



STATNETT PROVIDES FASTER, MORE EFFICIENT IT SYSTEMS TRAINING WITH THE IFS TRAINER E-LEARNING TOOL

When Norway's main-grid operator Statnett decided to upgrade its ERP solution to IFS Applications 8, the company needed a tool that could produce and distribute educational material about the new software suite to employees. Statnett chose IFS Trainer, a solution for training, knowledge transfer and performance support. Twelve months on, some 600 Statnett employees have been trained, with impressive results.

When consumers in Norway flick a switch and the lights come on in their home or office, they can partly thank Statnett. The company is Norway's state-owned energy-system operator and is responsible for the transmission and distribution of all high-voltage electricity in the country.

Carrying out such a massive and strategically important role requires a large and organized workforce. Statnett employs more than 1,000 people and manages numerous consultants and subcontractors. This workforce is spread out across the country, from Lista in the south to Kirkenes in the north.

Statnett has long relied on IFS's ERP solutions, which are used enterprise-wide by staff working in areas including finance, HR, logistics, distribution, project management and maintenance. In 2013 Statnett decided to upgrade to the newest versions, IFS Applications 8. The upgrade created a need for training in the application's new functionality, and, with employees working from many different locations at different office hours, e-learning stood out as the most viable option.

Statnett's e-Learning consultant, Tove Sjømo, explains, "We needed a tool that could teach people practical skills as well as transfer application and process knowledge to everyone in the organization in an easy way." After reviewing various options for e-learning tools, IFS Trainer was selected. "One major advantage that we have noticed with IFS Trainer is how quickly you can provide e-learning to the target group once a need arises," Sjømo says. "This is because production and distribution are both done in-house. This has allowed us to continually create content that reflects the needs of the organization."

Sjømo says one key advantage for employees is being able to undertake e-learning courses at times that suit them, rather than being told when to clear time in their calendar for training. "Not having to move people to certain spots for classroom training is more resource efficient," Sjømo says.

THE FIRST YEAR

The training material relating to the new ERP suite was initially divided into 16 separate courses, and the roll-out took place in October 2013. Twelve months

ABOUT STATNETT

Statnett is the system operator in the Norwegian energy system. This means operating about 11 000km of high-voltage power lines and 150 stations all over Norway. Operations are monitored by one national control center and three regional centers. Statnett is also responsible for the connections to Sweden, Finland, Russia, Denmark and the Netherlands.



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Tove Sjømo, e-learning consultant, Statnett



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after launch, 100 videos were available and some 600 people had received training via courses created using IFS Trainer.

Sjømo says Statnett has used the system to produce videos, cue cards and user documentation. These have been published in an integrated learning management system (LMS) and a context-based help function. “Having all these different functionalities offered by one system simplifies the management, maintenance and distribution of content,” she says.

Sjømo says Statnett now plans to extend its use of IFS Trainer into new areas. “We’re going to produce learning material showing users how to deal with common error messages,” she says. “There will be benefits for both our support desk and for users, as people will be able to localize support material themselves. The material will be so accessible that users won’t have to waste time looking through lots of documents trying to find help. Presumably, this will help more people to perform their work correctly the first time.”

Sjømo says one of the most labor-intensive aspects of the implementation of IFS Trainer was the preparation of guidelines for how content should be produced, presented and made available to end users. However, once these guidelines were established and she and her colleagues became familiar with the system, production time decreased.

CONTEXT-BASED HELP FUNCTION

Since launch, the Statnett course material has been made more accessible through the addition of a context-based help function, also known as an electronic performance support system (EPSS). This allows users to access help within a range of subject areas on an ad hoc basis while they are performing daily activities.

“The EPSS is perhaps the most powerful aspect of IFS Trainer,” Sjømo says. “In our selection process, we weren’t able to identify any other e-learning tools offering this functionality to a similar standard.”

EPSS content is being launched up to 850 times a month, despite minimal promotion of the tool, and Sjømo is confident it will be even more useful going forward.

SATISFIED END USERS

Statnett decided to make the courses optional, with managers determining who should have access to the different training modules. Despite the voluntary nature of the training, some 600 people engaged in the e-learning over the first 12 months of operation.

A few months after launch a survey revealed that the satisfaction level was high among the end-users. “The users are happy and satisfied with the end product,” Sjømo says. “They think it’s very exciting and satisfying that it’s produced by their own people. In fact, nine out of ten say they will continue to complete courses as they become available in the course catalog.”

Sjømo says, overall, being able to provide e-learning through IFS Trainer has provided many benefits to Statnett, and she believes the system has the potential to deliver more. “E-learning is very suitable for transferring system knowledge because it’s lower in cost, high in reach and offers a lot of flexibility to the end user,” she says.

BENEFITS

- Efficient training and fast user uptake
- Ad hoc help function provides immediate guidance
- Implementing competence requirements contributes to highly educated users
- Offers flexibility to employees as they can undertake training in their own time
- Lower costs as travel is unnecessary
- Reusability of learning material compared with one-day classroom courses and seminars.

IFS TRAINER

Comprehensive, industry-leading solution for learning, knowledge transfer and performance support, combining simulation-based end-user training, automated documentation, assessment and certification, role-based learning, content distribution and electronic performance support.

