Bendable Maine

A lifelong learning system being shaped by Mainers for Mainers

Content Curation Principles

Bendable Maine is, in large part, a discovery tool—a way for residents to easily find and access the learning that is just right for them.

In turn, curating content—picking which learning resources to offer in the system and from which providers—is essential for enabling and enhancing that process of discovery. These are the principles that guide the Drucker Institute team in our curation:

• We seek to offer a balance of content from national providers (like Cell-Ed, Study.com, Penn Foster, LRNG, edX and so on) and local providers (such as the Wiscasset-based National Digital Equity Center, the Maine Community College System, Waterville Creates, the Maine Adult Education Association, the Portland Conservatory of Music, the Abbe Museum, etc., etc., etc.).

• We thoroughly vet all providers (local and national) to ensure that their offerings are of high quality—that is, they have a proven track record of teaching the knowledge and skills they say they are going to teach, offer a good student experience and are willing to collaborate with the Bendable team to help us meet Mainers' learning needs and desires.

• We feature a robust mix of providers so that Bendable has valuable content for everyone: younger learners and adults, those who've had a lot of formal education and those seeking foundational skills, people who are comfortable on a computer and those who are less digitally confident.

• We know that there are a wide variety of learning goals, constraints, strengths and barriers represented in every community across Maine. And so when choosing providers and resources, we consider multiple dimensions of both the learning experience and the learner. Our ultimate aim is to offer users different modes of learning, instructional approaches

and skill levels across topics and areas of interest. Take technology, for example. We want to make it equally easy to find a short video tutorial on how to set up a Google account; an instructor-led class on using mobile devices that meets several times online or in person; and a semester-long course ending with formal credit on programming in Python. Making it simple and seamless to tap into any and all of these learning experiences is what Bendable is all about.

- Our research shows that people learn for all kinds of reasons throughout their lives—sometimes even throughout the day—and we hope to scratch all of those different itches. What's more, having people return to Bendable over and over again to meet their different needs helps to cultivate in them the habit of continuous learning. With this in mind, we consciously choose content that covers a wide spectrum of topics, whether it's learning to advance your career, improve your everyday life or just have fun.

- At the same time, we believe that less is more. Rather than dump every course offering from all of our content providers into the Bendable catalog, we analyze and cull and, in the end, serve up a set of resources that various stakeholders have indicated are important for Mainers. Our goal is for the Bendable catalog to include thousands of courses and other learning activities that are highly relevant, rather than tens of thousands that stand to simply overwhelm our users.