

# MUTANT LEARNING™

How to Develop a  
Social Learning Lab



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PREVIEW ONLY

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**S**ocial media proliferation, mobile applications and wireless accessibility have dramatically influenced how informal learning is taking place. The question is are you someone who is embracing all of the relevant learning fragments available to you? If you frequently turn to social media and other online sources for answers, you are what we call a Mutant Learner. But if you are an unconnected sceptic—a traditional learning Luddite—and you fall within the camp of people who see social media and online networks as learning charlatans you could be classified as a Zombie Learner.

Like any age of civilization, if you are not mutating and adapting, then you are slowly dying. This mutant age is no different. However, in previous eras, evolution was slow and mutations took time to develop. In this new age of instant information, learning mutations are occurring faster and faster.

If you're not actively working towards becoming a Mutant Learner, then you are a part of the dying breed of Zombie Learners who are content with the status quo. Mutant Learners are those among us who use technology and online tools to constantly learn, initiate, wander and create. They are the new generation of learners.

Being a Mutant Learner does not come without its challenges. To be an effective Mutant Learner and survive the deluge of information available at your fingertips, you must have a system, a process and a daily ritual that will provide structure and focus to you - this is your unique Mutant Learning Lab.

An ideal Mutant Learning Lab is simple, relevant and accessible. It requires you to be connected to the right people and networks and to block out dedicated lab time to scan, review and study relevant learning fragments. Most of all, a Mutant Learner must not only consume information but also contribute their perspective and knowledge to the online mutant community. This is how learning in the mutant age is occurring and how it will continue to grow.

to contribute to the knowledge base in a community. No matter what your field of study or career track, you have relevant experience that will benefit someone else who has not had those experiences yet.

Now let's dive into the 5 Links of Mutant Learners, or learning styles, of people in the mutant age.

**The Initiator.** This learner initiates a conversation by asking, "Do you know?" They are dynamic consumers of knowledge. These are the individuals who ask questions in a social networking site like Facebook and LinkedIn and wait for the community to answer. They instigate, prod, stir, and then wait to see what answers they get.

**The Creator.** This learner says, "I will do it." They are dynamic contributors of knowledge. They know the answer to the Initiator's questions, and can confidently articulate their response via a blog, wiki, community post, or other online tool. Creators are the life blood of the Mutant Learning age. Without these dynamic contributors the perpetual growth and value of online mutant communities would die.

**The Learner.** This learner thinks, "I want to know." These are the active consumers. This is how most of us learn everyday. We seek knowledge – finding it, reading it, and internalizing it. While there is nothing new about this category, the means through which we gain knowledge has exponentially increased and dramatically changed due to technological, mobile, and wireless advances.

**The Wanderer.** This learner says, "Look what I found." They are an active contributor to the online learning community. A wanderer is someone who stumbles

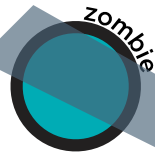
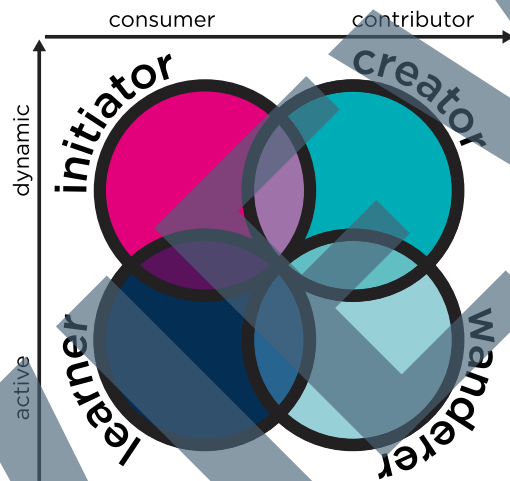
upon an interesting source of knowledge somewhere on the web and then shares it on Twitter, Facebook, or another online community. While their initial intent may not have been to learn anything new, their online activity accidentally led them to learn something of value, which they then wanted to share with others. We

want to make it clear that being a wanderer is not necessarily a bad trait, in fact, JRR Tolkien once said, "Not everyone who wanders is lost." As long as you don't spend most of your learning bandwidth wandering, accidentally

stumbling across learning fragments can be a refreshing change to the regimented practice of looking for specific information.

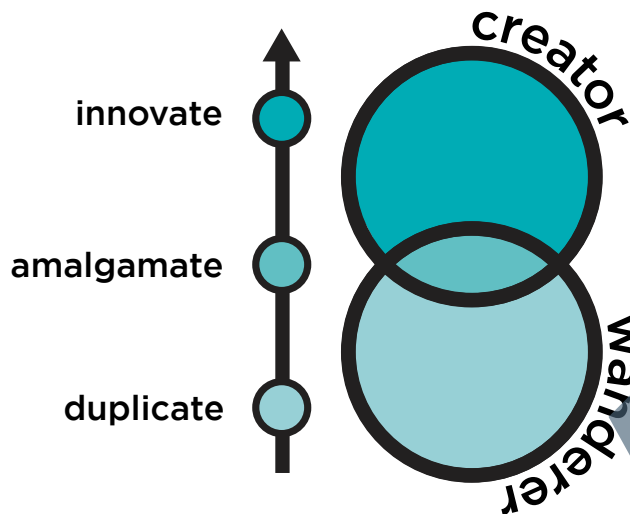
**The Zombie.** The last link is one we have already introduced you to, the Zombie. A Zombie Learner says, "I don't care." They are not producing or consuming—they are decomposing. They have no desire to explore and spend little to no effort learning new things or opening themselves up to new technologies of learning. These people are also referred to as Luddites, people who hold on so tightly to their old ways of business that it strangles innovation and new modes of learning.

So, which link should you be in? Most people should spend the majority of their time in the first four links, depending on their work-life balance and current



a creator or wanderer by looking at the Contribution Continuum.

**Duplicate.** To duplicate is to copy. It is to share a learning fragment in its original form, completely unchanged. The Contribution Continuum



unchanged. Duplication is a common Mutant Learning practice. For example, a Mutant Learner will re-tweet or link their learning fragment to a source website, blog, or research paper. Mutant learners also give attribution and credit where it is due.

We have all witnessed this form of contribution recently in the wake of worldwide natural disasters and uprisings. Information (or news) has been shared, re-tweeted and linked to by millions of people. Not just experts or journalists, but even the average Shane and Sheila can contribute to the knowledge base of the online community.

In some cases, the duplication of information has resulted in the major overhaul of governments, like in the case of the Egyptian Revolution, or the ruin and taint-

ing of famous brands like Kenneth Cole, who tweeted out an insensitive comment about the aforementioned revolution, which then led to a negative smear campaign ironically using the same social media tool. Clearly, the power of the Mutant Learner is greater than ever. While it has been said that "The pen is mightier than the sword," (Edward Bulwer-Lytton) in light of what we have recently witnessed, we propose that the CLICK is mightier than the sword, or can be mightier than the sword. (We all know how much wasted time and energy can be spent clicking on distractions and wasted activities.)

**Amalgamate.** When you amalgamate, you combine your opinion, comment or perspective to the original learning fragment, creating a composite result that is a fuller, more robust form of the original. The composite result being a fuller, more robust form of the original. Some mutant learners may have expertise or experience they can contribute to a knowledge fragment that would enhance the learning experience for others who

#### THE PRINCIPLE OF TRIANGULATION

There is so much great information available to you today. A common problem is knowing whether learning fragments are accurate and reliable. While online collaboration and contribution is generally reliable, we must warn against believing everything you read online.

When in doubt, we recommend the Principle of Triangulation. Search for answers from at least three independent and reliable sources. If all three sources support one another, you know the information is correct. Move on. If one or more of the sources make divergent statements, you may need to spend more time researching the topic before knowing which argument is correct.





# AUTHOR TREION MULLER

## The Author

Treion has spent the past two decades helping some of the largest Learning & Development companies in the world with their behavior change and digital transformation initiatives, including serving in the following roles: Chief Solutions Architect, eLearning Brothers; CEO & Founder, The Modern Learning Architect; Chief Product Officer, Korn Ferry; Chief Product Officer, Strategy Execution (Formerly ESI); Chief Product Officer, TwentyEighty (Private Equity holding company made up of some of the largest L&D companies—Miller Heiman Group, ViltalSmarts, Strategy Execution and Achieve Forum); Chief eLearning Architect, FranklinCovey (Key contributor through digital transformation phase).

Treion is also a go-to expert, author, and problem-solver, who can align market and customer demand with successful product creation, CX, and go-to-market initiatives. He knows what your learners want, how they want it, and what to do about it. Treion has a master's degree in Instructional Technology and Learning Science and is currently a Ph.D. student in the same field. Treion is the author of several books and publications, including:

- The Getting Things Done Workbook: 10 Moves to Stress-Free Productivity, with David Allen (Ghostwriter)
- The Power of Small Things and Baby Steps: 7 Reasons Microlearning Works Today!
- The Learning Explosion: 9 Rules to Ignite Your Virtual Classrooms
- The Webinar Manifesto: Never Design, Deliver, or Sell Lousy Webinars Again!
- 7 Consumer Realities That the Learning Industry Can No Longer Ignore
- Mutant Learning: How to Develop a Social Learning Lab

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## eLearning Brothers Learning Solutions Process

Did you know that less than 10% of all learning and development solutions today deliver on the promised behavior changes and business results? While research has shown how technology can improve the way adults learn, retain, and apply information, many organizations choose not to apply modern learning best practices to their instructional design and solutions. In today's economy, your business can't afford to provide training that doesn't work. You need effective learning solutions and technologies that change behaviors, reduce costs, and deliver results.

eLearning Brothers can help! We can help you design, develop, and launch effective learning strategies, technologies, and solutions for the modern learner using our 3-Step Learning Solutions Process.

If you need to address one or more of the following L&D needs, challenges, or opportunities, let's talk!

- Short-term training emergencies & deadlines
- Long-term learning strategy & roadmap
- Transform your learning solutions for the modern learner & digital native
- To show ROI and business impact on your L&D initiatives
- Help getting senior management buy-in
- Assistance launching your L&D initiatives internally & externally
- A quarterly or annual review

Learn more and schedule an appointment with Treion and his team:

[LET'S TALK](#)

## 3-STEP LEARNING SOLUTIONS PROCESS

1. **ASSESS:** We start with a FREE assessment of your existing training plan, offerings, and technologies and identify training needs, objectives, and behavioral change gaps.
2. **ARCHITECT:** We design a custom learning plan for your specific training needs and objectives based on what is discovered. This includes selecting the right solutions, technologies, partnerships, and modern learning approach.
3. **ACTIVATE:** We launch your modern learning training solutions, accountability processes, and success tracking system to assure your goals are achieved.