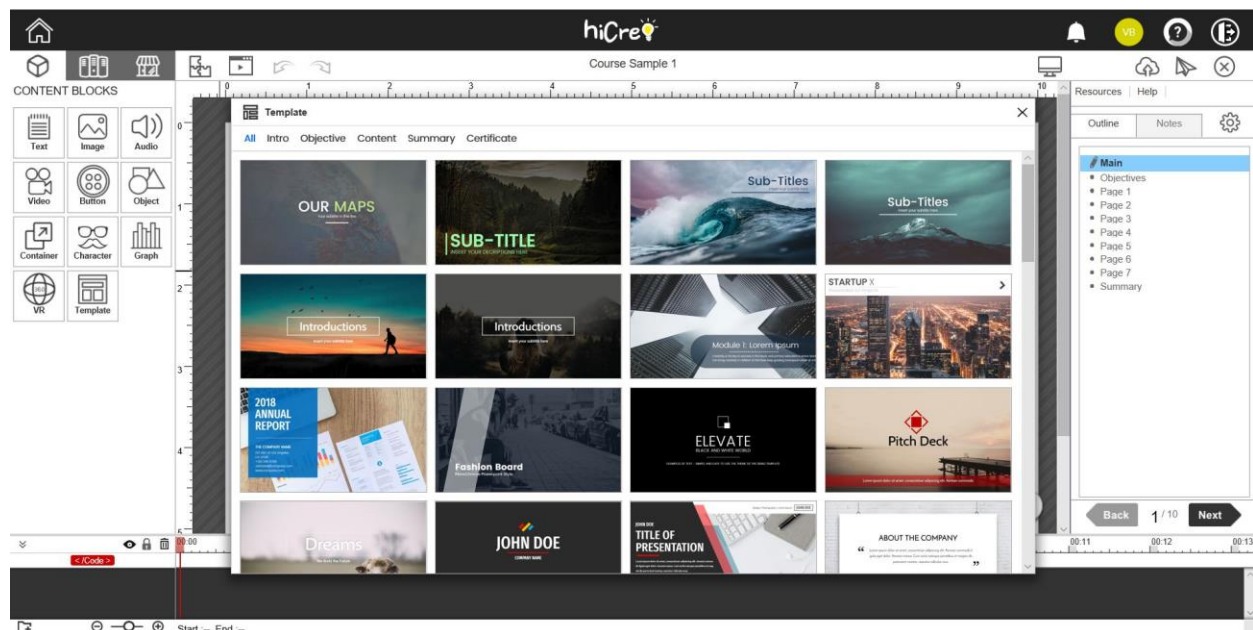


Figure 7

hiCreo's courseware templates include the following ease-of-use features:

- Downloadable Course Template
- Editability of Legacy Content
- "What You See Is What You Get" (WYSIWYG) System
- Online Content Review
- Storyboards
- Storyboard Export Tool
- Information Architecture Tool
- Functional Examples
- Responsive Display/Mobile Devices
- Interactive Display Components
 - Toggle List
 - Pop-Up Text Objects
 - New Window
 - Hub and Spoke
 - Tables
 - Links
 - Menu
 - Navigation and Page Structure
 - Auto-Play Toggle Off/On

- Assessments
 - Minimum Passing Score
 - Feedback
 - Link to Content
 - End of Lesson and End of Course Assessments
 - Knowledge Checks
 - Matching, Multiple Answer, Multiple Choice, True/False, Fill in the Blank Questions
 - Required Passing Score
 - Link Question to Learning Objective
 - Media Input (audio, video)
- Built-in Section 508 Compliance
- SCORM Compatibility
- LMS/SCORM Testing
- Setup and Programming Outside Content Builder System
- Post-Contract 24 Month Availability
- HTML5 Exportation

5.1.2 All-in-One Authoring System

hiCreo is an all-in-one authoring system and publishing tool where you can import your content into templates and populate them, cropping images, amplifying audio, and enhancing videos all within hiCreo. hiCreo's all-in-one authoring system allows a non-programmer to build the basics of a module, including interactive components such as quizzes, images, audio, and videos, within the storyboard.



Figure 8

5.1.3 Multi-Author Collaboration and Review System

hiCreo streamlines the eLearning development process and enables multi-author collaboration in real-time while working on a project. This allows more than one author to see the same content, and thus collaborate on it simultaneously (**Figure 9**). It also enables permission/role-based production workflows. Multi-author collaboration also functions as a review system for courses during development.

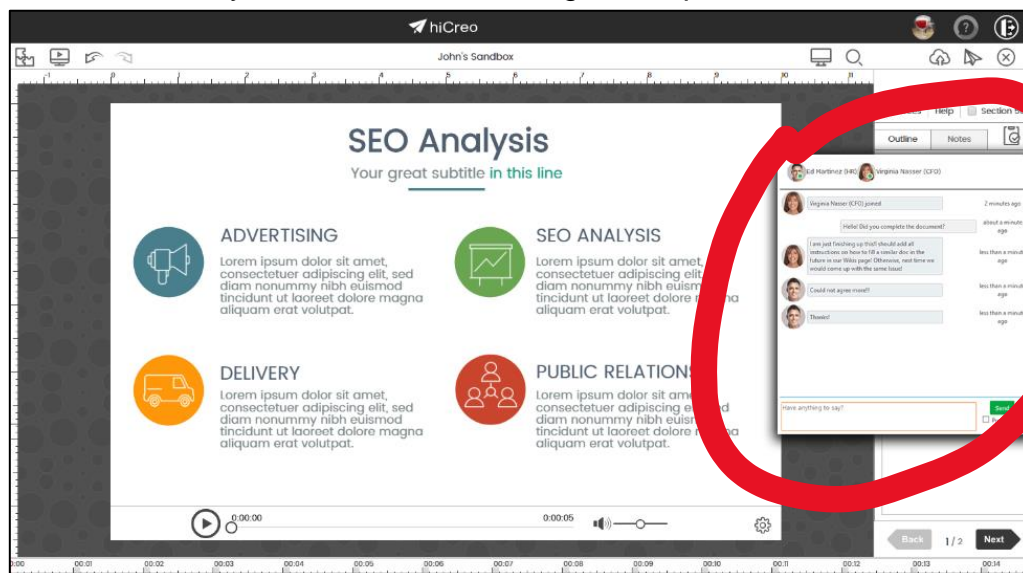


Figure 9

5.1.4 Section 508 Compliant Courseware Templates

Section 508 standards and templates (including OMNI, classic, and OMNI media player) are built into hiCreo. hiCreo provides the foundation for developers to adhere to standards, allowing course authors and subject matter experts (SMEs) to focus on course content. When planning and developing Section 508 compliant templates, hiCreo considers the elements of usability and accessibility because each plays an important role in the design, development, and implementation of the training. All students, regardless of disability, are presented with well-designed content in a manner that does not hinder but enhances the learning experience.



Figure 10

hiCreo has a certified Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Office of Accessible Systems and Technology (OAST) Trusted Tester (TT) on staff. This person has been certified and committed to the development of the common testing approach for accessibility compliance and conformity. The TT provides a code-inspection based test approach for determining software conformance to the

Section 508 standards. Furthermore, hiCreo is fully versed in all aspects of Section 508 compliance for development and distribution. We understand and develop to all standards sections and subsections, including General Implementation, Technical Standards, Functional Performance Criteria and Information, Documentation and Support. We will focus on Section 508 subsection 1194.22 that identifies the requirements for web-based intranet and internet information and applications, which includes T&E on desktop, tablet, and mobile platforms. That section includes requirements such as:

- a) A text equivalent for every non-text element shall be provided
- b) Equivalent alternatives for any multimedia presentation shall be synchronized with the presentation.
- c) Web pages shall be designed so that all information conveyed with color is also available without color, for example from context or markup.
- d) Documents shall be organized so they are readable without requiring an associated style sheet.
- e) Redundant text links shall be provided for each active region of a server-side image map.
- f) Client-side image maps shall be provided instead of server-side image maps except where the regions cannot be defined with an available geometric shape.
- g) Row and column headers shall be identified for data tables.
- h) Markup shall be used to associate data cells and header cells for data tables that have two or more logical levels of row or column headers.

- i) Frames shall be titled with text that facilitates frame identification and navigation.
- j) Pages shall be designed to avoid causing the screen to flicker with a frequency greater than 2 Hz and lower than 55 Hz.
- k) A text-only page, with equivalent information or functionality, shall be provided to make a web site comply with the provisions of this part, when compliance cannot be accomplished in any other way. The content of the text-only page shall be updated whenever the primary page changes.
- l) When pages utilize scripting languages to display content, or to create interface elements, the information provided by the script shall be identified with functional text that can be read by assistive technology.
- m) When a web page requires that an applet, plug-in or other application be present on the client system to interpret page content, the page must provide a link to a plug-in or applet that complies with §1194.21(a) through (l).
- n) When electronic forms are designed to be completed on-line, the form shall allow people using assistive technology to access the information, field elements, and functionality required for completion and submission of the form, including all directions and cues.
- o) A method shall be provided that permits users to skip repetitive navigation links.
- p) When a timed response is required, the user shall be alerted and given sufficient time to indicate more time is required.

5.1.5 Courseware Packaged into a SCORM 1.2 Module

hiCredo can be published in standards-conformant formats including Aviation Industry Computer-Based Training Committee (AICC), Sharable Content Object Reference Model (SCORM) 1.2, and SCORM 2004. The development of courseware template files to SCORM standards has many benefits. As the de facto standard for eLearning content communication, developing content to SCORM standards ensures interoperability.

Adherence to SCORM standards allows a communication relationship to exist seamlessly and at a significant cost benefit. SCORM was created to address the challenges of interoperability, portability, reusability, sequencing, and durability. Utilization and integration of SCORM standards in hiCredo allows us to leverage the collection of interrelated technical specifications and guidelines to meet your organization's requirements. hiCredo's course packages will conform with a SCORM 1.2 module by implementing the requirements outlined below:



Figure 11

- Utilization of SCORM packaging standards provides:
- Individual Sharable Content Objects (SCOs)
- Content that can integrate with other vendors
- Large libraries of learning objects
- Reusable learning content
- The training tracks learner performance (grading and bookmarking)
- The training learns the needs of the learner and can adapt accordingly

5.1.6 Support Services

As a premium support package, hiCreo provides specific technical support, Section 508 support, and technical documentation to users through our Online Technical Support via email. We understand the need for easy in-house maintainability and provide two hours of training per month on hiCreo and its templates to users. hiCreo-conducted training sessions are provided to users to instruct and demonstrate the various components of hiCreo and the skills needed to make use of them. We conduct our hiCreo training sessions over webinar software.

5.2 User Management System within SaaS

hiCreo's user management system is simple and intuitive, providing registration, user access, and project assignments for the eLearning products. Our user management system solves the problem of managing user access to various resources. For example, a curriculum developer requires different resources than a web developer. The curriculum developer probably doesn't need access to internal web development systems. User management enables administrators to manage resources and provision users based on task and role.

5.3 User Interface

hiCreo makes eLearning authoring simple with its drag-and-drop/"What You See Is What You Get" (WYSIWYG) content development system (**Figure 12**). A WYSIWYG system allows users to edit in a form closely corresponding to its appearance when displayed as a finished product (e.g., printed document, web page, or slideshow). Whether you are an instructional systems designer (ISD) with no programming skills, a subject matter expert

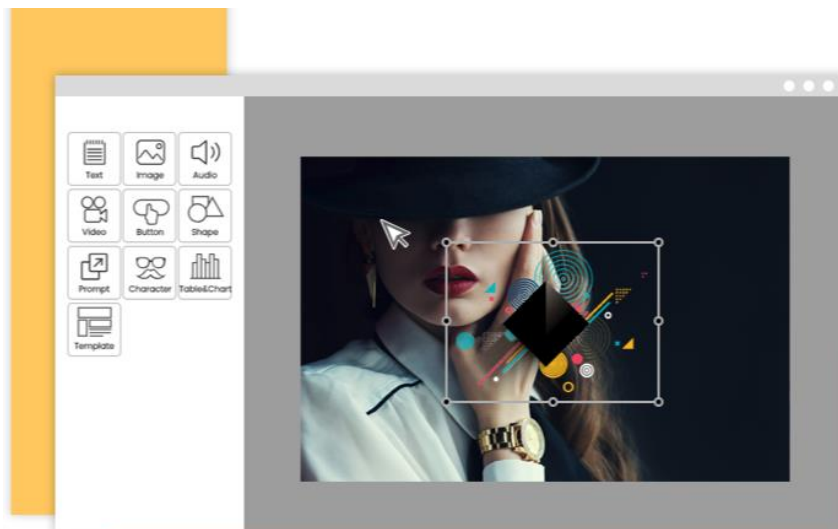


Figure 12

(SME) with no knowledge of eLearning authoring tools, or an experienced user, hiCreo's user interface is straightforward and intuitive. The dashboard includes an application menu; account management; Online Technical Support; and a knowledge base for working in hiCreo.

5.4 Project Management Functions

hiCreo recognizes the importance of project management and incorporates those functions into our service. Project management unites teams, provides a vision for success, and ensures each team member is on the same page. Furthermore, project management delivers on-time, within budget, and in-scope deliverables. Project management occurs throughout all phases of design, development, review, and validation for eLearning. hiCreo's project management functions focus on organization: role-based assignments, subgroups, online review, reports, acceptance milestones, and a content (file) repository.

5.5 Export Tool

hiCreo's export tool has multiple publishing options, from standalone to Learning Management System (LMS) to HTML5 to zip files to runtime modules. The content is editable by standard programming (HTML, HTML5, JavaScript, JSON, CSS, and others). Section 508 compliance and SCORM packaging is built within hiCreo, as described in **Section 5.1.4 Section 508 Compliant Courseware Templates** and **Section 5.1.5 Courseware Packaged into a SCORM 1.2 Module**.

5.6 Media Player

hiCreo includes industry-standard MP3 for audio, MP4 for video, and HTML5 for course templates as part of our media player. Functional elements of the media player include: narrated video; closed captioning (CC); HTML5 animation; poster images and loading screens; simple media player controls/appearance/navigation (play, pause, CC, transcript, narration); and compatibility.

5.7 Modify SaaS and Courseware Templates

hiCreo and its courseware templates can be modified to meet specific user systems and Section 508 needs. hiCreo already has Section 508 standards built into its system.

5.8 Subscription

hiCreo's SaaS premium subscription model provides all-included capabilities to build eLearning at \$29.99 per month (**Table 2**).























	10GB Cloud Storage		Character Library
T	Text Editor		Course Themes and Templates
	Image Editor		Button Builder/Editor
	Audio Editor/Player		Course Builder
	Video Editor/Player		Cloud Asset Library
	Voice Recorder		Collaboration Tool
T 	Text-to-Speech (TTS)		Section 508 Tool
	Graph Editor		HTML5 Publish
	Quiz Creator		SCORM/LMS Publish
	Interactivity Builder		iOS/Android Publish
	Motion Builder/Presets		Import (PPT, pdf, Word)
	Script Editor		

Table 2

6. START YOUR FREE TRIAL TODAY

You know you have many reasons to implement eLearning at your organization, and you now know how hiCreo can help. Why not try building eLearning with hiCreo today? Check out hiCreo's subscription rates <https://portal.hicreo.com/> or log in <https://portal.hicreo.com/login/> and start your 14-day free trial!



Figure 13