

# 2008 PRODUCT STRATEGY AND DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP FOR TRAININGPARTNER™



**T**his white paper provides an overview of the most recent innovations and product enhancements for the TrainingPartner 2008 product line as well as an outline of proposed development priorities for the coming years.



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# 2008 Product Strategy and Development Roadmap for TrainingPartner™

## Introduction

The TrainingPartner™ 2008 product line consists of TrainingPartner 2008, TrainingPartner 2008 Online, TrainingPartner 2008 Offline Content Player, the TrainingPartner 2008 API, and KnowledgePresenter 2008.

These products provide unparalleled enterprise learning functionality for the extended enterprise.

Key development goals with this (and future releases) include backwards compatibility, continued support for extensibility (through macros, form and online designers) and specific features determined by market requirements and client feedback.

General release for TrainingPartner products are made on an annual basis in either the first or second quarter.

The 2008 version of TrainingPartner has close to 100 improvements including status triggers, new search options, security settings and added browser support. The major enhancements in TrainingPartner 2008 are related to activities that happen outside the classroom. Many of the new features can be grouped into two main areas that together help organizations deliver and manage collaborative learning environments: performance management and informal learning.

### Key 2008 Enhancements

Performance Management: Performance improvement is the process of helping workers develop their capabilities and reach their potentials. Learning and development activities that are linked to performance are more effective than those that don't and can help the individual, the organization and the enterprise. TrainingPartner's new performance management features provide the tools to help organizations link learning to performance.

Informal Learning: Learning does not always happen in a classroom. Training isn't necessarily structured into formal packages that can be scheduled and tracked in traditional ways. Learning can be fluid and continuous, sometimes happening in informal one-on-one sessions or through group interactions. TrainingPartner's new Informal Learning functionality is designed to help manage the informal learning that takes place throughout an organization using features to record knowledge capture and facilitate communities of practice.

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## Performance Management

Performance management and improvement is best looked at as a cycle. It begins with performance planning where goals and objectives are established. This is followed by the development stage, which can consist of both formal and informal learning. The next stage is performance appraisal or evaluation where individual performance is formally documented, feedback is delivered. The cycle then begins again with new planning. Following is an overview of the performance management features that are expected in TrainingPartner 2008.

### Performance Goals

The new Performance Goals features of TrainingPartner let learners create goals at different levels and offer default learning plans that can be tailored to the individual and that are automatically assigned to learners within the scope of the goal.

The new features give learners the capability to:

- create personalized performance plans, consisting of enterprise, organizational, and learner goals
- tailor learning plans associated with each goal
- track progress independent of the recommended learning

### Performance Plan Workflow

The Performance Plan workflow:

- The supervisor creates a plan and tailors the goals and the recommended learning.
- The learners can then associate learning to goals.
- Supervisors add comments and record observations of progress.
- During the performance review, the supervisor rates each goal in the plan.
- The plan is closed, and a new plan is created.

### Recommended Learning

Recommended Learning for performance improvements can include:

- Courses
- Programs
- Job Roles
- Skills
- Learning Groups/Communities of Practice

### Closing and Rating a Goal

When a Performance Plan is closed, usually during a Performance Review, each goal is rated and flagged if it is to be carried over to the next plan.

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## Informal Learning

It has been suggested that as much as eighty percent of how workers learn to do their jobs is informal and happens outside of formal training and development activities. The Informal Learning features in TrainingPartner 2008 are designed to enable the recording of informal *knowledge capture* and to enhance the collaborative capabilities of TrainingPartner Online.

### Components of Informal Learning

There are three main components of the Informal Learning functionality in TrainingPartner 2008:

Communities of Practice: Communities of Practice are groups of people in organizations that form to share information, learn from each other and improve processes. Communities of Practice are offering a new approach to learning and performance improvement through networking and sharing. Often, it is in these communities where solutions are identified, best practices are developed and innovations emerge. The new CoP features in TrainingPartner are designed to facilitate these group interactions for the benefit of the individual, the organization and the enterprise.

Questions & Answers: Knowledge can be found in many places. Some workplace knowledge is recorded in documents or databases and taught during formal training, but some knowledge is intangible and transitory – coming and going with workers and processes. The goal of the Questions & Answers functionality in TrainingPartner 2008 is to create a knowledge repository created by those who hold the knowledge to make it easily accessed by those who need it.

Knowledge Capture: Often the knowledge capture that takes place outside of formal training goes unrecognized and unrecorded. Workers learn from observing others, through practical application, during meetings and from self-study. The Knowledge Capture features in TrainingPartner 2008 are designed to record skills and knowledge that are not part of existing training offerings.

### Communities of Practice

The Communities of Practice features in TrainingPartner 2008 allow for the creation of moderated learning groups, enhanced with collaborative tools. A learner wishing assistance on a topic can search the existing groups and join, or request a new group be formed. Subject matter experts can review the requests and create new groups, which they then moderate.

These Community Groups allow the transfer of knowledge from more experienced learners in an informal, yet focused environment. Groups can be associated with performance goals, to encourage professional development through collaboration. Features include:

- Chat
- Forums
- Recommended Courses
- Links to Online Resources

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## Questions & Answers

The Questions & Answer functionality provides the ability to pose questions to the entire learning community and to rate the best answer, forming a knowledge bank of user-generated content.

## Knowledge Capture

As we have already discussed, much of the knowledge that workers hold is acquired outside of formal learning events. Workers possess skills and experience that have been accumulated in a variety of ways. Often, this type of knowledge or expertise is not cataloged, but it can be important – if not critical – to the learner, the organization or the enterprise. In the context of creating a 100-percent learning environment, where all learning and knowledge capture is acknowledged and encouraged, it is vital to record these skills.

In TrainingPartner 2008, the new Knowledge Capture features provide the ability for learners to enter and rate skills for themselves when these skills are not included in a formal skills catalog. These *non-catalog* skills provide learners with the ability to record skills specific to their own knowledge and expertise.

Learners can selectively publish their skills so that others can locate them, and then facilitate peer-to-peer learning or group collaboration.

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## Other Features

In addition to these two main areas of development, TrainingPartner 2008 has many more improvements. Following is a partial list of the enhancements to TrainingPartner for 2008.

The following features are expected in the core Administrator Module of TrainingPartner 2008:

- Status triggered e-mails through Application Server
- Quick Reports with "Distinct" option
- Enrollment status on course failure
- Enrollment status trigger to create an invoice "Order"
- Automatic class waitlist promotion
- Allow selecting of a specific learner for 360 degree reviews
- Import templates for units associated with evaluations
- Prerequisite checking for WBTs
- AICC roll-up rules
- Customizable search options for learners
- End date field for learning events
- Ability to sort learning event list for learners
- Security options for calendar
- Enhanced task scheduler with interruptible processes
- Multi-select learners in Learning Group Properties dialog
- Import for pricing model
- Last log-in field

The following features are expected in the Online Learner Module of TrainingPartner 2008:

- Site-specific shopping carts
- Ability to cancel e-learning courses
- Online document search
- Merging of Student Skills and Student Set Skills pages
- E-mail update by learner
- Public Program Catalog and Program Picker Window pagers check for Program Groups available to Learning Groups
- Firefox® support

There are many more features, enhancements and improvements in the 2008 version of TrainingPartner – nearly 100 in all. Our goal with the new features in TrainingPartner 2008 is to help you create the most comprehensive learning environment possible where all forms of learning are used to improve individual, organizational and enterprise performance.

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## KnowledgePresenter® 2008

KnowledgePresenter® is an award-winning elearning content development system created by Kookaburra Studios Pty Ltd in Australia. GeoMetrix has exclusive rights to distribute the KnowledgePresenter in North America, and considers it part of its TrainingPartner product line.

Since both products offer SCORM compliance, TrainingPartner has always been capable of launching and tracking courses created in KnowledgePresenter. Recently, GeoMetrix provided additional integration between the two products, making it possible for KnowledgePresenter to be launched directly from TrainingPartner when working with SCORM courses. This integration allows KnowledgePresenter to be deployed as an editor within TrainingPartner's built-in LCMS. The integration also provides automated course packaging for KnowledgePresenter-created content, letting new Learning Objects be created within KnowledgePresenter and stored in the TrainingPartner learning object repository. Learning object types include assessments, simulations, converted Flash files and Microsoft® PowerPoint presentations. TrainingPartner then lets users create courses based on any combination of these learning objects.

GeoMetrix is continuing to work with Kookaburra Studios to provide even tighter integration with between the two products.

## Beyond TrainingPartner 2008

For 2009 and 2010, GeoMetrix will continue to develop performance management capabilities, including compensation management, in TrainingPartner. Additional functionality will be available in the areas of LCMS and Assessment creation and delivery. Communities of Practice will be extended to support a whiteboard and shared content repository. User interface enhancements will be made to the Administrator module to further streamline workflows, enhance ease-of-use even more, and support Unicode for double-byte languages.

In addition, a new Web-based Administrator interface will allow organizations to manage administrative duties without the desktop client interface. This interface will support fully upgradeable customization and significantly reduce the number of steps to complete a task when compared with competing Web-based products.

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## Conclusion

Informal learning is becoming the focus of many organizations due to its immediacy and relevancy. Informal knowledge capture often provides workers with methods for taking advantage of immediate application, as well as the ability to drive learning in a more meaningful and self-directed way.

Organizations are finding that there can be significant competitive advantage in promoting and supporting informal learning and the communities of practice that encourage it.

TrainingPartner 2008 provides the tools for improving learning opportunities for everyone.

GeoMetrix continues to develop and distribute the industry's most advanced and comprehensive learning tools. The central vision driving the development of TrainingPartner remains the ability to adapt the product to meet each customer's unique business needs. But not to compromise the ability to maintain the system when newer versions are released.

Major features planned for the next two years of product development are carefully designed to minimize any impact on current functionality and business processes. As always, specific product features and enhancements are based on market demands and customer requirements.

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## About GeoMetrix Data Systems Inc.

With the demand for learning growing around the world, learning management systems are providing the foundation for the delivery, management and administration of enterprise-wide learning. GeoMetrix Data Systems Inc. was founded in 1992 to create software that responds to the need for comprehensive learning management.

Today, GeoMetrix, a privately-held Canadian company, provides flexible, accessible, convenient and cost-effective enterprise learning management solutions for utilities, media, governments, universities, law enforcement agencies, commercial trainers, hospitals, and Fortune 1000 companies around the world through its TrainingPartner™ line of learning management products.

GeoMetrix consistently delivers integrated systems that address business, technology and learning challenges. TrainingPartner is the only LMS in the industry to offer total control of a learning environment without the expense of developing and maintaining a custom system. TrainingPartner provides complete learner management that enhances administration and increases productivity – while helping improve organizational performance by measuring and managing up-to-the-minute data.

For more information about our learning management products and services please call 1-800-616-5409, visit [www.trainingpartner.com](http://www.trainingpartner.com) or email [info@trainingpartner.com](mailto:info@trainingpartner.com)