e-Learning with Authorware

Authorware is a flowchart style, multimedia authoring tool. It is used to transfer knowledge from subject matter experts to learners and for developing both computer-based training and web-based training packages.

Authorware has its roots in the education field, and is widely used to develop learning objects, learning units and even full-fledged multimedia training packages. It was developed keeping the layman in mind and is very easy to use once a user understands a few basic things such as the interface and the icons. Authorware provides a wizard to create a complete course if you are not keen on using icons and prefer to create a customised course yourself. With this wizard, a user can easily create various types of interactions such as “Drag and Drop” and “Multiple Choice Questions”. These wizards are known as “Knowledge Objects”.

However, there will be times when you will need or want to create something that no wizard can provide, such as simulations or entire customised courses with your own custom graphic designs. The good news is that this can be easily done by dragging and dropping icons onto the Authorware flowline but remember that coding might be needed in the case of simulations. Coding is easy if you already know some scripting or programming languages. Alternatively, it is not difficult to learn Authorware’s own scripting language or Javascript - a language most web developers have used to develop interactive web pages.

Other features that make Authorware fun and easy to use are:
- It allows easy importing of Powerpoint presentations such that each Powerpoint screen is converted into an Authorware screen, enabling you to edit or add/delete content and make more interactive if you like. No manual importing using ‘copy and paste’ to Authorware is involved where Powerpoint is concerned.
- It accepts a wide variety of media formats (sound, video, animation and image files and even DVD videos).
- Authorware has many built-in tracking functions and variables which can be easily used for student score tracking. Data can also be collected and fed into standards compliant learning management systems.
- It has tight integration with learning standards such as SCORM (Sharable Content Object Reference Model).
- It provides tools which allow developers to incorporate accessibility features into their products such as self-voicing (for the visually impaired), tab navigable features (for the physically impaired) or captioning (for the hearing impaired).

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