

Learning Uncut Episode 47
Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning
Hosted by Michelle Ockers



Michelle Ockers: Before we get into today's conversation, I'd like to share one way you can get more out of Learning Uncut. A listener recently contacted me to say that after listening to an episode she looked at the resources provided in the show notes. She told me that she found the curation provided on topics relevant to the conversation very useful, and went on to say that most of the time, podcast producers link to materials mentioned in the conversation – but on Learning Uncut we curate beyond that to expand what people might explore if the topic interests them. At her suggestion I'm letting you know that if a topic interests you it's worth looking at the show notes for additional resources. Wherever possible I include samples of work from the initiative that a guest discusses which helps bring their work to life.

Which brings me nicely to this episode, where you will find screenshots to illustrate the great design work on Queensland Rail's onboarding and compliance refresher program – fittingly called 'All Aboard.' My guests are Julian Davis, the Senior Digital Learning Advisor from Queensland Rail and Naomi Waldron, who is Learning Director at easyA. EasyA partnered with Queensland Rail to create the All Aboard program. The program moved onboarding from a cumbersome paper-based three-month long process to a highly engaging digital learning experience that new staff complete on their first day. The program also includes compliance refresher training so it touches everyone in the organisation. In addition to the significant business benefits of moving to a digital solution, this program has been designed and developed with learner experience as a primary goal. Naomi does a great job walking us through how the program was created, including how they worked effectively with Subject Matter Experts. Listen out for the design concept, storytelling, attention to detail, authenticity and gamification. What's more all of these elements have been brought together in a way that is not at all forced or gimmicky – it's elegance and ease of use is impressive.

The show notes include articles from both of our guests on relevant aspects of learning design. Enjoy this rich conversation.

Michelle Ockers: Welcome Julian and Naomi

Julian Davis: Hi.

Naomi Waldron: Thanks, hi.

Michelle Ockers: And congratulations on the All Aboard program that was developed by Queensland Rail and easyA being a finalist in the best onboarding and induction program in the Australian Institute of training and developments 2019 Excellence Awards. That's quite exciting. *<Note – easyA was actually winner of this category.>*

Julian Davis: Thank you very much. It is.

Naomi Waldron: Thank you.

Michelle Ockers: And in a nutshell, maybe we'll start with you Julian. Why do you think the program was chosen as a finalist?

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

- Julian Davis: I think because of the impact that it had and it was such a change from where we were to what we became and that it had been such a, such a large organisation and it had such a positive impact in such a short period of time from when it was introduced. And I think that's probably one of the biggest reasons why it got selected as a finalist.
- Michelle Ockers: Yeah. And I know in any kind of industry awards, the impact piece is something that they're always looking for some demonstrated measurable impact on this organisation.
- Julian Davis: Yes.
- Michelle Ockers: And Naomi, how about yourself? What do you think stood out that made this program a finalists apart from the impact or in addition to the impact?
- Naomi Waldron: I think just the fact that, and I suppose this is why the impact was so successful, is that I think it's a really fit for purpose learning solution. So, I think it was so successful because it not only met their technical and design requirements, but everything about it is just distinctly Queensland Rail. So just the cultural fit I think was quite interesting about this project as well.
- Michelle Ockers: And we'll come back to that cultural fit because it's interesting the lengths you guys went to, to achieve that, right?
- Julian Davis: Yes.
- Michelle Ockers: Okay. So Julian, can you introduce us to Queensland Rail and give us a sense of the size and scale of the organisation?
- Julian Davis: Sure. Queensland Rail is... it operates out of Queensland Australia and we look after most of the rail network. We have about six and a half thousand kilometres worth of track. And we last year, 2019, moved more than 54 million passengers across the network, which is pretty huge. And we were an organisation of about 7000 people across the entire state. So it's quite a big organisation.
- Michelle Ockers: It is. And I think what many non-Australian listeners might not really appreciate is the geographic size of Queensland.
- Julian Davis: Yes.
- Michelle Ockers: It's massive, right? It's like several European countries are going to fit into Queensland.
- Julian Davis: Absolutely. It's huge, yes.
- Michelle Ockers: And sticking with you for the moment, Julian, and what's your role in the organisation and what are your responsibilities in regard to onboarding?
- Julian Davis: So I'm the Senior Digital Learning Advisor for Queensland Rail and I look after and support all digital learning across the entire organisation. My role now with the All Aboard product in particular is, is I manage that product now. So any changes that need to go through and in the reviews that we do, making sure that it's going to work on just about everybody's device. Because we do have people, because we are so big, we have people in areas that sometimes the internet is not as strong as what we get in the city. So we

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

- need to make sure that it works out there. So I'm offering support for all that as well.
- Michelle Ockers: Yes, so there's a lot of technical considerations in the build and making the program available to everyone regardless of where they are across the state.
- Julian Davis: Absolutely. Which is one of the challenges, very much so being so big and so diverse.
- Michelle Ockers: And some of the content as I understand it is used for annual refresher training. So there's a compliance element to the program as well. Would that be right?
- Julian Davis: That's right. Yes. Yes. So it's built into the All Aboard. So there's actually two products. There is an All Aboard induction, so new employees when they first start they'll be doing that particular part of the product. And the other part is a yearly refresher that they do, which covers the compliancy that's required for all employees, every year.
- Michelle Ockers: Okay. So how many people need to go, I guess through the onboarding every year and then through the refresher component.
- Julian Davis: So the onboarding side of it is basically how many employees we get at the start of the year. Statistics wise, we are sitting at about 1500 people have completed the All Aboard induction since it's came online last year. So that's 1500 new employees and we're up over six and a half thousand people have completed the All Aboard refresher in the last 12 months.
- Michelle Ockers: So you're getting the volume through.
- Julian Davis: We're definitely getting the volume through yet. Yeah. Which is really great. Yep.
- Michelle Ockers: And it's a 100% digital solution isn't it? Or are there supplementary non-digital components?
- Julian Davis: We do have the supplementary non-digital for those that may have issues accessing computers. So we do have a paper based version for them as well.
- Michelle Ockers: So it's an alternative rather than a supplement?
- Julian Davis: There is an alternative. Yes, yes, yes.
- Michelle Ockers: Okay. So take us back to how onboarding used to work and why, why it needed to change.
- Julian Davis: The old process that we had was very paper based. There was a couple of little digital aspects in there as well, but it was predominantly paper-based and they called it the Go Program. It took up to three months to complete. There was a very heavy administration process. There was a reliance on managers from different areas of the organisation to sign off on it. It was very, very cumbersome. It can be put in someone's top drawer and completely forgotten about. You weren't compliant until such time as you was completed. So it was quite a big manual process to complete and I got to do it. I joined just before we changed over so I got to experience both of them, which was a great benchmarking for me.

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

- Michelle Ockers: Yeah, absolutely. So apart from you know, the time to complete the administrative overhead, I imagine there was very little visibility of how people were progressing through it and potentially even if people were completing it, maybe difficult to capture that they had completed it. So from the kind of record keeping and particularly the compliance element perspective,
- Julian Davis: There was no visibility.
- Michelle Ockers: There were gaps.
- Julian Davis: Yes, big, big gaps. There was no visibility at all because it was all paper driven and it was heavily reliant on people manually entering data into the system, into, into the LMS. So yeah. Yeah, it was very, very clunky.
- Michelle Ockers: The program name is very ironic, right? The Go Program, did that lead to any nicknames for the program or jokes about the program?
- Julian Davis: No, not no. I can see where you're coming from. Not that I'm aware of but, yeah.
- Michelle Ockers: So, so tell me, in the new world, how is onboarding done now and how does this better meet the needs of the organisation?
- Julian Davis: So when a new employee comes on board, they're assigned a bunch of new e-learning that they have to do. So courses that they have to do and the All Aboard is one of the first ones and they're asked to complete it within the first week. They can complete it at their desk. They can... It takes approximately two and a half hours to complete it. It's quite a sizeable e-learning course, but it's broken up in such a way that it allows people to stop and then they can come back and continue on. So it's such a contrast. It's so different to what we had before. People are compliant from day one. So once they've completed the course and completed the All Aboard, they're compliant, which compared to what we had before where particularly in the rail safety awareness area that they weren't compliant. And now we have record of that as well because that's captured in their learning management system.
- Michelle Ockers: Yep. So do you have any sense of completion rates?
- Julian Davis: Yeah, that was the six and a half thousand completions for the All Aboard refresher that we've had completed in the system and 1500 completions.
- Michelle Ockers: As a percentage. Like are you having to do much chasing around non-completion? I mean you have better visibility of where people...
- Julian Davis: No, there's so much more visibility now that there's not and, and the LMS will flag it to the manager as well if they haven't completed it. And it's just a matter of going back to the employee and giving them a little nudge to say, Hey, you've got some mandatory training that you need to complete.
- Michelle Ockers: Okay. And you've just told us that you joined when the old program was still in place. So I think July, 2018 you joined.
- Julian Davis: Yes.
- Michelle Ockers: And you did the old program and then you were involved with the rollout of the new program. I'm curious about your initial impressions of the project and the program. What do you recall?

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

- Julian Davis: My very first impression was wow, because I came into it from a straight into a digital learning aspect, so I got to see first-hand what had been developed and it was by far the biggest e-learning project that I had ever seen and I opened it up and it was a big wow when I opened it up. And it didn't take me long to get through to figure out how it had been done and how it means structured and everything just fell into place. After that. It was quite daunting for a new person not knowing how Queensland Rail works and then being given the paper version and then being given the digital version, a lot earlier than what a lot of other the organisation could see. Initially quite overwhelming, but it's pretty big and it's pretty cool. It's a very well structured.
- Michelle Ockers: And from an employee experience perspective, obviously a big difference.
- Julian Davis: Huge, huge difference. We've got a couple of people that are new on, on the floor that I'm working on and, and they all have to go through it. And it's only after that they come and realize that it was me and my area that actually look after it. And we've not had any negative feedback whatsoever that's been personally delivered to me about the product. It's all very, very positive and this is so great. This is so easy. This is so quick. And, and that's based on their experience and they've had in other organisations. So that's been phenomenal in that sense.
- Michelle Ockers: Fabulous. Naomi let's get into the design and development of the program and how you tackled something on such a big scale. You were involved from the time of vendor briefing in August 2017, what were easyA engaged to do on the project and you personally, what was your role in the project?
- Naomi Waldron: Sure. So my role at easyA is the learning director. So I'm responsible for the instructional design, quality of our products and we specialize in digital learning products. So basically we had a vendor briefing at Queensland Rail and I remember going in there and meeting the Queensland Rail team and they were talking a lot about their aims and a lot of the content kind of topics that they wanted to do. Originally they wanted to do a... Like almost like a Sim City version of Queensland Rail. So you could kind of click on different buildings and see different areas of Queensland Rail. So we pitched a number of different concepts and one of them was, had this gamification kind of aspect that had.. So with my original thinking, I was kind of thinking about something that I'd seen in around, how in New York there are these hidden visits, there are these tours of New York that you can do where there's hidden places that you have to go on a special tour to see.
- Naomi Waldron: And so in my mind, this concept of being able to explore different aspects of Queensland Rail was quite interesting. And I thought that there would be a way to kind of bring in a gamification element where the reward is finding out a new and hidden aspect of Queensland Rail that you get to, you get to find out more as you go. So we kind of pitched that idea and Queensland Rail really liked it, which was exciting because then we could kind of go on a journey together on the project. And then we worked. So we do basically, our process was that we, after pitching this initial concept, we started to do some initial story boarding, started to look at the graphic design for it, came up with a visual metaphor to use a map of Queensland and that you could actually go as different steps along your journey. From everybody starting down at main yards, kind of station in Brisbane and heading up North along various trains to get up to I think the far North Queensland.
- Naomi Waldron: And so the idea is that as you go along, you complete different topics and there's kind of a logical topic around that as well. So there's the, you start out with fit for work because everybody at Queensland Rail, regardless of their role, needs to be fit for work every day before they start their job. So the very

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

first topic that you see is exactly that. And then as you continue through this kind of a logical sequence to that. So yeah, so we did the visual design for that and then we conducted some, a lot, a lot of subject matter expert facilitation.

Naomi Waldron: So we actually got a lot of people in the room talk to them about what was important to cover, talk to them about the vision for the actual product and what was important to cover, kind of captured their content. And then my counterpart in Queensland, Lauren Conneely also facilitated a lot of subject matter expert reviews and feedback in terms of the storyboard. And then we went ahead and built it and developed it. So we did also have like a little prototype stage as well where we actually built one module independently and then had some, some user testing around that.

Michelle Ockers: Okay. There's a couple of aspects of that design process that I'm curious about and would love to dig into. Let's go back to the SME involvement and facilitation because this is an aspect of designing, developing programs that I'm trying to avoid using the word struggle, but it is something that is a challenge and often leads to delays on projects or they can be issues with the degree of technical expertise that some subject matter experts want to incorporate into programs and challenges with working effectively with them around actually goes into the program. How many, just roughly, how many subject matter experts did you need to work with and can you talk to us a little about that facilitation session, what you actually were wanting to achieve out of it and how, how you did it, how that ran?

Naomi Waldron: Yeah, sure. So Julian, how many did we say that where it was more than 20 at least?

Julian Davis: Yeah, I think it was at least 25 at least.

Naomi Waldron: At least 25 different subject matter experts across all of the different topics that need to be covered in the onboarding piece. So the way that we did that was to, Queensland Rail had already previously scoped out the, the higher level topics that needed to be in the onboarding piece from a compliance perspective. So I guess we didn't need to work that out. We just knew that there were these topics needed to be covered and there would be the subject matter experts. So that was wonderful to have that arranged beforehand. I guess one of the things that I always, or that we do in easyA when we're running these kinds of subject expert workshops, is to be very clear and set a very clear framework upfront about what it is that we are designing and developing. Ideally if we can, we'll show them what it's going to look like.

Naomi Waldron: So I remember with the onboarding, so for All Aboard I should say, we had the graphically designed module layouts. We had them in PowerPoint, they were non-functional, but we had those. And we kind of, we kind of told the story. So imagine you're a new, you're a new person at Queensland Rail. One of the things we're really trying to achieve here is to help people feel welcome and just give them just exactly what they need to know to be successful in their first you know, first few weeks, first few months at Queensland Rail.

Naomi Waldron: So setting that tone was really important cause I think there's a tendency sometimes for subject matter experts to want to put a lot of content in. And I think not starting with the content was really critical but start with the learner experience and start with the story that we're wanting to convey. So I think

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

that was a really big, a big factor in the effectiveness of it because we were able to go, you know what? It's not about your content. It's not about the things that you want to achieve. It's about what, what do, what's going to be? What do you know that's going to be really useful to people when they first start?

Michelle Ockers: That's such a great reframe. So useful. So you've set the tone, you've got them in the room, you've set the tone, here's what we want you to think about. What did you do then?

Naomi Waldron: Sometimes we had mandatory content that had to be covered. So in those kinds of situations, for example, rail safety, fit for work, kind of things like that, those things are mandated. We don't have a lot of choice around those things. In other subject areas, we were looking at things like, had you talked to, so talking to subject matter experts, had you talked to people who are new to the organisation about the things that they would have liked to know about your organisation when you first started that you could tell them. And also stories like, think back to when you first started in your role, what did you wish that you had known that you, that you didn't know? So those kinds of questions were a great place to start. We also sometimes had some source content that was already there.

Naomi Waldron: Usually that was very, very long and complicated. So often we wouldn't even look at that first. We'd start with that initial conversation and go, what do you, what do you think people need to know? And then the other focus that we had was just telling people where to go to find out the information. So rather than trying to stuff a whole lot of information into an onboarding piece, really the focus was a lot about giving people an introduction to the particular area, telling them about what their role is in Queensland Rail is. So in this particular area, this is what we do and, and welcome and we're so glad that you're here with us in the organisation. And by the way, if you want to find out more about this topic, he is the link to the intranet or he is how you can go about contacting us. And for some of the topics, that was it, that was all we needed to say. So yeah, it was, and then it was just, is there anything else that people really need to know if not wonderful. So that was, that was pretty much how we went about scoping the project, for particular modules.

Michelle Ockers: I think that starting rather than starting with a big pile of heavy content and starting with the learner experience and the stories and using questions and their own stories to solicit the content, it sounds like a really nice approach. Really helpful approach. So you've talked a little bit about some of the elements that you've included in the design, and we do have some screenshots to share in the show notes. It's a really elegant design and there's also this incredible level of attention to detail that's gone into the presentation and the design. You've talked about the concept of the journey. You've talked a little about gamification, you've touched on stories, but perhaps not fully elaborate across how stories are used in the program. What are some of the other key elements you've incorporated in the design, which perhaps we haven't spoken about yet?

Naomi Waldron: Yeah. So one of the things I knew about Queensland Rail coming in was that I knew that they had this really strong culture within Queensland Rail. Because I had designed some work for them previously and I knew that this... The success of this product would all come down to whether people, how authentic it was, whether people could really see that it was designed for Queensland Rail by Queensland Rail, and it needed to be something that all employees would really champion within the organisation and think was a good thing. So one of the things that we were really fortunate to have, is contact with a gentleman who had been in Queensland Rail for I think at least

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

20 years, he knew everybody. He was that kind of guy in the organisation that kind of has, he has a particular role, but he is talking to people all over Queensland, all different employees who he knows.

Naomi Waldron: And we were able to, I was able to sit down with him and say, this is the plan. These are the places where we're planning to have, have the different parts of the story. So we literally had different cities mapped out and cities and towns along the path. And one of the things that I did before I met with him is to sit down and actually work out the train journey. So I was looking at Queensland Rail timetables and the different train networks and the different train tracks. Making sure that you know, if there was a connection that came into Rockhampton, I'm just making this up now, Rockhampton at one o'clock in the morning, that we wouldn't have a graphic that showed Rockhampton during the day time.

Naomi Waldron: All of those like tiny little things that I just knew that people in Queensland Rail who we needed to really value this program would be you know, when you do it right, it's invisible and no one notices. But if you do it wrong, everybody notices and it becomes that thing that people go, Oh, that program, it's you know, that's not really how it is because of this, you know.

Naomi Waldron: So, that was something I did before I met with this gentleman and then I talked him through what we had done to try and make it authentic and make it real. And he really just got it, just got right into it. And he loved that. And so he was, he was then kind of a champion for us. And then you know, he put me in touch with people who, were track workers out at Rockhampton or you know, and he'd send me photos of buckled tracks, buckled railway tracks that had needed to be repaired because of the extreme heat out West. And you know, all of those kinds of things that me, as a learning designer in Brisbane city is not going to be able to do by myself. So having that person and having the connection to his amazing connections with other people and you know, photos and examples and stories that really helped to bring the entire package. Just that level of detail and authenticity that we would never have been able to do otherwise. So yeah, it was really wonderful to have that experience.

Michelle Ockers: I'm sure he really enjoyed being able to use his network in that way as well. It sounds like he was really enthusiastic.

Naomi Waldron: Yeah, he was. Yeah, he loved it and he sent emails to me and sent emails to the people and was fantastic at getting things done for us.

Michelle Ockers: That's great. What an awesome champion to have working with you on this. Julian, I want to ask you a question about a design element about storytelling in, in the program because I know there's stories included in the different locations and you've taken real people's stories and incorporated them. Can you tell us a little bit about the value of the stories and maybe an example of, of a story from one, all the stops along the way?

Julian Davis: Sure it, to me it made it very personable and, and it showed that someone who's doing it that what you do actually matters. And one of the stations is Roma street, which is one of the main transit centres here in Brisbane. So it is quite a big customer focused area. And the story at the end is actually from a customer and talks about their positive experience that they've had while they were at Roma street. And it's nice that it's quiet in a frame. It's a little bit warm and fuzzy cause it actually makes you realize that you're working for an organisation that has such a major impact on people's lives every single day.

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

- Julian Davis: And you're getting that straight away as soon as you start with Queensland Rail through the induction program. So that was pretty cool. That was pretty cool. A lot of other stories along the way that relate to people doing stories that are telling stories that they, they might not never know of. So we've got people talking about track workers and how they work in the track, which we might be in an office and never get out on track. So it gives people a better understanding of, of what people actually do through real life stories, which is great.
- Michelle Ockers: It is. And no, I mean I understand the stories were real, but you decided not to use real people. Well you use real people, but they were actors rather than actual Queensland Rail workers. Is that, is that what was behind that decision?
- Naomi Waldron: Yes. So, so we've... I've kind of had this quite a bit of experience with incorporating stories into very various different learning designs. And one of the things that I have learnt over the years is if you use real people, it does add to the authenticity, but there's also a risk. So for example, if those people leave the organisation or if something happens and or there, if there's any kind of controversy regarding that, that individual it, it does influence the tone of your module and then you need to potentially look at changing those images down the track.
- Naomi Waldron: So we decided to... we originally were going to use real people and certainly those stories that we captured were from real individuals and real people at Queensland Rail where ever possible, but we used source, stock images or we used some of Queensland Rails branding images in terms of how we would visually represent them. We initially also wanted to have video clips there, but we decided for bandwidth reasons not to do that. But what we did do was professionally recorded audio. And the reason for that is that things, if you add professional voiceover, it can really, really bring something to life and give you that sense of authenticity in a way that just using text or something like that wouldn't do. So we did want to, we've kept most of the module very low bandwidth, but we've put professional voiceover into the storytelling aspects of the module as well.
- Michelle Ockers: Great. And is there anything you tried that didn't work, perhaps something that was still there in the prototype or something that you tested along the way that either for design reasons or for technical reasons just didn't work?
- Naomi Waldron: Yes. So one of our initial concepts was to do a 360 panoramic kind of representation, so rather than having a metaphor of the state of Queensland and that you travel along a journey like that, we had thought about having a scene from the Outback and you can spin around 360 degrees and in two directions you have the track that just disappears into nowhere and then you have other, other things in the scene. And we decided not to do that for technical reasons. And in the end, I'm kind of glad that we didn't cause I think that's the design that we came up with was much better anyway. So yeah, wait, there's, I think, you know, there is so many design decisions that we discarded along the way and that's just part of creative thinking and creative work I think is the discarded ideas along the way.
- Michelle Ockers: What did you learn from the prototype, Naomi?
- Naomi Waldron: So we prototyped one module, which was cyber security for a couple of reasons. Obviously it was such a major, major piece of learning content. I think it's around two hours, seat time. We didn't want to have the risk of developing the whole thing and then having potentially usability issues or

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

anything like that. So, and also the cybersecurity module was needed earlier than we were going to be able to deliver the rest. So we prototyped, we used it as a prototype and got it in front of real, real new starters, real Queensland Rail employees gathered information around, specifically around our strategy for using the text and the audio.

Naomi Waldron: We needed to kind of tweak that a little bit so that it was really seamless and so that it did, it was supporting people in learning rather than just being text or audio or something like that. So we did play a little bit with how the audio and the text worked on screen, making sure it wasn't too complicated and making sure that it just conveyed what we wanted, what we wanted to convey. I think we had at one point, we had a tiny little animation in that module as well that I think we ended up taking out because it just wasn't adding a whole lot of value. So yeah, we change things along the way.

Michelle Ockers: I remember someone speaking at a conference doing a case study about a program that they had developed an online program several years ago, and he gave a lot of examples comparing different approaches and he talked a lot about cognitive load and not putting too many modes into a piece of learning in one hit. That it was just too much and it didn't really add value. It didn't improve the learning effect of started detracting from it if you try to use too many different modes at once.

Naomi Waldron: Yeah, and another thing that we prototyped was the different types of interactions and how they would work. Because we wanted to use it a quite templated approach just because we have so many pieces of content to develop, but also just for that consistent user experience so that you're never thinking about how do I have to interact with this particular screen? It's just I can figure that out really easily and just get straight into the learning. So that was a good thing to kind of test out as well with the cyber security module.

Michelle Ockers: Yep. And Julian, you spoke at the start a little bit about the cultural aspects of organisation culture and the program, in your view really fitting the organisation culture. How was or how does that come through in the content and in what way does that suit the organisations culture? And Naomi if you want to throw in anything that you've experienced by actually thinking through designing that as well. But maybe if we start with you on that one, Julian.

Julian Davis: I think it kind of fit, for new employees at Queensland Rail it starts to set the culture straight away. We have a very big culture on safety. Safety is very, very important for us and the All Aboard induction actually focusing quite heavily on the safety aspect of it so that that cultural side of it gets introduced very, very early in someone's career at Queensland Rail. Which is really, really important, really important. And the design aspect of that comes, as Naomi was saying, when you start with the fit for work and then you move through and we've got rail safety awareness in there as well. There's quite a lot that fits into the culture and we talk about the culture a lot. There is quite a big culture here at Queensland Rail, which has, you can see that in, in the induction program that it starts to embed that culture very, very early.

Naomi Waldron: Another thing that we specifically were looking to target was to make people aware that even if they're not, even if they don't particularly find a good fit in their existing role when they start within the organisation, there are many different pathways and many different roles that they can take on. So that was a really strong message that we wanted to get across as well in terms of showing people all of the different roles and all of the different areas.

Michelle Ockers: Okay. And you had lots of stories in there to bring that to life as well, right?

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

Naomi Waldron: Yeah, absolutely.

Michelle Ockers: Yep. Julian, the program was launched in October 2018 around 14 months ago. As at the time we're having this conversation, have you needed to make any updates or changes to the program in that time?

Julian Davis: We have, we have, so we have made, so we're now on an annual review basis because it is such a large application. The project around making changes to it is quite long. It takes about six months because there are so many stakeholders involved. So we have gone through one review process. We have, with the All Aboard refresher because that we have questions in there. We're actually changing the questions every year on a three yearly cycle to keep it alive. So because this is done every year by everybody, we, we want the questions to be new and fresh and relevant to things that are happening at that particular time in the organisation. So that's what we're about to go through the next iteration of that, which kicks off early in the new year. So it's quite a big project because it is so big. So yes, changes are ongoing. And continuous improvement is always happening.

Michelle Ockers: It's good to have that, that sort of annual review process in place so things don't get out of date. Particularly for a program that's being used so much.

Julian Davis: Yes. Yes.

Michelle Ockers: We talked briefly about the experience of people joining the organisation using the program and you spoke about some of the feedback you've been getting. What do people at Queensland Rail say about the program?

Julian Davis: Probably the most common feedback I get is just how easy it is to use and that's credit to easyA is that, is the interface is, it's consistent and it's easy. So from, from the adult learning perspective, it's very easy to pick up, big buttons, very simple, click next, activity or conditions in there that you can't until such time as narration to finish or animations or layers have been showed you can't progress. That's... That design is, is I think is what's feeding the feedback to say that it is so easy to use and I think yeah, that's, that's the biggest feedback that we're getting, that it is just so easy to use and they do. There's a lot of information to take in. I'm not denying that when you've got, you're in the seat for two hours. There's a lot to take in, but people are, yeah, they're quite positive about it. It's been really good actually. Really good.

Michelle Ockers: And in terms of tips then to others who might want to move their onboarding online or I guess be a little bit creative about how they design a program and the concepts they include, what tips would you give to any listeners who are in either of those situations? So let's just start with that move. Initially we'll take them one at a time to move from paper-based or something where there is very little of the content online to going to more of an online strategy for onboarding. What tips would you give them, Julian?

Julian Davis: Yeah, I would probably say to know your outcome before you start. So almost a working backwards, know what it is that you want and then work back from there. In Queensland Rail's perspective, they knew what they already had and wanted to digitize it and make it a much, much more compliant. A much more easy process to do. They knew what the outcome was first. So if you understanding the onboard and induction is an employee's first impression of the organisation. So it needs to be good. So understanding that from the outcome purpose first will have that right impact on day one when they do it.

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

- Michelle Ockers: Yeah. And that that speaks to the design as well. And the tips you give people who design it. So it's the first impression of learning in the organisation, so you want to make it a great experience for them.
- Julian Davis: It does, it sets the benchmark for future learning. Yes, yes.
- Michelle Ockers: And Naomi, what tips would you give to anyone out there who wants to move their onboarding online or simply to create a better experience for their people and maybe do something a bit more creative in the way that you have done with this program.
- Naomi Waldron: So I suppose it's a little bit connected with Julian's, but a little step along. So once you do know what it is that you're wanting to do, when it comes to working with your different stakeholders, I think communicating that clearly is really important. And start, don't start from the content, start from the perspective of participants and really advocate from their perspective so that it's not about your content, it's not about your information, it's about the learners and what will actually help them. So yeah.
- Michelle Ockers: That's great advice. I have one final question that I like to ask guests and could you share with us one resource that you find valuable for your professional development and seeing we're with you Naomi, let's start with you on this one.
- Naomi Waldron: So mine's not a particular resource as such, but it's traveling and conference presenting is probably my preferred professional development method for myself. So one thing there's nothing lack a critical deadline to make me motivated to do the necessary research and the necessary deep thinking about a particular topic. So my method is I'll put in a proposal for speaking and about something that I think is going to be of interest to other people. And then and then go, Oh no, now I really have to do this.
- Michelle Ockers: I understand you've been accepted to speak at the AITD conference in March 2020 looking forward to seeing the results of that.
- Naomi Waldron: Exactly. Exactly. So that's the latest. That's the latest one. But yeah, so I think having an audience is really important. So the thing about it is that you can't just, it gives you a constraint. You know, what's going to be interesting to other people, not just to me and what and what can I meaningfully convey within my little slot that I'm able to say something. And I find having the, the concern, the design constraints or most of that helps me think really clearly about different aspects of my work and reflect on that and come up with hopefully some new concept that helps me in my professional development. So that's my strategy.
- Michelle Ockers: Sure - makes you realize where the gaps are in your own knowledge when you have to share something and provide some value for someone else. Right?
- Naomi Waldron: Yeah, that's right. Yep.
- Michelle Ockers: Yep. And Julian, how about yourself? What's a resource you find valuable for your professional development?
- Julian Davis: I guess it's not dissimilar to Naomi and I actually write and share a lot of articles, particularly in the digital learning world, but I come back to, I actually come back to LinkedIn. LinkedIn to me is, is quite a powerful tool when you

Learning Uncut Episode 47

Julian Davis and Naomi Waldron – All Aboard for Engaging eLearning

start following the right people and they're sharing a lot of articles as well. So I learned from, from their articles and I'll also write and publish articles as well, which then I also get feedback from other people that it was, Oh, that's how you do it or can you assist me any further? Which for me is, is, is quite personally satisfying to be able to help people in their digital learning journey and their digital learning and their digital learning world as well.

Michelle Ockers: So putting your thoughts out there creates conversations as well.

Julian Davis: It does create conversations. Yes, yes. Yeah. Which is great.

Michelle Ockers: And if people want to find your articles and have a read where, where do they go to look for your articles? Where do you publish?

Julian Davis: juliandavis.com.

Michelle Ockers: We'll include a link in the show notes.

Julian Davis: Thank you.

Michelle Ockers: Excellent. And we will also include a link to both of your LinkedIn profiles in case any guests would like to follow up on anything we've talked about in today's episode. Thank you so much to both of you for sharing your work and insights with us today.

Naomi Waldron: Thank you.

Julian Davis: Thanks Michelle.

Michelle Ockers: And for our guests. No, for our listeners, well, guests could do this too if you feel so inclined. If you're finding Learning Uncut valuable, please take a moment to rate the podcast and leave a review on whatever platform you use to listen to it, because it really does help in making sure that the great work of our guests can be made available to more people to learn from. So thank you very much and we'll see you in a fortnight.

About Michelle Ockers

Michelle Ockers works with business and learning leaders to realise the untapped potential of learning in organisations. She is an organisational learning strategist and modern workplace learning practitioner. Michelle works with organisations to develop and implement transformative organisational learning strategy, and to build the capability of their learning team. She delivers keynotes, workshops and webinars for learning and broader professional or workforce groups at both public and in-house events. Michelle also mentors learning professionals at all career stages on career planning and professional development.

Michelle received the following prestigious industry awards in 2019:

- Australian Institute of Training and Development Dr Alastair Rylatt Award for L&D Professional of the Year – for outstanding contribution to the practice of learning and development
- Internet Time Alliance Jay Cross Memorial Award – for outstanding contribution to the field of informal learning

Michelle can be contacted at michelle@michelleockers.com.

