

Screencasting Tools to Teach Distance Education and Promoting Your Lessons via Social Media

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Introduction

Hidden communities also include students located on another campus or students who are unable to attend an online class due to time conflicts. However, these hidden populations can be reached through distance education initiatives that allow students or the general public to view recordings of the sessions for later viewing. There are a range of screencasting tools available that can then be uploaded to free hosting sites. These tutorials can be promoted via social media websites to raise awareness of your work. These tools introduce a larger audience to you and the screencasts can also be your online portfolio.

What is Screencasting?

Screencasting software programs allow you to capture your computer's screen(s), mouse movements, keyboard input, audio, and webcam input. You can then edit these recordings into a video that you post online for your students. Some programs allow you to add interactive features like quizzes and external links within the video.

Screencasting Tools

- **Camtasia:** <http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia/>
 - 30 day free trial
 - Windows and Mac compatible
 - \$299 per license
 - Help via email, video tutorials, Twitter, forums
 - Best for just recording screen with little interactivity
- **Captivate:** <http://www.adobe.com/products/captivate/>
 - 30 day free trial
 - Windows and Mac compatible
 - \$799
 - Help via email, video tutorials, articles, forums, phone

- Best for creating fully interactive training videos
- **Jing:** <http://www.techsmith.com/jing/>
 - Limited to 5 minutes in length
 - Limited to 2 GB of free hosting space
 - Free version records to SWF only
 - Paid version
 - \$14.95 allows you to upload to other websites
 - Can record from webcam
- **Camstudio:** <http://camstudio.org/>
 - Free to use open source software
 - Windows XP, Vista, 7
 - Help via forum, text file within profile
 - Records screen and audio

What is Livestreaming?

Livestreaming is similar to screencasting except that your screen capture is being transmitted over the internet in real time. The quality of the cast is often lower in resolution and of course, if you get distracted while streaming, your audience will witness it. Some tools listed do not record your computer screen but can be useful for recording discussions. Videos are also recorded and stored online.

Livestreaming Tools

- **Livestream:** <http://www.livestream.com>
 - Free has a 10 GB limit
 - Paid includes 1000 GB and HD quality
 - All editing is done online
 - Can embed recorded videos into your own website.
- **Ustream:** <http://www.ustream.com>
 - Does not record the screen but streams footage from your camera
 - To record your desktop, you will need to upgrade to Ustream Producer or Pro.

- Allows for social media interaction amongst viewers. They can sign into chat by selecting from a number of websites like Facebook and Twitter.

What is Social Media?

The heart of Web 2.0 is the ability for your audience to interact with the content provider. In the earlier days of the web, emails, instant messengers, and guest books were often the only way visitors could contact a site's creator or talk to other visitors. However, the rise of social media has made the internet an interactive, collaborative environment.

As a content creator, you can share your videos for distance education students as well as a general audience. Social media websites allows your tutorials to garnish a worldwide audience with only a limited amount of effort on your part.

Promoting Yourself on Twitter

- Keep your account name short.
- Upload a photo of yourself to be user friendly.
- Google for others in your field and follow them.
- Post often and reply to others' posts.
- Use <http://bit.ly> or other URL shortening websites to keep your posts within 140 characters.
- Try to keep your posts within 120 characters so they can be retweeted (RT) by others.
- Create a hashtag for your tutorial posts and use it every time. E.g. #myvideo
- You can use a free program like Tweetdeck <http://www.tweetdeck.com> to keep track of who is tweeting about your hashtag.

Promoting Yourself on Facebook

- Create a fan page for your work. <http://on.fb.me/alSvoq>
- Be careful in choosing your name for you cannot change it.
- Once you have 25 "Likes," you can request a customized URL.
- Create custom tabs using iFrame (announced 11/3/10)
- Link to your Twitter account so you only have to post once. <http://www.facebook.com/twitter>

Resources

- Camtasia Studio Hotkeys: <http://bit.ly/dgQ71n> (pdf)
- Online Video History: <http://bit.ly/a9vzKR>

- Smashing Magazine's Guide to Screencasting: <http://bit.ly/am0M1k>
- Comparison of screen capturing Tools: <http://scr.bi/bmOA4a>
- 18 free screencasting tools: <http://bit.ly/deGeD0>