

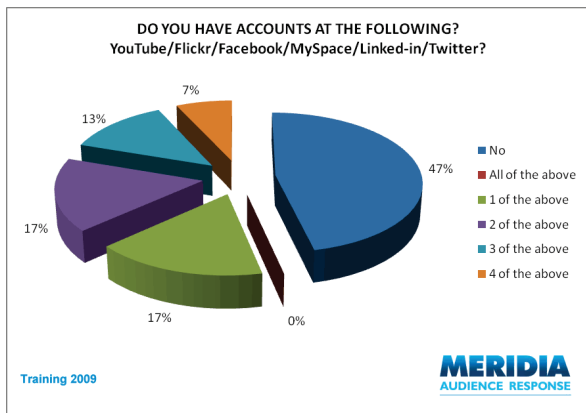
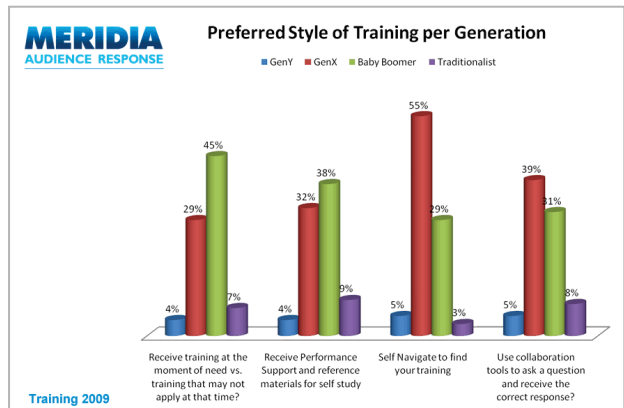
Trendwatch

LEARNING STYLES

At Training 2009 in Atlanta, Meridia Audience Response Systems supported The Training Magazine to collect data in relation to three categories of information, The Economy, Training and Generational Trends in Learning. Data was collected as an introduction to some inspirational keynote speakers.

Participants spanned four generations, with a predominate attendance of Baby Boomers (56%) and Gen X (37%), with representation of Traditionalists (5%) and GenY (2%)

Understanding generation learning styles and supporting multiple generations in the workforce is a hot topic of conversation. When asked what each generation's preferred style of training was, there were varying results. The most average method across generations was to receive Performance Support and reference materials for self study, however most popular with GenX was still self navigating to find training (55%).



In a break session by Bob Pike, Bob asked his workgroup if they used YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, MySpace, Linked-in or Twitter. Surprisingly 47% did not utilize any; whereas 17% had one/two of the above. This group was attended by Baby Boomers (48%), GenX-ers (50%) and Traditionalists (2%).



EMMA KING, CHIEF LEARNING STRATEGIST FOR MERIDIA AUDIENCE RESPONSE SUGGESTS:

Generational Learning is a challenge that training organizations struggle with regularly. How do we effectively and efficiently provide learning with all of the different learning and generational styles? The honest answer... we struggle!

The problem we face: finding a course structure (either online or classroom driven) that meets the expectations of the four different generations in our workforce today.

Looking at the years that span these four generations, we are facing more of a challenge than just learning styles. Understanding each generation and how they embrace technology is critical when creating content.

Here is how each generation looks at technology:

	Traditionalist	Boomers	GenX	GenY
Year Born in	1922-1943	1943-1960	1960-1980	1980-2000
Understanding of Technology	"What is that?"	"Ugh! Technology slow me down"	"I'll get back to you, let me check my emails"	"Don't leave home without it"

I was born in Generation X, but my adaption to technology as a self confessed geek underlines my technology age as that of a Millennial. But my willingness to adapt doesn't apply to all Xers in the workforce. To provide adequate training within your organization, it is necessary to provide levels of training that can cross the generational divide.

As trainers, we need to be asking our workforce who they are and what they do with technology, to understand the levels of social media, scaled assessment testing, interactive mediums, virtual classrooms, ILT classes, Performance Support we can supply to our workforce.

To create platforms that can teach four generations that exist in our workforce, we need to **understand their technology capabilities** to effectively deliver training using mediums that make sense to the workforce, and not just the technology geeks (me included) that want to push out the latest and greatest authoring tools and social media platforms because they think it's cool!

But how do you understand what technologies relate to your workforce? How do you know if implementing social media platforms in your corporation, just because the industry is talking about social media becoming the next method of informal training?

At Meridia, we have designed workshops to enable corporations to evaluate what technology age their workforce belongs to, as well as understand the technology that speaks to all generations within the field of industry you operate.

We recognize that professional roles as well as the industry sector your company resides in can seriously change the view of technology and the use of training tools within organizations to reach their generational audience.

Our workshops help corporations evaluate and assess training methodology and best practices that meet their specific organization. All too often within our training environments, we adopt a 'one size fits all' approach, which unfortunately does not cater to the majority of a company's workforce. Understanding the majority and the way it works can enable you design training concepts that can meet the needs of your work force and increase its performance.

Five elements to remember when designing your training:

1. What are your specific training goals?
2. Who is your audience?
3. Determine the technology age of your audience
4. Which training mechanism(s) will align with the majority of my audience?
5. How will I measure the effectiveness of my training?

Click here to read more about [Emma King](#) and her role at Meridia.