



# eFront

Refreshing eLearning...

## What is new in eFront v3.5.2



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# What is new in eFront 3.5.2

eFront 3.5.2 brings a new level of functionality and visual enhancements to an already established learning management system. The most important new characteristics of v3.5.2 are as follows:

## **Customizable first page**

eFront v3.5.2 introduces a new visual interface that helps user build an attractive first-page layout out of several styles. You can add new types of blocks as well and populate them with your own data.

## **Tests improvements**

The new eFront improves the test infrastructure to support past views of the same test, professor feedback on questions, random tests creation at run-time, test pausing, post-test analysis and analytic reports.

## **Skill-gap analysis (Educational/Enterprise versions)**

A new test layer is introduced that can test the user problematic areas and suggest or auto-assign appropriate lessons

## **File management improvements**

With eFront v3.5.2 you can add files to the lesson's repository directly through their URLs

## **Vertical Chat**

eFront v3.5.2 introduces a vertical, always visible chat that can be used in conjunction with the rest of the system.

## **Editor improvements**

Direct embedding of images and an intuitive html mode helps you build content easier, faster and more accurately. Also, a new editor option allows you to attach a PDF document as the content of a unit.

## **Search improvements**

Search has been extended to return relevant files based on metadata searching and more descriptive forum results

## **Quick commands**

Use the search box to issue quick commands from any page inside the system

## **Subscription payments support (Educational version)**

Paypal integration has been extended to support subscriptions on top of one-time payments

## **Better certifications support**

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The new eFront uses Reach Text Format (RTF) files to better control your certifications look-and-feel

### **Unit completion improvements**

Complete units through questions and get immediate feedback on your current lesson status

### **Dashboard improvements**

We have upgraded the user dashboard with new elements and a fancier look-and-feel

### **Speed improvements**

Extended AJAX support throughout the interface to improve performance and response time

### **Other improvements**

Forum improvements, Enterprise edition improvements, Grid improvements, Module upgrade infrastructure, Side-bar improvements, Extended lesson option to better customize your learning environment

# Customizable first page

eFront v3.5.2 includes a state-of-the art front-page customization interface. Through this interface you can select upon 4 basic layouts (*Simple, Two columns left-aligned, Three columns, Two columns right-aligned*) and then re-arrange content boxes according to your needs. Moreover, you can build an arbitrary big number of custom boxes and embed them to the interface. The custom boxes can include any type of multimedia content. In order to re-arrange boxes you can simply **drag-and-drop** them to the desired location on the interface.



Figure 1: Two columns right-align firstpage layout

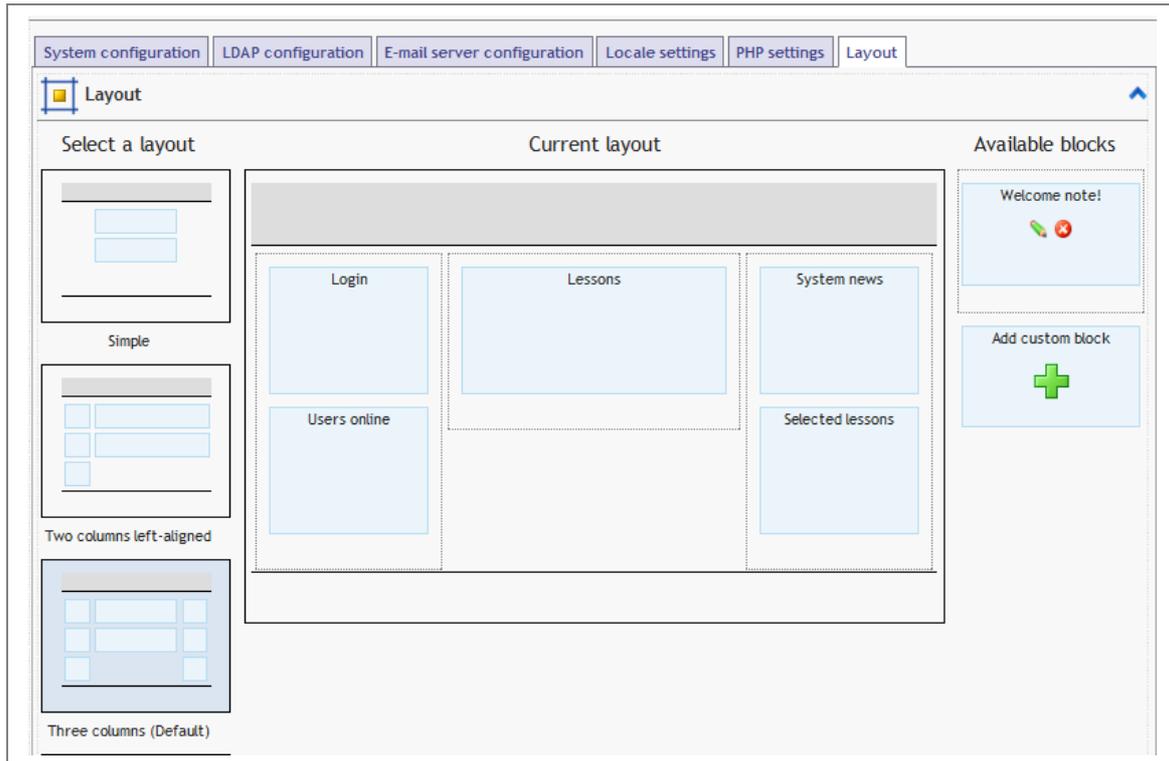


Figure 2: Three columns default layout

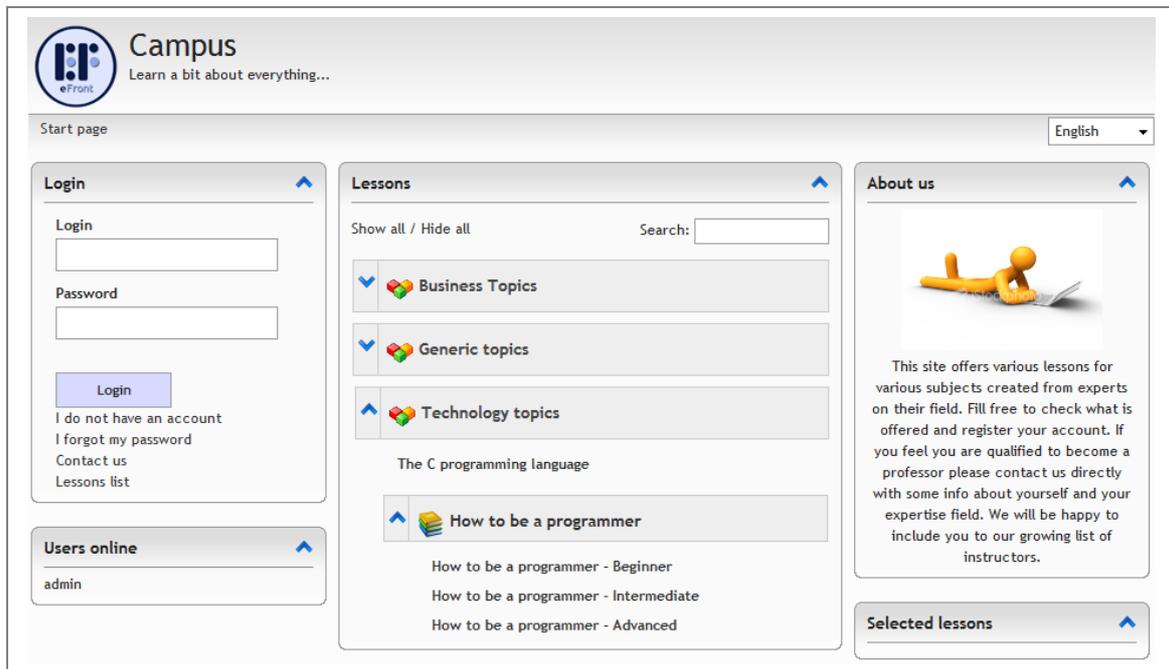


Figure 3: A tailor-made front-page

# Tests improvements

The new eFront version includes several important changes regarding test building. A short list of the additions is as follows:

- A pass score for each test
- Publish option for tests
- Persistent storage for different test re-tries
- Random tests creation from a pool of questions (Select X random questions from a pool of Y questions - on each retry select other questions from the pool)
- Post-test analysis of the results
- Max-min-average score per test/user
- Professor feedback on each answer and ability to change the test score or reset a test try
- Better treatment of open-answer questions
- Ability to pause a test and continue later
- Tests without time limits

The screenshot displays a test interface with several key features highlighted by red arrows and grey boxes:

- Test retries:** A grey box labeled "Test retries" points to the "Redo test" button.
- Pass score:** A grey box labeled "Pass score" points to the "Test score is: 90% Passed" text.
- Test analysis:** A grey box labeled "Test analysis" points to the "Test analysis" button.

The interface shows a test titled "A small programming test" with a dropdown menu for execution details. It indicates the test started at 2008 Nov 27, 11:33:18 and completed at 2008 Nov 27, 11:34:01. The test is done 2 times and can be done 1 times more. The test score is 90% Passed. Below this, there are two questions:

**Question 1 (Weight 0.2) Unit "1. Learn to Debug"**  
Programming can be taught directly through good programming books  
 True  
 False  
Score: 100% | Score in test:  $100\% \times 0.2 = 20\%$

**Question 2 (Weight 0.2)**  
Which of the following are...  
 SVN  
 CVS  
 ERP  
 HCD  
 NGI

**Explanation:** SVN= Subversioning  
CVS= Concurrent Versioning System

Figure 4: Tests improvements from the user perspective

A small programming test (Jump to execution: #2 - 27 Nov 2008, 11:34:01)

The test started at 27 Nov 2008, 11:33:18 and completed at 27 Nov 2008, 11:34:01. It was completed in 43s.

The test is done 2 times and can be done 1 times more

Test score is: 90% Passed

Redo test | Test analysis | Add feedback | Reset this test execution | Reset all execution status

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**Question 1** (Weight 0.2) Unit "1. Learn to Debug"

Programming can be taught directly through good programming books

True  
 False

Score: 100% | Score in test:  $100\% \times 0.2 = 20\%$  | Add feedback

**Test control options**

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**Question 2** (Weight 0.2)

Which of the following are source control systems

SVN  
 CVS  
 ERP  
 HCD  
 NGI

**Question control options**

Explanation: SVN= Subversioning  
 CVS= Concurrent Versioning System

Score: 100% | Score in test:  $100\% \times 0.2 = 20\%$  | Add feedback

Figure 5: Tests improvements from the professor perspective

## Skill-gap analysis (Enterprise Edition)

The skill gap tests functionality can identify lack of skills and to propose assignments of lessons and courses that would best cover this gap.

The skill gap analysis comprises the core of the entire functionality, by showing the user's estimated skill possession according to his results on the particular skill gap test. A skill is supposed to be possessed by a user, if his total score on the test's questions associated with that skill is higher than a threshold.

Skill	Score	Threshold
Algorithms	66.67%	65.00 %
Knowledge of course History course	0.00%	65.00 %
Knowledge of lesson Greedy algorithms	66.67%	65.00 %
Knowledge of lesson Internet basics	33.33%	65.00 %

General Threshold: 65.00 %

Figure 6: Skill gap analysis

The analysis then maps the missing skill set to the skills offered by courses and lessons. The higher the number of common elements between these sets (missing skills to lesson offered skills and missing skills to course offered skills) for each lesson and course, the higher the position this lesson or course will receive in the corresponding proposed assignments table, showed in the second tab. As displayed in the two pictures below, lesson "Internet basics" and course "History course" are proposed for assignment for this student according to his results shown in the previous picture.

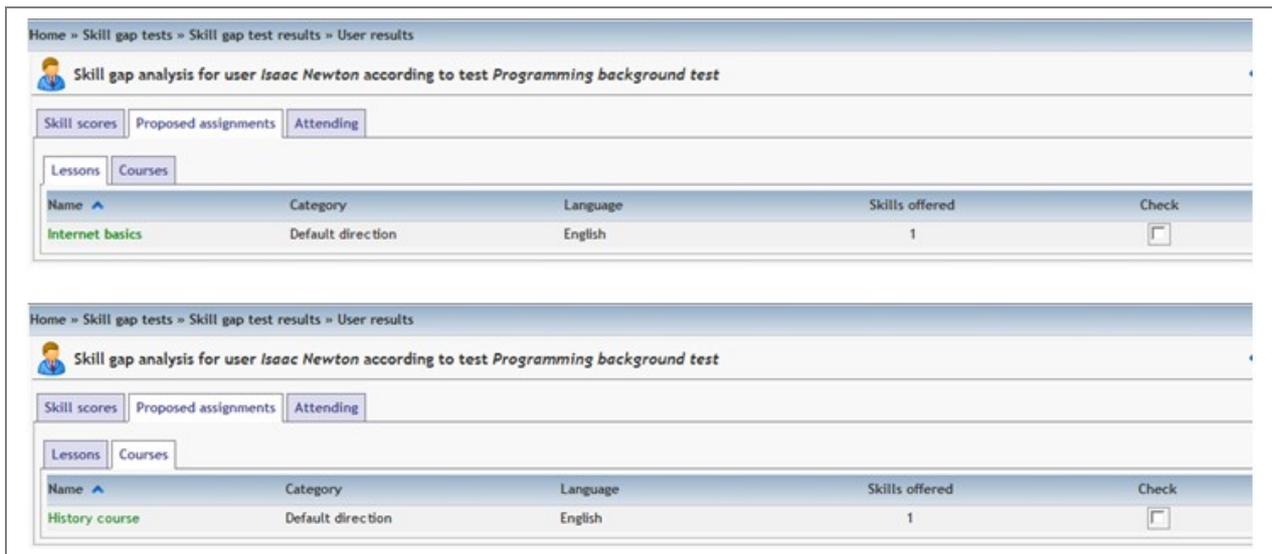


Figure 7: Lessons/Courses assignment proposal based on skill-gap analysis

## Vertical chat

The vertical chat replaces the standard chat that was available in previous versions of the system. After extensive usability tests we decided that an embedded chat solution that would allow people to continue working throughout the environment while at the same time would be able to communicate was the proper solution for systems like eFront. The vertical chat is located on the side-bar on a dedicated sub-tab. When entering a lesson you are automatically enrolled to the chat-room of that lesson. People can change their active room easily.

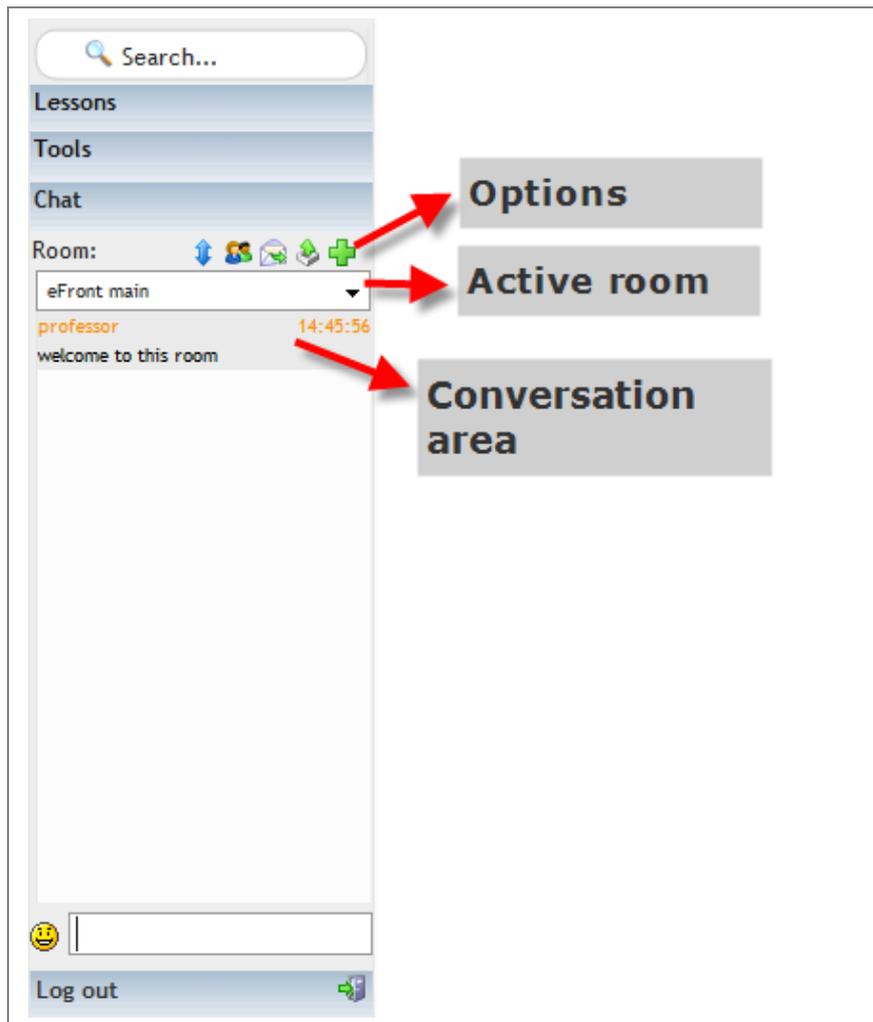


Figure 8: Vertical chat

# Editor improvements

eFront v3.5.2 supports the direct uploading of files through their URL as depicted on the following screenshot. The files are being transferred from their internet address to the internal file system.

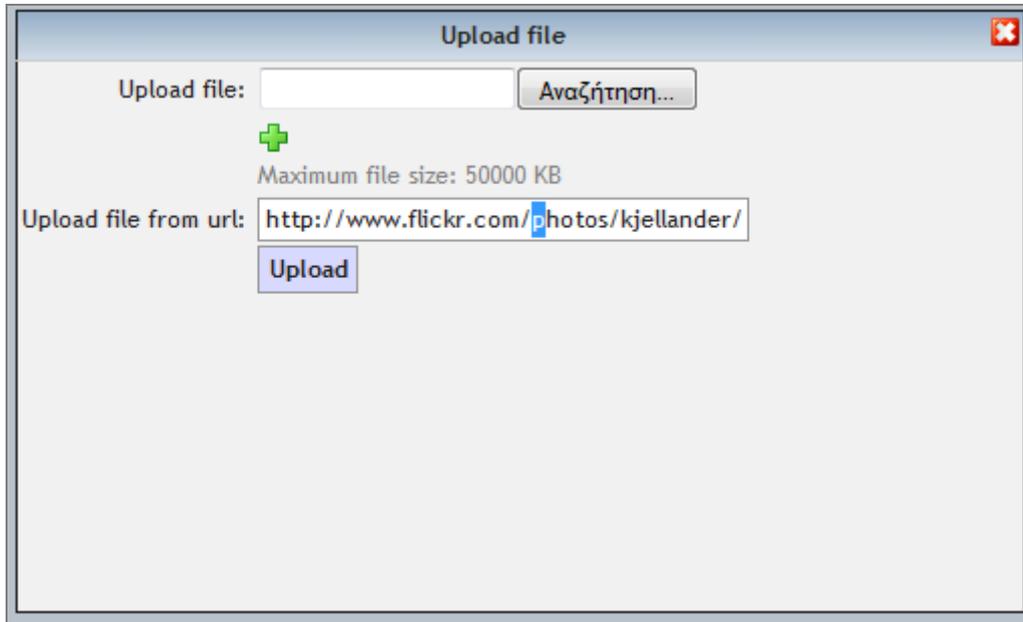


Figure 9: Uploading a file through its URL

eFront v3.5.2 includes new handy tools on top of the visual editor.

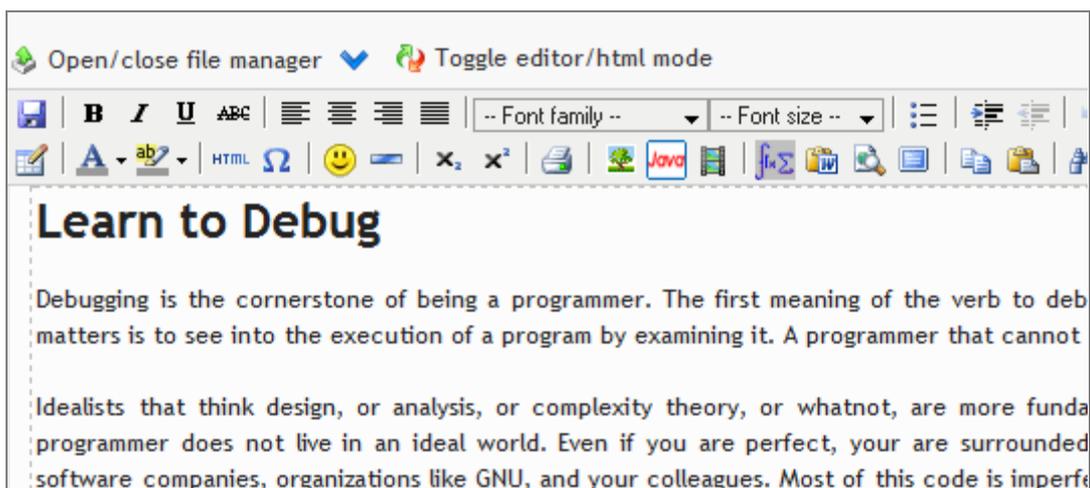


Figure 10: Handy embedded options to the editor

With eFront v3.5.2 you can embed images (or links to other documents) to your content in a very straightforward process.

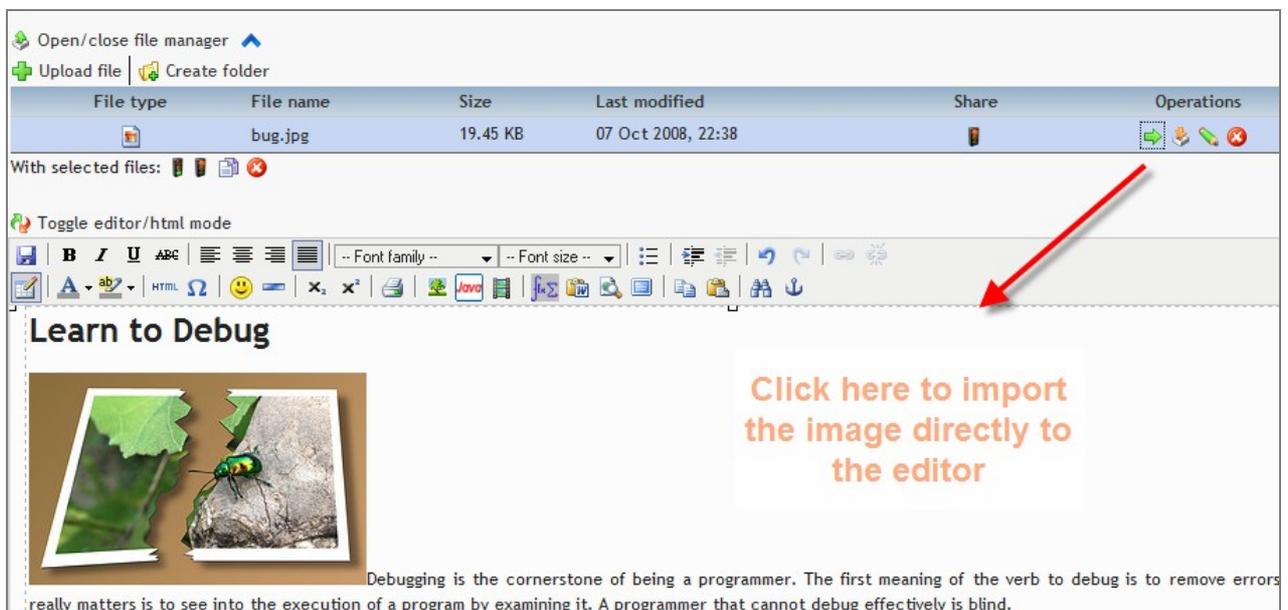


Figure 11: Directly importing an image to content

# Search improvements

Search has been improved to find relevant items to lessons, personal messages, forum, files and announcements.

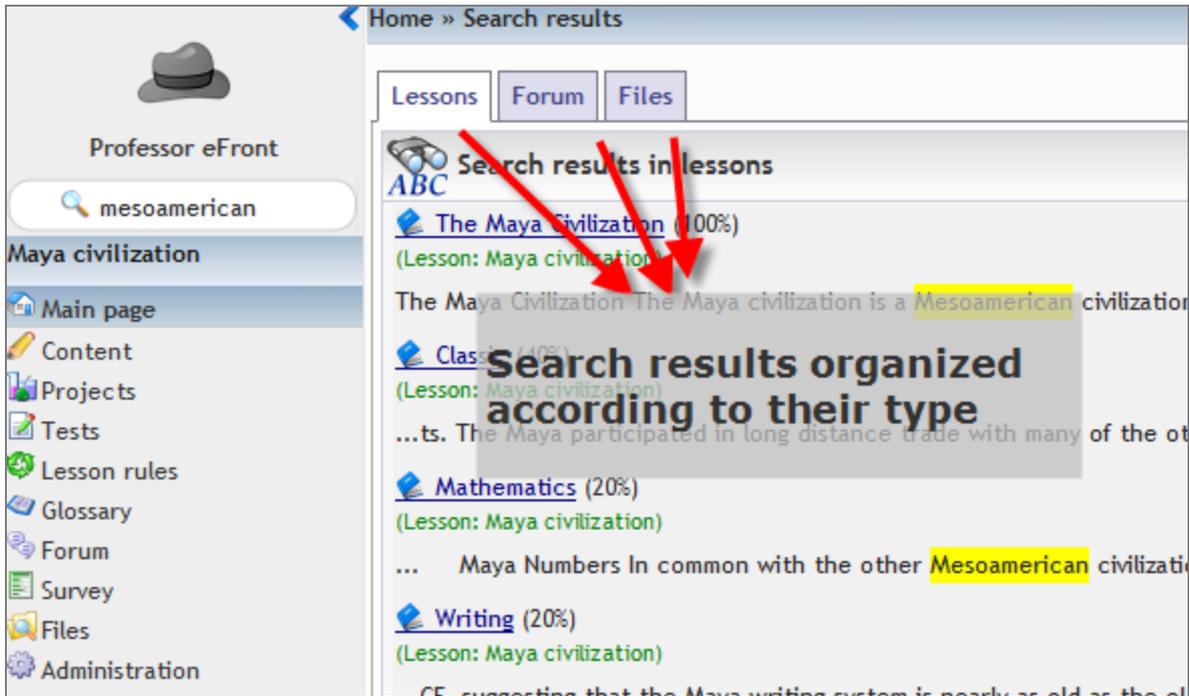


Figure 12: Search results organized in tabs

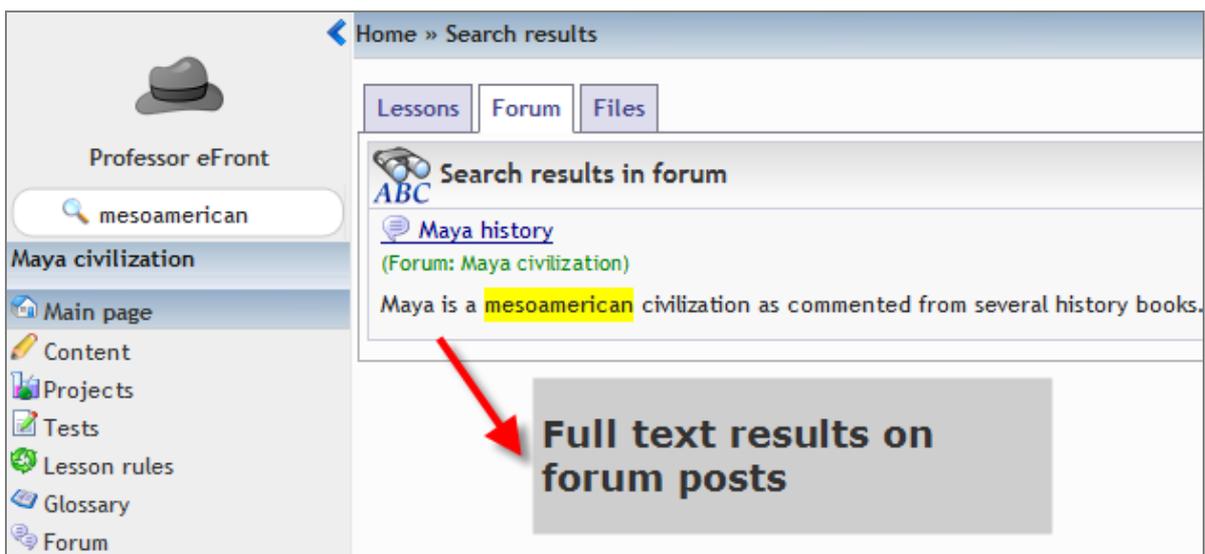


Figure 13: Full text results on forum posts

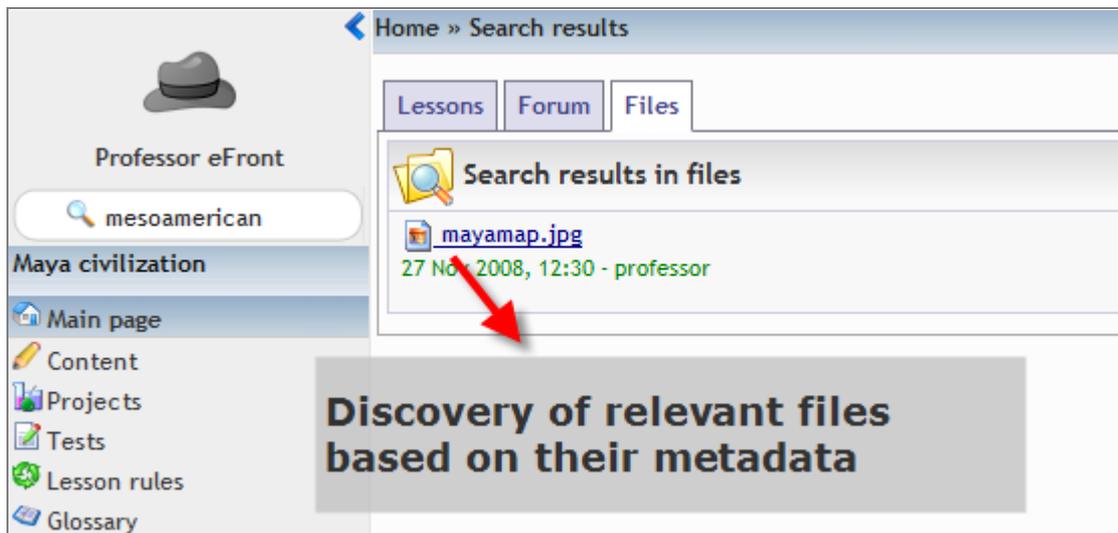


Figure 14: Finding relevant files by searching on their metadata

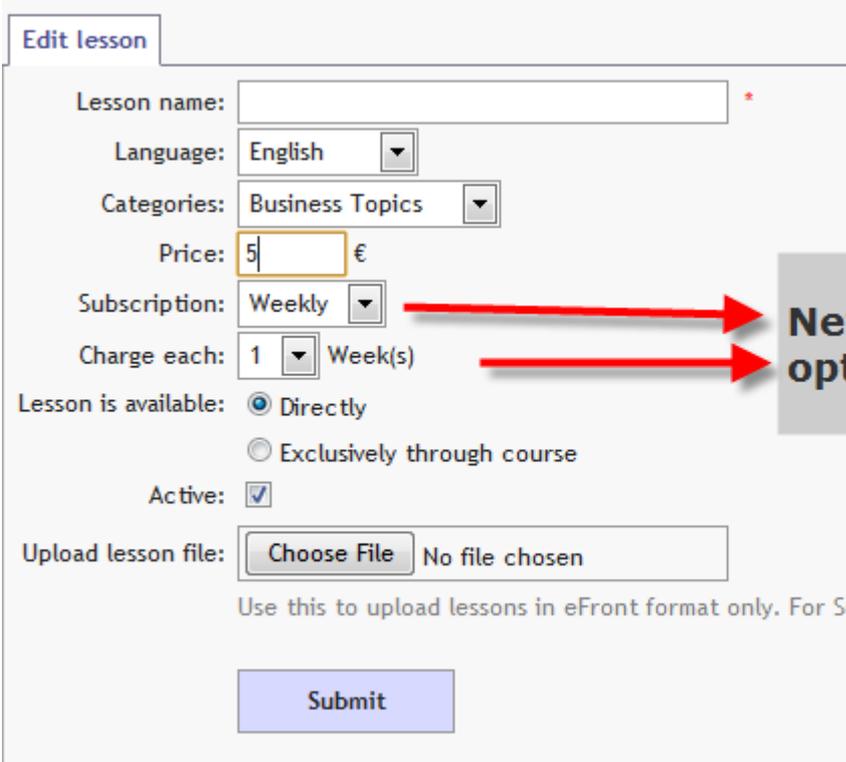
## Quick commands

Quick commands offer a handy way to do common tasks by directly issuing the command through the search box that is available throughout the interface. The supported commands for administrators and professors are as follows:

Administrator	Professor	Student
add user add lesson edit lesson <name> administration lesson <name> edit user <login> add category edit category <name> add course edit course <name> reports system    system reports reports lesson <name> reports user <login> reports test <name> send message	edit unit <name> edit project <name> score project <name> edit test <name> preview test <name> edit question <name> reports lesson <name> reports user <login> reports test <name> select lesson <name> ....(inside a lesson) add unit add project add test add rule add glossary add question one add question empty add question many add question dev add question match add question true add question upload file send message	select lesson <name> send message

## Subscription payments support (Educational edition)

The payment support on eFront Educational has been extended to support subscriptions. When creating a lesson you can decide if it should be acquired through a subscription and the subscription period (day, week, month). The whole process is straightforward for the end user with minimum hassle while it keeps offering superior integration results.



The screenshot shows the 'Edit lesson' form with the following fields and options:

- Lesson name:
- Language:
- Categories:
- Price:  €
- Subscription:
- Charge each:  Week(s)
- Lesson is available:  Directly,  Exclusively through course
- Active:
- Upload lesson file:  No file chosen

Two red arrows point from the 'Subscription' and 'Charge each' dropdowns to a grey box on the right containing the text 'New subscription options'. Below the file upload section, there is a note: 'Use this to upload lessons in eFront format only. For S' and a 'Submit' button.

Figure 15: Subscription options

## Better certifications

The new eFront supports the creation of certifications through rich text formats (RTF) documents. This allows people to build a multimedia rich template for their certifications using programs like Microsoft word.



Figure 16: Improved Certification Creation

# Dashboard improvements

The lesson dashboard has been upgraded to be more attractive and easier to navigate. The new dashboard includes a static horizontal bar with information about the lesson and basic action buttons. Moreover, we have added user-friendly time indications for new happenings inside the lesson.

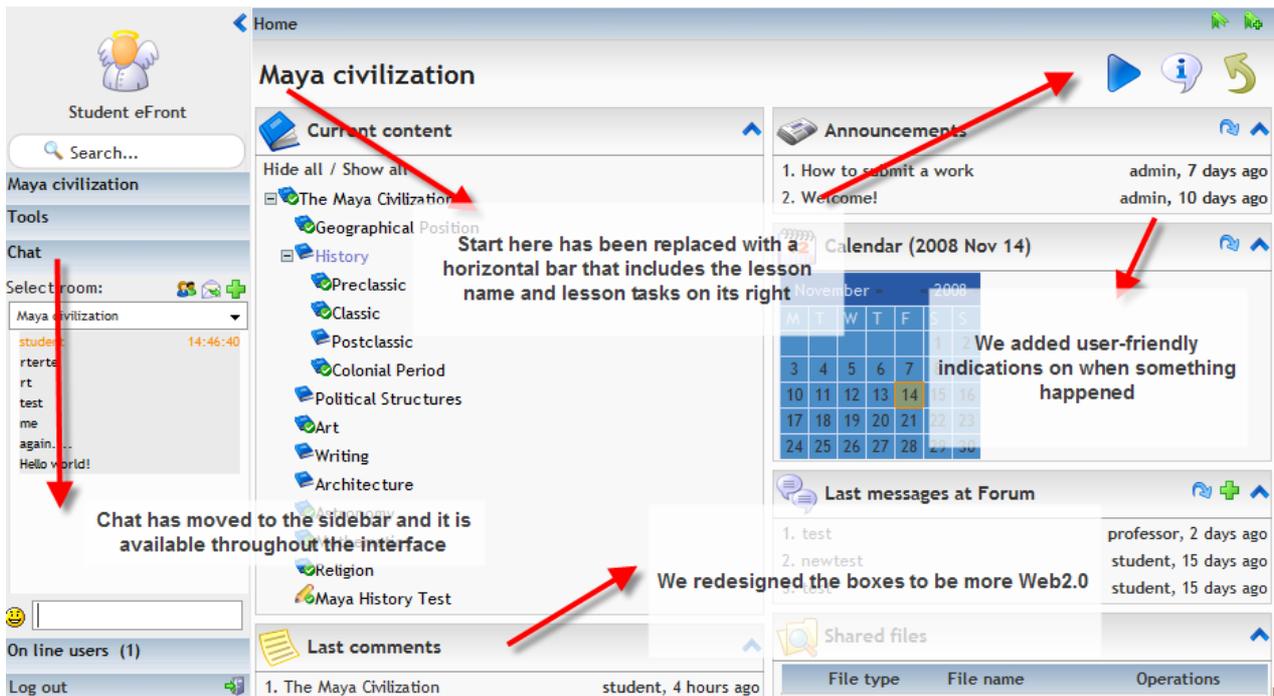


Figure 17: Improvements on lesson dashboard

# Unit completion improvements

Unit completion has been extended. Now, unit can be completed through a dedicated question instead of simply clicking the complete unit icon. We have also extended (through ajax) the direct visual feedback when a lesson is completed or the lesson progress has been altered.

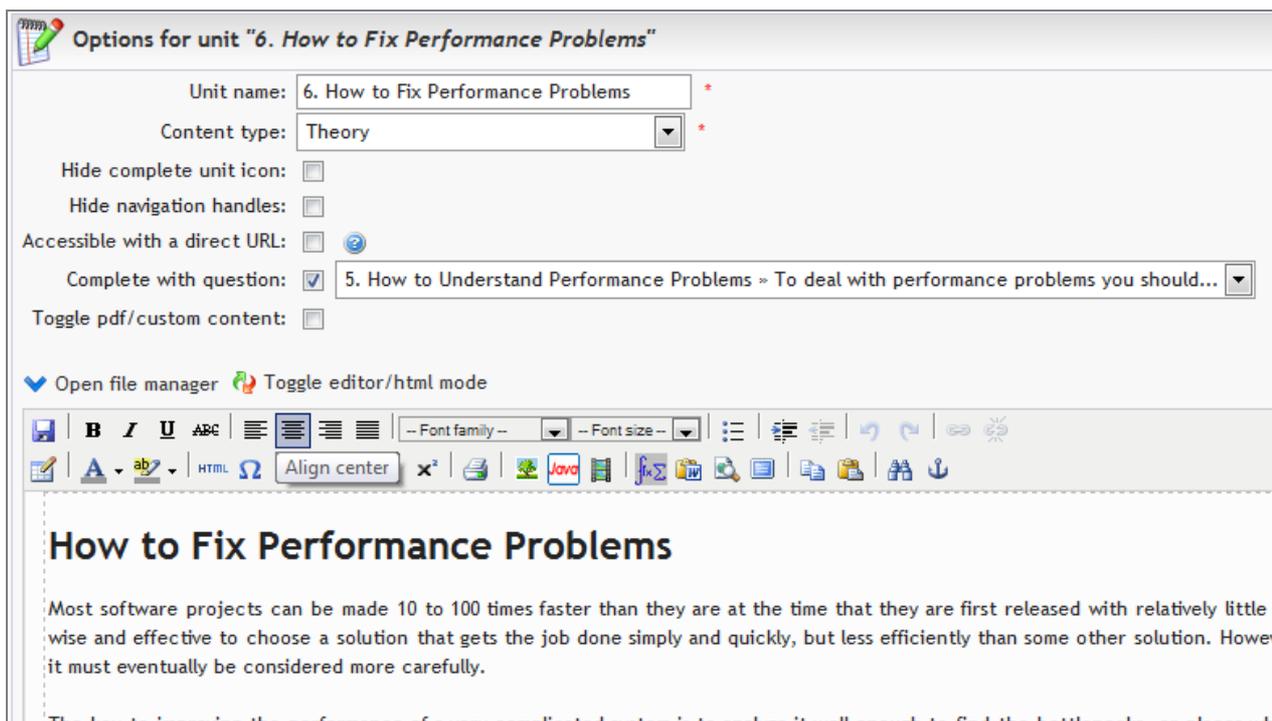


Figure 18: Mapping a question with the completion of a unit (professor)

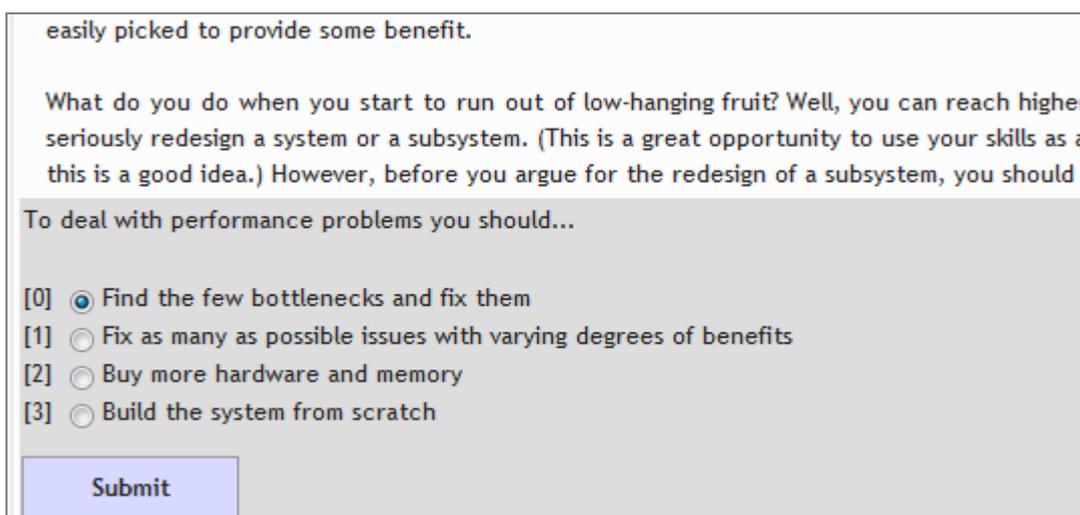
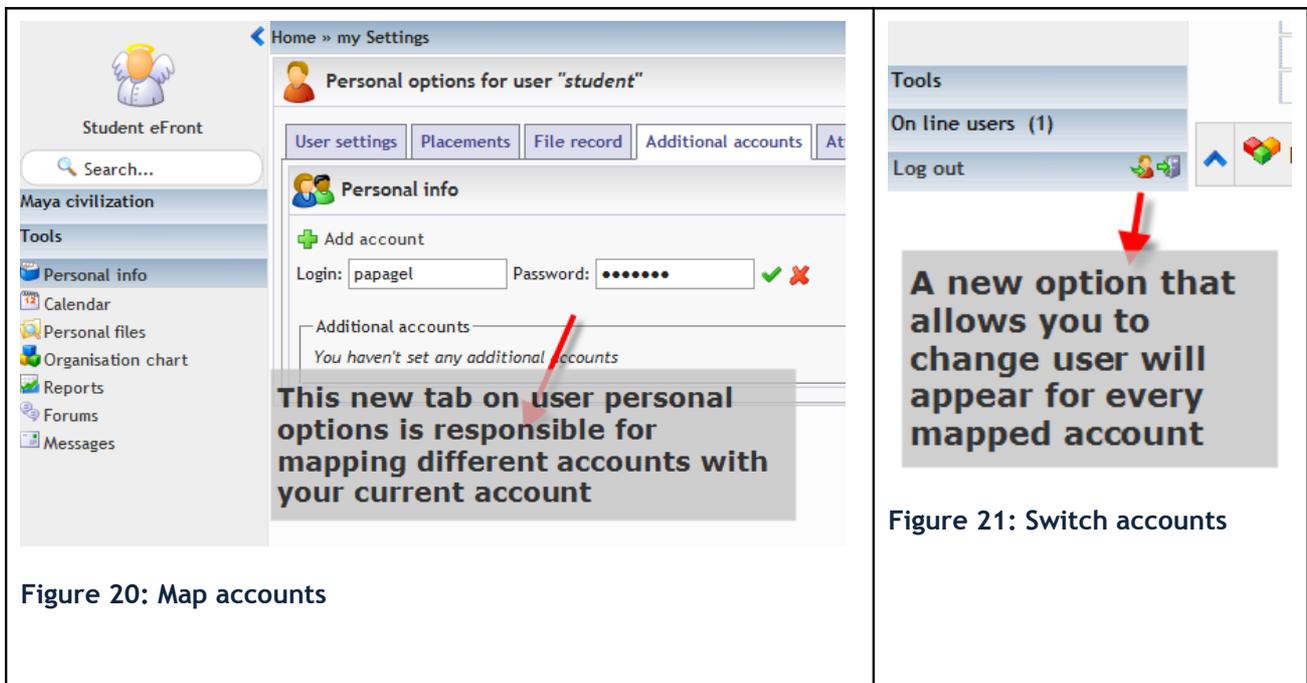


Figure 19: Answering a question to complete a unit (student)

# Hot Swap between accounts

Here is a common usage scenario - You have an account as professor and one as student and you need to check how the lesson looks-like for the user. Just map the professor account with the student (and the student account with the professor to be able to get back). From within a lesson click this icon - it will transfer you to the same lesson on the student interface. Click it once more to get back to where you were.

The mapping between accounts does not work immediately for both ends. For example if you map professor with student then the student is not automatically mapped with the professor. This offers great flexibility on how this feature will be used.



## Other improvements

eFront v3.5.2 includes small improvements on every aspect of the system. We have collected hundreds of user generated comments to improve the system's usability, the end-user experience, its look-and-feel and the subtle details that (many times) make a big difference. Among the things that got improved are the Forum (interface and functionality improvement), the Data Grid (functionality improvements), the side-bar (functionality improvements), the modules infrastructure (upgrade module functionality), the lesson administration (more characteristic to add/remove from the lesson), the statistics (clarity improvements), the files management (metadata for files), the pdf usage inside the system (option to upload a pdf file as the unit content), new options on the *system-options* (change the width of side-bar, include a custom footer), and the system speed (we extended AJAX use whenever performance is an issue)

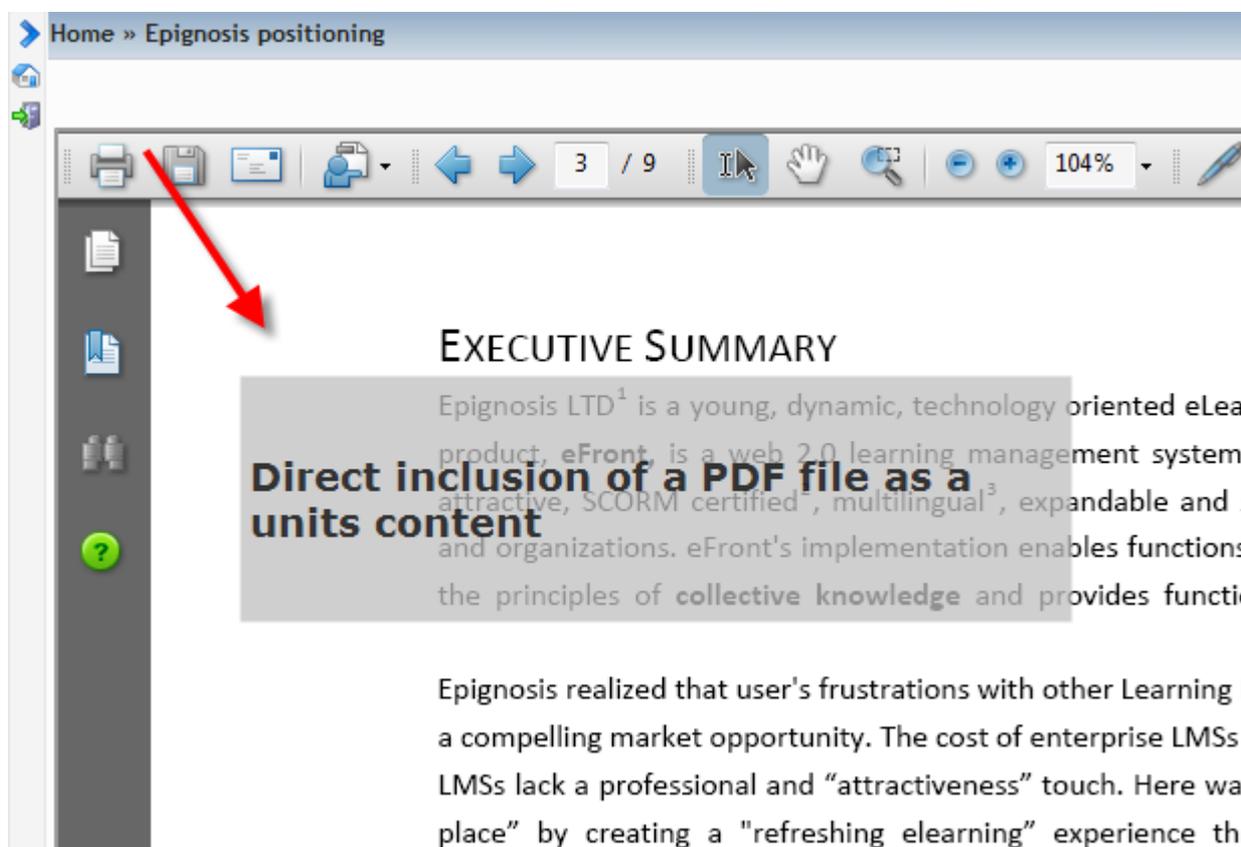


Figure 22: Using a PDF as unit's content