

E-learning Authoring Tools Comparison

Purpose

This document was created as a way to share our experiences and opinions about some of the leading e-learning development products on the market. We do not have a reseller relationship with any of them, but we do have an interest in helping our clients and the learning community at large to be more aware of their features. Each of these tools has their own strengths and weaknesses and all of them play a role in what we do. We use these tools every day and teach others how to get the most out of them. The goal is informed evaluation, selection and implementation. After all, anyone who is serious about their craft knows the importance of choosing the right tool for the job.

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Ease of Use

	Level of Difficulty	Features
Articulate Studio 13	Depends*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple for basic authoring • Authoring interface is PowerPoint • Add-ons for interactions and assessments • No scripting language
Articulate Storyline 2	Depends*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple to moderate for basic authoring • Authoring interface looks like PowerPoint but is not • Supports robust custom development for experienced developers
Captivate 8	Depends*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple to difficult for basic authoring • Depends on experience and tasks • Excels at captures and transitions • Captivate does what Captivate wants to do
Easygenerator 8	Depends*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designed for non-developers • Focus is on didactical approach • No scripting language
Lectora Inspire 12	Depends*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moderate for basic authoring • Depends on experience and tasks • Supports robust custom development for experienced developers

Depends* on level of experience and what you are trying to get the tool to do.

Stock and Customizable Interactions

	Programming Interface	Interactions (non-question)	Branching
Articulate Studio 13	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★ • 20 different template interactions, such as accordion, checklist, circle diagrams, tabs, etc. in the Engage product 	★
Articulate Storyline 2	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★ • Can make your own buttons and interactions • Interaction templates are available from third parties 	★★★★★
Captivate 8	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★★★ • 27 different learning interactions available, such as accordion, tabs, process circle, glossaries, word search, etc • Can make simple buttons • Easily incorporates stock and third-party widgets 	★★
Easygenerator 8		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★ • Roadmap includes some stock interactions to come Summer/Fall 2015 	★★
Lectora Inspire 12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★ • Can make your own buttons and interactions • Includes access eLearning Bros library of template interactions 	★★★★

Stock Media

	Rating	Features
Articulate Studio 13	☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No stock non-character images included Comes with 40 illustrated characters and 1 photographic character, full range of editable poses and emotions. Can buy additional characters: two volume packs (\$999 each) of 8 Characters (1,100+ total poses); single characters available at \$299 each (145+ total poses)
Articulate Storyline 2	☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No stock non-character images included Comes with 40 illustrated characters and 1 photographic character, full range of editable poses and emotions. Can buy additional characters: two volume packs (\$999 each) of 8 Characters (1,100+ total poses); single characters available at \$299 each (145+ total poses)
Captivate 8	☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No stock non-character images included Comes with 4 Illustrated and 21 photographic characters with range of poses; ability to download more from eLearning Templates and eLearning Art
Easygenerator 8	☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No stock images or character art included Windows version as a robust file repository to upload and store files of all formats which you can use and reuse in your courses
Lectora Inspire 12	☆☆☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comes stock with stock media library with character images, backgrounds, buttons, and access to clipart Includes access to the eLearning Bros library of photos, graphics, audio and video

Assessments

	Multiple Question Pools	Features
Articulate Studio 13	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★ • 25 question types
Articulate Storyline 2	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★★★ • 25 question types • Programming interface can further enhance assessment functionality
Captivate 8	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★ • 8 question types
Easygenerator 8	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★★★ • Windows version: 13 question types • Web version: Up to 8 interaction types • Can easily tie questions to learning objectives and content pages
Lectora Inspire 12	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ★★★★★ • 9 question types • Programming interface can further enhance assessment functionality

Software Simulations

	Built-in capture	Editing interface	Multi-mode	Overall rating
Articulate Studio 13	No	No	No	NA The Replay product provides capture and playback as video
Articulate Storyline 2	Yes	★★★	Yes	★★★★★ Moderate ability to customize functionality
Captivate 8	Yes	★★★	Yes	★★★ Great capture program but can be difficult to customize functionality
Easygenerator 8	No	No	No	NA
Lectora Inspire 12	Yes	★★	No	★★ Camtasia provides great playback enhancement options and multiple output formats

PowerPoint Conversion

	Converts audio	Editable after conversion in tool	Converts animations	Overall rating
Articulate Studio 13	Yes	NA	Yes	★★★★★
Articulate Storyline 2	Yes	Yes	Yes	★★★★★
Captivate 8	Yes	No	Yes	★★
Easygenerator 8	Yes	Yes	No	★★
Lectora Inspire 12	Yes	Yes	No	★★★

Output

HTML(5) Flash Additional Output Formats

Articulate Studio 13	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish for Web, Articulate Online service, LMS, CD, or Word (layers and slide notes supported) • Supports: SCORM 1.2 & 2004, AICC, and xAPI (Tin Can API) • HTML 5 compatible, Articulate Mobile Player app for iPad; download for offline
Articulate Storyline 2	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish for Web, Articulate Online service, LMS, CD, or Word (layers and slide notes supported) • SCORM 1.2 & 2004, AICC, and xAPI (Tin Can API) • HTML 5 compatible, Articulate Mobile Player app for iOS and Android; download for offline
Captivate 8	Yes	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish for Web • Adobe Connect • Flash (SWF) • Video (mp4) • SCORM 1.2 & 2004, xAPI (Tin can API), AICC
Easygenerator 8	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish for Web • CourseMill; CourseMill Wave • Java Executable (jar) • QTI (xml) • SCORM 1.2 & 2004, xAPI (Tin can API) – Web version
Lectora Inspire 12	Yes	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish for Web • Offline (zip or exe) • SCORM 1.2 & 2004, xAPI (Tin can API), AICC

Collaborative Review

Features

Articulate Studio 13	None
Articulate Storyline 2	None
Captivate 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish course to shared network drive ★★ • Use the Captivate review program (free) • Adobe offers Acrobat to manage server-based review
Easygenerator 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course available for collaborative review ★★★★★ • Roles-based management component • Free for unlimited reviewers
Lectora Inspire 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ReviewLink ★★★★★ • Free for unlimited reviewers

Collaborative Development

Features

Articulate Studio 13	None
Articulate Storyline 2	None
Captivate 8	None
Easygenerator 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All online; Roles-based development ★★★★★ • File repository for all media and resources <p>Development workflow manager</p>
Lectora Inspire 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No collaborative development in the desktop version* ★ • Media Library can look to a network drive or shared folder accessible by other Lectora users

*Lectora Online supports collaborative development

Accessibility

	Our rating	Notes
Articulate Studio 13	★★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some issues with certain objects and JAWS screen reader • HTML5 output still has some limitations compared to Flash output • Tab order is set by object position rather than layer order
Articulate Storyline 2	★★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some issues with certain objects and JAWS screen reader • HTML5 output still has some limitations compared to Flash output • Tab order is set by object position rather than layer order
Captivate 8	★★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good as long as you use the stock playbars
Easygenerator 8	★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock templates work pretty well; can be made to work very well with some customization
Lectora Inspire 12	★★★★★	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stock templates work pretty well; can be made to work very well with some customization

Multilingual Capabilities

Translation Features

Articulate Studio 13	Import/Export tagged document
Articulate Storyline 2	Import/Export tagged document
Captivate 8	Import/Export tagged document
Easygenerator 8	Import/Export XML
Lectora Inspire 12	Import/Export tagged document

Mobile Learning

	Our rating	Notes
Articulate Studio 13	☆☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No preset size or template to start • Supports HTML5 output • No responsive interface options but content can scale • Publish setting Use Articulate Mobile Player on iPad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows downloading for offline viewing
Articulate Storyline 2	☆☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No preset size or template to start • Supports HTML5 output • No responsive interface options but content can scale • Publish setting Use Articulate Mobile Player on iOS and Android <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows downloading for offline viewing
Captivate 8	☆☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsive UI settings and templates • Project size presets for PC, tablet and smartphone • Supports HTML5 and MP4 output
Easygenerator 8	☆☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows version has Master Page templates for different sized mobile devices • Supports HTML5 output • Web edition has a responsive UI design
Lectora Inspire 12	☆☆☆	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Template Wizard includes two template styles with multiple color options for mobile devices • No responsive interface options but content can scale • Supports HTML5 output

System Requirements for Development

Articulate Studio 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows • Mac OS X 10.7.0 or later with Parallels Desktop 9 or later or VMware Fusion 6 or later
Articulate Storyline 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows • Mac OS X 10.6.8 or later with Parallels Desktop 7 or later or VMware Fusion 4 or later
Captivate 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows • Mac OS X v10.9 • iOS 7.0.6, iOS 8.0.2 (for iPad)
Easygenerator 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows version: Windows only • Web edition supports development on PC and mobile web browsers
Lectora Inspire 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows only

Trial Availability

Articulate Studio 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 day free trial
Articulate Storyline 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 day free trial
Captivate 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 day free trial
Easygenerator 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 day free trial
Lectora Inspire 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30 day free trial

Price

Articulate Studio 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,398 per license (prices may vary based on Platinum Membership Plans)
Articulate Storyline 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$1,398 per license (prices may vary based on Platinum Membership Plans)
Captivate 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$999 per license, \$29.99/month for subscription
Easygenerator 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Windows version: \$89/month • Web edition: \$0 - \$59/month based on level
Lectora Inspire 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$2,495.00 per license • \$2,790.00 per license with support services