

“How to Make the Web Come Alive! Intergrating New Video Technologies into the Web”

Time: 9:45, Tuesday, March 4
Location: Hilton at Easton
Format: Demonstration and discussion, question and answer

Presentation Team:

- Richard James, Video Web Developer, Columbus State Community College
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Workshop Abstract:

This workshop will help educators with little or no experience with web-delivered video consider the potential applications of such for distance learning and traditional courses.

Keywords and concepts: Streaming media, web audio, multimedia, streaming media authoring, Internet Video, Online Video, Web Video, Streaming Video/Audio, Downloadable Video, Webcasting, Netcasting.

Workshop Summary:

Participants will have greater awareness of:

1. How streaming media works
2. What media can be streamed and reasonable quality expectations of such
3. Equipment, software and production skills for successful streaming media
4. Benefits and limitations of streamed and downloaded media
5. Authoring options such as embedding, captioning, indexing and adding URLs
6. ADA and copyright considerations
7. Outlook for streaming media

Considering using web-delivered video and audio in distance-learning or traditional courses? You are not alone. As more educators venture into e-learning, many are seeking ways to deliver content that goes beyond pages of text and downloadable PowerPoint presentations. At our institution, Columbus State Community College, our distance learning options have grown to include over 180 web-based courses delivered via the Blackboard course management system. Although Blackboard provides a useful student portal and template for online course design, the faculty and staff believe it is important for some classes to include multimedia content to complement the basic course syllabus, course information and course materials. To accommodate explorations in this area, we partnered with our IT department to configure a Windows Media Server to deliver streaming media over the web.

Streaming media is one of two kinds of web-delivered media; the other is progressive download. They differ in how they are delivered to the end user and, with some notable

exceptions, are similar in quality and functionality. During this session, we will share our experience in our first year of experimentation and implementation of web-delivered video. We will show examples of different applications of streaming and downloaded media and use them to discuss what it takes to produce such content as well as the strengths and limitations of delivering video via the web.

Among the issues we will share and discuss are:

1. Arguments for against streaming audio and video

Is seeing and hearing a lecture necessarily better than reading it? Does streamed media insert another layer technology between the student and the subject matter? Can web-delivered media be more effective than other methods of reaching students raised in a television-saturated environment? What are you thinking about the strengths and weaknesses of this technology?

2. How streaming video works

Some call streaming video “just in time” video, since it is delivered to the user just before the user sees and hears it on her computer. The process of preparing video for “just in time” delivery has everything to do with how that content will appear to the user. It is a process involving trade-offs in various aspects of aesthetic quality. We will consider the trade-offs made in production, post-production, and encoding for cross-platform delivery.

3. What can be streamed?

Streaming media is a bandwidth sensitive communications channel. If there is not enough room in the pipeline to delivery the quality will compromised or it may not be delivered at all. The compromises one makes to prepare video for web-delivery may render material nearly unusable to the student. We’ll talk about what is likely to work and what isn’t.

4. What equipment do you need?

Preparing streaming media can be as cheap or expensive as you choose to make it. It is possible to take advantage of existing audio-visual and computer tools in your department or on your campus to deliver quality media over the web. We will talk about some of the basic hardware and software needs for web-delivered video and audio.

5. Authoring of web-delivered video

Authoring, in the lingo of multimedia developers, includes the many ways to integrate and dress up your video to increase its functionality, usability and aesthetic appeal. We will look examples of embedding, captioning, indexing and adding URLs.

6. Accessibility and copyright

We are not authorities on the section 509 of the ADA nor the TEACH Act but we can comment on how some of our examples raise issues of accessibility and copyright.

7. Outlook for streaming media in higher education

As time allows, we will touch on issues of technology and public policy that may shape the future of streaming media for higher education.