

# MATRIX

BY CYPHER LEARNING

# VS

Acorn, Compass,  
and OpenLearning

# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Ease of use.....	4
Features.....	5
Cost.....	8
Summary.....	9



# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

## Introduction

This is a detailed comparison between MATRIX, Acorn, Compass Education, and OpenLearning, taking into consideration the features, functionality, and cost of each platform.

**MATRIX** is a learning management system (LMS) for use by small and medium-sized businesses, as well as large corporations. MATRIX helps companies manage all training activities, such as creating and delivering training content, evaluating employee performance, training clients and partners, and selling online courses. MATRIX is a product of CYPHER LEARNING, a company that specializes in providing learning platforms for organizations around the world.

**Acorn** is a cloud-based LMS with a long free trial (60 days) that prides itself in being Australia's most trusted LMS for businesses. Since 2014, they've amassed 1 million users, including top clients such as Learnhub, the Australian Security and Investments Commission, and the Australian Government.

**Compass** is a web-based school management system that comprises six different core modules that communicate with each other. Yet another Australian LMS, Compass is now used by 180 schools across not just Australia, but also UK and Ireland.

**OpenLearning** is a cloud-based LMS with a focus on helping educators create, market, and sell micro online courses. Its global community that counts 3 million learners, 196 institutions, and well over 4000 pirate courses puts it at the top of the Australian-based LMSs.



# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

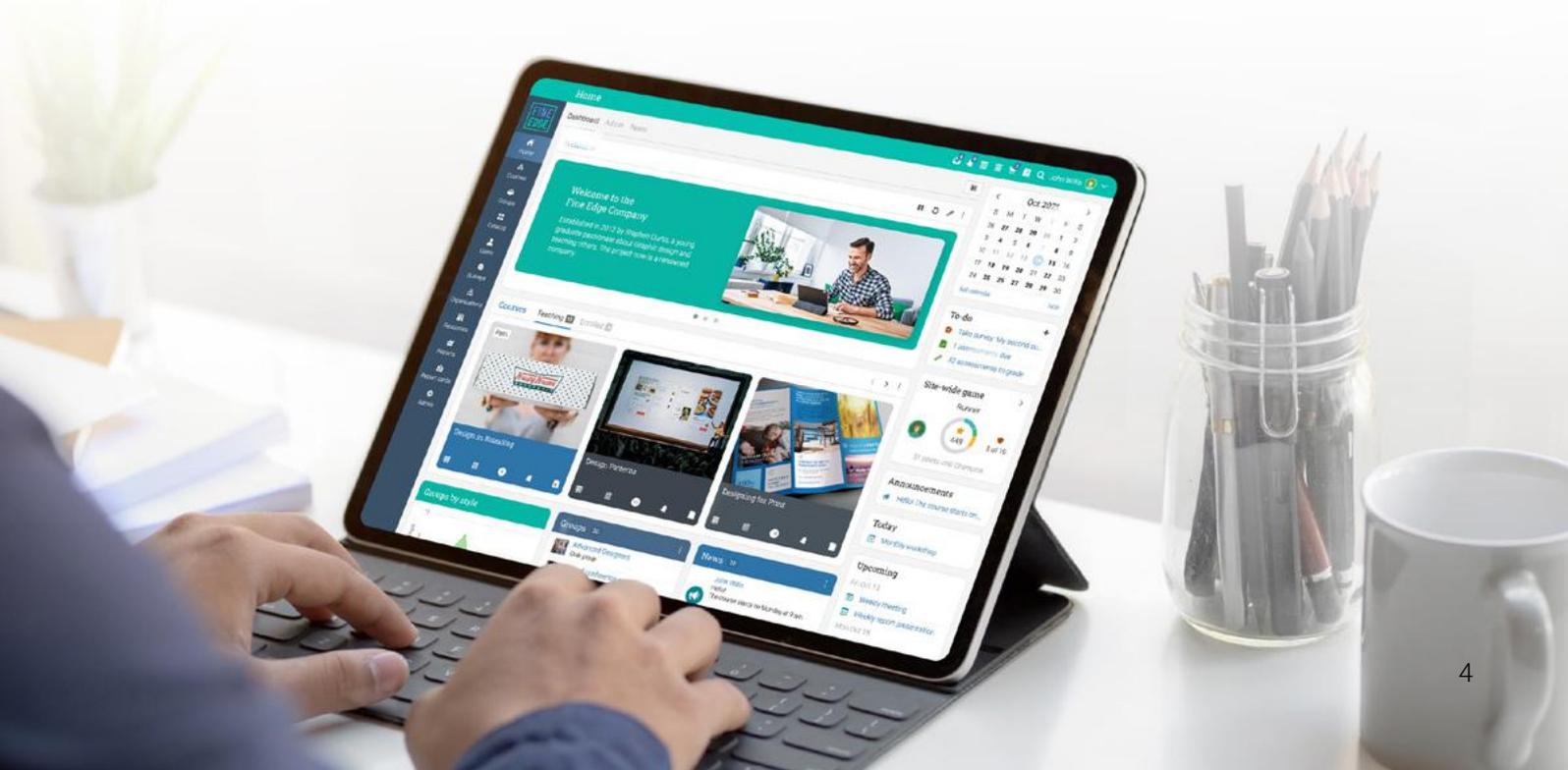
## Ease of use

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

Acorn doesn't have a help center, in-app getting started videos, or whitepapers with specific use cases. Customer support is available 24/7, but only for Australian customers, highlighting the platform's regional focus for the Australian corporate market. The in-app chat seems to be mainly focused on buying the platform rather than getting support.

Compass offers ongoing support via phone, live chat, and email - 20 hours a day, 5 days a week. Aside from case studies, whitepapers, and regular webinars, the platform hosts remote meetings for existing schools to learn from each other's practices called Compass Together.

OpenLearning encourages both educators and learners to phone call their offices in Australia and Malaysia for support. A chat, help page, and product community exist for proactive engagement, but there are no in-app getting started videos.



# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

## Features

MATRIX provides the range of functionality you'd expect in a modern LMS, such as support for courses (instructor led, blended, self-paced, and micro learning), content authoring, integrated e-commerce functionality, graphical course catalog, beautiful module layouts, gamification, automation, learning paths, drip content, adaptive learning, compliance, ad-hoc reporting, a customizable portal, web conferencing, collaboration tools, mastery and learning outcomes, resources catalog, and more.

MATRIX integrates with a wide variety of systems, including G Suite, Google Drive, Calendars (iCal), PayPal, Stripe, Authorize.net, Salesforce, Zapier, xAPI, Microsoft 365, OneDrive, GoToMeeting, GoToTraining, Zoom, Webex, and more.

Acorn's main selling point is that it combines content from multiple sources - like LinkedIn Learning and Oracle Peoplesoft Applications - to create native personalized learning experiences. The basic LMS features are covered as follows: visual catalog, 4 course types (blended, face-to-face, qualification, and eLearning), guided learning paths, default evaluations, certificates, badges, gamification, reports, skills, and resources catalog.

It doesn't have a customizable portal, but insists on white-labeling as a way to provide a consistent brand feeling. Their FAQ page indicates that learners can sell courses, but their overall website and feature list don't.



# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

Compass' focus seems to be more on reducing the admin burden and keeping parents engaged. They achieve the first point via an easy-to-fill attendance grid (available on mobile, tablet, PC), SMS absence approval for parents, and individual or team-based attendance reports. As for the second point, Compass offers a secure online wallet so parents can save their credit card data when future events or class excursions occur. Parents and carers also get a separate portal, just like with MATRIX.

On the other hand, the interface is not so user-friendly, rendering reports hard to read. The mobile app has got consistent negative reviews on both AppStore and PlayStore for not saving filters, links that don't open, limited absence statuses, and an inability to contact teachers.



# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

OpenLearning is one of the few ones to support open credentials that align with Australia's first micro-credential framework. The content authoring tool works by drag and dropping content into the course. It also supports all types of online courses: MOOC, free, paid, private, and self-paced ones. However, there are fewer assessment types than in MATRIX (five, which can be further customized). Each course comes with its own landing page, analytics, and certificates.

When it comes to selling courses, international payments via Mastercard, VISA, American Express, and PayPal are supported. Cash transfers are only eligible in USD, AUD and MYR. One caveat to this platform are the inexistent native integrations; their own API and Zapier are the only available options.

Important notice: OpenLearning seems to work hand-in-hand with content creators by providing two paid services. The Learning Design Services is a service where educators pay for consultation on how to research, build, and present online courses; while the Marketing service deals exclusively with brand awareness and course distribution (OpenLearning reserves their right to pick whom they work with in this case).



# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

## Cost

MATRIX LMS plans range from \$499/month for 100 active learners (yearly billing), to \$4,699/month for 3,500 active learners (monthly billing). There is a discount for yearly billing. There are no setup fees, cancellation fees, storage fees, bandwidth fees, support fees, or other hidden costs. MATRIX offers advanced features, such as full e-commerce functionality in each of the pricing plans.

Acorn has a hybrid pricing model. For under 100 users, there is a fixed flat rate fee of \$375/month only for the LMS (\$500 for the LMS and content). As the number of users increases, the pricing model increases, charging an extra \$3.50/user/month for organizations between 101-500 users. The price gets discounted at \$3/user/month for organizations between 501-1500 users. For those with 1500+ users, Acorn advises getting in touch for custom pricing.

Compass hasn't fully disclosed its pricing model, leaving you no choice but to get a quote.

OpenLearning's pricing starts with a personal plan for educators who want to deliver educational content up to 250 people at a flat fee of \$60/month. It continues with an institution plan that starts at \$275/month for 5 educators and 500 learners and goes up to \$2,200/month for unlimited educators and 4000 learners. Institutions with 4000+ learners can access custom pricing and also get free onboarding like in the previous plan.



# MATRIX vs Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning

## Summary

This was a comparison of the most important feature differences between MATRIX and Acorn, Compass, and OpenLearning.

MATRIX LMS is a more comprehensive and well-rounded solution than the rest. It caters to institutions around the world (not just Australia), has a rich content authoring tool and e-commerce module, while integrating with a diverse range of productivity and web conferencing tools. The price is also on the lower end and publicly disclosed.

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

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



This comparison was written in December 2021 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.

