

NEO

VS

Moodle

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
Institutions are no longer adopting Moodle.....	4
Some of the reasons why institutions are moving away from Moodle.....	5
Why cloud-hosted is better than self-hosted.....	6
The real cost of Moodle.....	8
UserInterface .....	12
Ease of use .....	14
Features.....	15
Cost.....	20
Summary.....	21

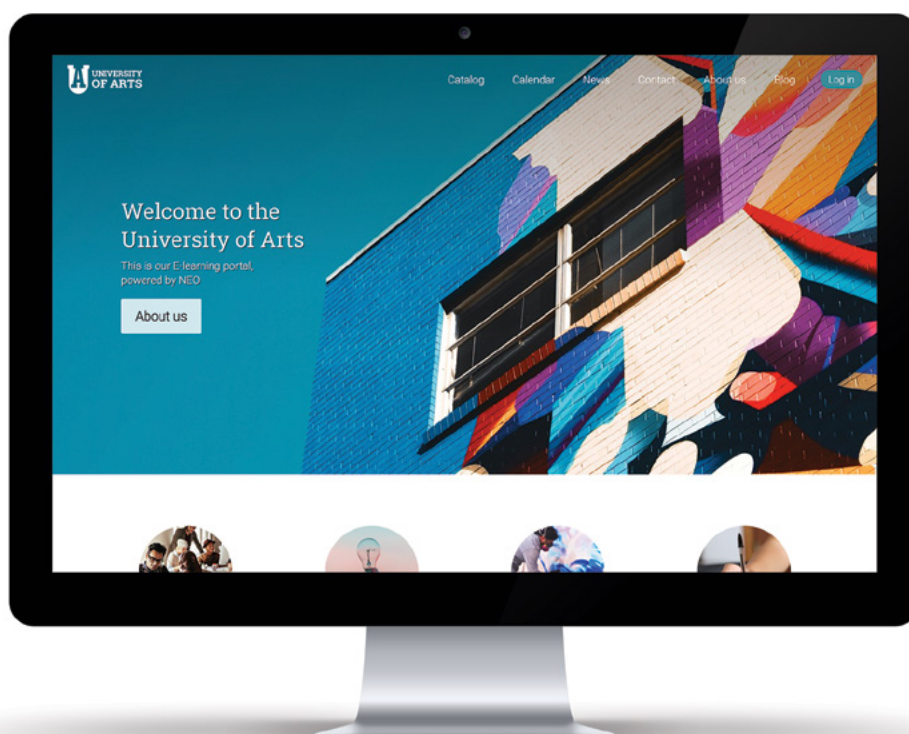


## Introduction

This is a detailed comparison between NEO and Moodle, taking under consideration the features, functionality, and cost of each platform.

**NEO** is a world-class, award-winning learning management system (LMS) for schools and universities. NEO helps schools manage all classroom activities, such as creating and delivering educational content, assessing students, tracking their results, and promoting communication and collaboration between students and teachers/faculty.

**Moodle** is an open source LMS that allows users to download the source code for free or host it on their own servers. Even though Moodle has been adopted widely throughout the world, the system no longer represents a viable solution for modern education. Self-hosted LMSs cannot keep up with the advancements in educational technology, and more institutions are starting to move towards cloud-hosted solutions.



## Institutions are no longer adopting Moodle

Moodle adoption peaked in 2010 with 41% of new LMS implementations, but dropped to only 2% in 2016. The data shows that in the first quarter of 2017, the adoption rate was 0%.

**Moodle Adoption North America**



The adoption rate of Moodle in other regions of the world has started to decrease significantly, from 60% new implementations in 2015 to 49% in 2016, and only 3% in the first quarter of 2017.

**Moodle Adoption Outside North America**



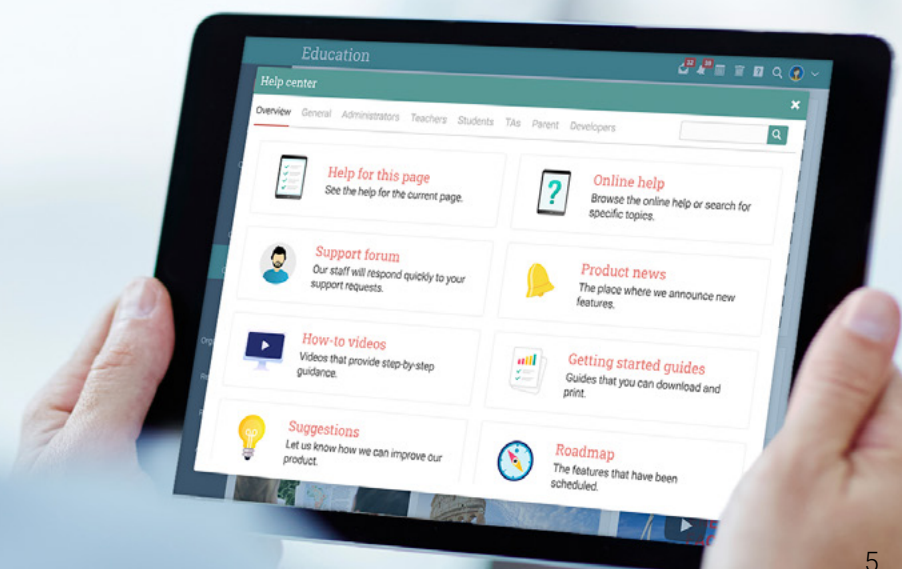
## Some of the reasons why institutions are moving away from Moodle

**Expensive self-hosted option:** The significant decrease in Moodle's popularity can be attributed mainly to the large costs related to self-hosting and the amount of resources needed for maintenance.

**Long implementation process:** Installing the software may be simple but configuring and fitting it to the institutions needs can be a time consuming process that can last up to 18 – 24 months.

**Outdated design:** The Moodle interface is somewhat old-fashioned and clunky compared with what is expected of modern web applications. Although the Moodle UI can be customized, most Moodle sites tend to be dry, text heavy, and uninspiring.

**Ease of use:** Many schools that use Moodle have to run training courses for their staff in order to use it effectively. Because of the extended learning curve, users won't be able to fully enjoy the benefits of the system right from its implementation which can decrease the product's perceived usefulness among early adopters.



## Why cloud-hosted is better than self-hosted

Studies show that institutions are moving away from self-hosted solutions, because they require substantial investments to cover server costs, storage and maintenance.

It is a far better solution to get an LMS that looks good right out of the box, has integration with a variety of tools, is easy to implement, easy to use, and comes with low initial costs. Here are a few reasons why cloud-hosted is better than self-hosted solutions:

### Cost

Cloud-hosted solutions offer a predictable cost over time, they have a smaller upfront investment and they don't require additional hardware investments.

Self-hosted solutions may have a reduced initial price, but the institution must also pay for associated hardware, maintenance, and more.

### Security

In the case of Cloud-hosted solutions, data security is in the hands of the vendor. Cloud-hosted solutions have strict data security standards to protect your data.

In the case of Self-hosted solutions, the institution is in charge of protecting their own data. This might cause issues if institutions are not up to date with data security protocols.



## Customization

Cloud-hosted solutions are flexible and allow users to easily make customizations and adapt the solution to their needs.

Self-hosted solutions might offer customization options, but these can significantly increase the implementation time and custom features can cause problems when the core software needs to be updated.

## Implementation

A Cloud-based solution takes less time to implement compared to Self-hosted solutions. Implementing self-hosted solutions requires more organizational tasks, responsibilities, and additional time for hardware and infrastructure setup.



## The real cost of Moodle

Moodle can be downloaded for free, it can be self-hosted or hosted by a third party company such as Blackboard Open LMS (formerly Moodlerooms). Here is an analysis of the cost of each option:

### Self-hosted for Small schools

You can run a few hundred students on a single server and single database, as long as you don't mind the possibility of outages if the server fails or occurs outside of normal school hours. A small-school configuration can often be installed and administered by an IT enthusiast so the running cost won't be that high considering that just one FTE is needed to keep the system running.

The estimated cost of servers, storage and operating system is somewhere between \$4,000 and \$7,000 but if you want to have a backup server that will double the costs. If you want your servers to run at all times, you may need to invest in some UPSs, which adds another \$1,000 - \$2,000 depending on their performance. Add the cost of auxiliary server equipment and the estimated initial cost is between \$10,000 - \$20,000.





You will also need to provide training to faculty members and students, which will probably cost another \$3,000 or more depending on the number of users trained.

There is also the IT administrator's salary which can differ from country to country. In the USA for example, the salary can range between \$40,000 and \$86,000.

There can be many additional recurring costs, for example if the school wants integrations with 3rd party tools such as anti-plagiarism tools, web conferencing tools, etc.

### Self-hosted for Large schools

In the case of large schools and universities the cost structure is similar but costs are multiplied because of the need for high-performance servers and large storage capacity.

To run Moodle reliably (99.9% uptime) for a lot of students, you need a more sophisticated setup than just a single server. Specifically, we recommend:

- 1 hardware load balancer
- 2 servers or more, depending on the number of students
- 2 copies of your SQL database in a master/slave setup with failover
- 2 memcached servers for fault-tolerant caching
- 1 high capacity RAID disk system for file storage and backups
- 1 search engine
- Professional monitoring software

For example for a large university of almost 100,000 students and thousands of courses, only the hardware and supporting equipment would cost over \$350,000.

With the large and complex equipment also comes a higher number of FTEs for maintaining a system, configuring software, adding different integrations, classes, and resources. It requires an IT specialist with knowledge of how to set up, configure, and maintain a complex cluster environment who is available 24/7 to deal with performance issues and outages.

If we calculate with one FTE for IT administration and 2 FTEs for software management then the cost will hit \$200,000. Adding to this 2-4 support FTEs who will instruct users and staff will cost another \$100,000 - \$200,000.



## Commercially hosted

Schools and universities can choose to host their LMS using hosting services, which can be an independent hosting service or an official [Moodle](#) partner such as Blackboard Open LMS.

The price of a hosting service can vary significantly based on the needs of the school or university. Hosting companies may offer plans and packages that cover different needs. Pricing is based on the number of the students, resources, and classes. High performance hosting with considerable disk space may start around \$1,000/month but the fee can increase with the needs of the organization.

Official Moodle partners such as Blackboard Open LMS are usually more expensive than cloud-hosted LMS solutions.





## User interface

The [NEO](#) interface is an easy to use design that looks sharp and automatically adjusts based on the type of device. It provides attractive tile-based dashboards for students, teachers and administrators, a graphical class catalog, as well as simple pop-out navigation. NEO also has a unique “activity display” feature that indicates the level of activity within classes and groups using a pulsing indicator on their tiles together with real-time widgets that scroll through the latest activities.

The [Moodle](#) interface is a simple design, yet it looks very outdated. Even the latest Moodle release, Moodle 3.5, still looks dated, especially as it is missing graphical dashboards for users. Although adding images for classes that are displayed on the dashboard was an improvement, Moodle still lacks a graphical class catalog with categories and subcategories. The Moodle interface is not responsive and the biggest inconvenience for administrators is having to download plugins and themes to make it more user friendly.

In NEO, many features can be enabled or disabled to suit young children through to college students. The platform offers a simple pop-out navigation that allows users to easily access all important areas, no matter where they are in a site as well as quickly add courses, groups, and more.



[Moodle](#) might seem confusing for first-time users. For example, there is an overwhelming number of menus and submenus and no pop-up navigation system. A learner can see all of their classes in the left bar, meaning that if a user has around 5 classes, they will have to scroll down the left bar to find their class. The considerably large left bar can be hidden to make more space for content on the page, but there is no thin navigation bar option as NEO has.

For teachers, [NEO](#) provides a visually attractive class layout to create and organize lesson material. For students, each lesson in a class shows the number of sections that a lesson has, the badges and points it awards, and certificates associated with the lesson. Students can also easily see progress icons for each class and lesson, making it easy to know which lessons have to be started or resumed and which ones are completed.

Moodle has the option of adding different sections and activities, but again misses the mark on visual appeal and usability. For teachers, it is hard to organize content since the entire course is a page that displays the different learning activities and resources. There are no progress icons for the activities instead, Moodle uses a tick to show which ones are completed.

NEO is available in more than 40 languages and offers mobile apps for iOS and Android. Schools can also choose to have their own custom branded apps. Moodle is available for iOS, Android and Windows, however, the apps will only work if individual sites have been configured to allow them.





## Ease of use

**NEO** is very intuitive and easy to use. In addition, it includes an online help center with videos, getting started guides, and searchable help content. NEO also has a rapid response support forum where staff members typically respond to questions within 15-30 minutes during business hours 24/5.

**Moodle** offers documentation, a community forum for sharing ideas, and a forum for downloading plugins.



## Features

NEO provides a more complete and more intuitive solution for supporting efficient teaching and learning compared to Moodle.

### Creating content

Using NEO, teachers can select the type of class that best suits their teaching style, whether it's instructor-led, blended, self-paced, or micro learning. They can also create beautiful classes using our built-in content authoring tool and quickly organize learning material.

In Moodle, teachers can create instructor-led, blended and self-paced classes. However, Moodle does not have specific features for each class based on the class style, as NEO does.



## Student assessment

In [NEO](#), teachers can choose from a rich set of 15 types of assignments such as quiz, essay, debates, team, Dropbox, Turnitin, discussion, LTI, offline and survey.

[Moodle](#) has less assignment options, most notably missing the essay, discussion, debate, Dropbox and even team assignments.

## Tracking progress

In [NEO](#), the support for competency-based learning is an indispensable tool for teachers that wish to track how well students are understanding the taught concepts based on their mastery of skills. Educators can also create charts and reports of important data such as assignment grades, lesson progress and missing work, get instant insights using extensive analytics and access custom reports. Schools can also track PD compliance through the compliance feature.

[Moodle](#) supports competencies, but it is harder to track student progress. For example, to be able to generate custom reports, the site administrator must install a third party plugin. Moodle does not have a compliance feature.

## Communication and collaboration

[NEO](#) makes it easy for students and faculty to connect through a comprehensive set of collaboration and communication tools, including chat, messaging, social networking, teams, forums, blogs, and more.



**Moodle** has less communication features, missing a built-in messaging system with email integration, automatic translation of communications and a teams feature.

### Personalization and engagement

**NEO** helps teachers make their classes more flexible and engaging with automation. They can easily set up actions that should be performed when students enroll in groups, complete classes or fall behind on their mastery levels. They can also use gamification to create course, path and site-wide games.

**Moodle** does not have a similar automation feature in the basic product, and usually administrators would have to install a plugin to automate at least some parts of the site, such as enrollments. For example, when a student's competency level drops below a certain threshold, users can automatically receive a notification in NEO. In Moodle, teachers have to manually send a message to a student to alert them that their competency levels are dropping.

Moodle has a gamification feature, but teachers can mostly customize badges and award them to students that complete tasks in a class. There is no option of adding a leaderboard, points, automated class levels or adding teams to a game.

### Customization

In **NEO**, schools can customize many aspects of their platform to match their own brand, including the color scheme, fonts, logo, terminology, and more. They can also create a visitor portal with their own portal images, panels, carousel, custom HTML, custom pages, and more.

**Moodle** is harder to customize at least when it comes to using the original Moodle themes. To access similar options as in NEO, administrators have to test different custom themes and generally invest more time in the portal creation.



Here is a list of the features included with [NEO](#) that are not supported by [Moodle](#):

## User Interface

- Automatic language translation of messages and forum posts
- Customizable terminology
- Activity display
- Customizable visitor portal

## Content

- Class ratings and reviews
- Graphical badge gallery
- Adaptive learning
- Content sync
- Gamification
- Automation
- Seating charts
- Micro learning
- Drip content
- Compliance
- Waitlists





### Assessment and analytics

- Debate, team, survey, offline, SCORM and attendance assignments
- Comprehensive set of built-in reports
- Curriculum coverage analysis
- Peer reviewed assignments
- Personalized assignments
- Report widgets

### Collaboration

- Public profiles
- Organizations
- Public blog
- Wikis

### Integrations

- Integration with your own email server
- MailChimp
- Integration with 1,500+ apps via Zapier
- Kimono
- Udemy

### Payment gateways

- Authorize.net
- PayU Latam
- PagSeguro
- PayUbiz
- Flywire
- PayPal
- Stripe

### Web conferencing

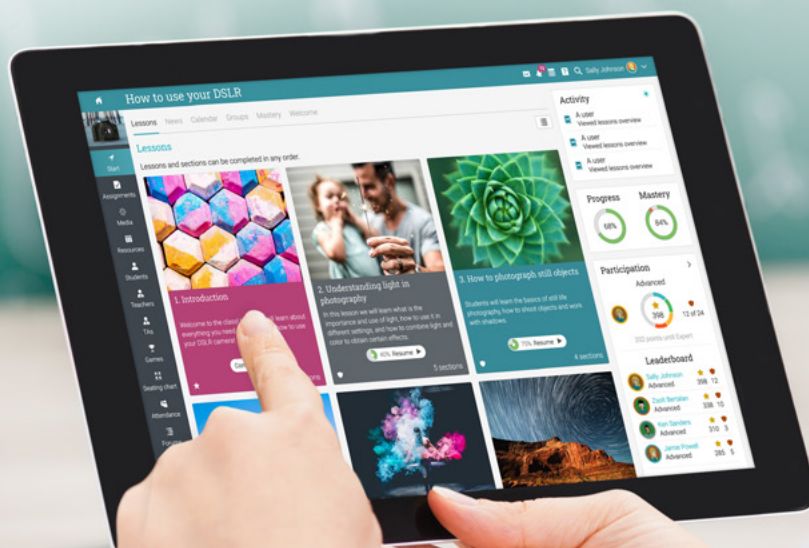
- GoToTraining
- GoToMeeting
- Google Meet
- Zoom



## Cost

NEO has a Free plan with a comprehensive set of essential LMS features and a Premium plan for schools that need more powerful functionality. There are no setup fees, cancellation fees, storage fees, bandwidth fees, support fees, or other hidden costs.

Depending on the requirements, the real cost of self-hosting for Moodle ranges from an average of \$68,000/year for small schools to \$450,000/year for large universities. For commercially hosted services, schools will have to pay around \$1,000/month, which can easily increase depending on specific needs.



## Summary

This was a comparison of the most important feature differences between [NEO](#) and [Moodle](#).

NEO is a more modern, powerful, and intuitive LMS than Moodle, for both K-12 and Higher Education institutions. NEO offers more features in a single platform designed to help schools manage all classroom activities in an easy and efficient way.

If you require additional information on NEO, please contact us at [sales@cypherlearning.com](mailto:sales@cypherlearning.com).

[www.neolms.com](http://www.neolms.com)



This comparison was written in August 2020 based on publicly available documentation on both vendors' sites. It was prepared as a guide and is not intended to be exhaustive. The comparison information does not constitute any contractual representation, warranty or obligation on our part. Liability for errors, omissions or consequential loss is expressly disclaimed. If you find any information in this comparison guide to be inaccurate, please contact us and we will correct the information.

