Academic BRASS

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Video Tutorial Booster: How To Make, Edit, and Publish a Video Tutorial In Under One Hour

Making tutorial videos is one of the most satisfying things I do because it achieves one of my greatest priorities: sharing my knowledge with the greatest number of people at a level of detail that's not always possible in many reference transactions. You can post your videos on your YouTube channel (My business tutorial database videos available here: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBCA6889EBEC202F5), send video URLs in chats for quick responses. and embed your videos in software like LibGuides. Your video may end up on the national website of the vendor itself (http://www.referenceusa.com/Static/VideoTutorials).

So why do some librarians seem reluctant to make videos? The process may seem too time-consuming or involved at first glance. In order to encourage more librarians to make video tutorials, I thought I would share my experiences in making dozens of videos - how to make a script, best practices, editing tips, how to deal with mistakes, and even how to accept your own voice! This article will not get into the differences in video editing programs - software like Camtasia, Captivate or Jing. You can simply apply anything you learn in this article to the software that you use.

The first rule is to have a limited, clear focus to your tutorial. Databases and library websites do so many things that focusing on a specific function is a good idea. Otherwise the video will be ten minutes long (I started out making those). Patrons with a specific question will not know where their question is covered in a long video. Over time, my videos have become shorter and more focused, Don't forget to give your video a clear title and to announce the learning goals at the beginning of the video. Having a caption pop-up with the main ideas helps to reinforce what the viewer should learn.

The next question is to script or not to script? In the beginning a script will probably be necessary. Your voice may sound stilted but it is more important not to pause, forget to mention something or ramble. Later on, scripts become less important as you gain experience.

Now you're ready to begin. Turn off your email so message notifications don't pop up while you're recording the screen. If you have an office door, close it. If there are any non work-related tabs (there wouldn't be, right?) on your browser, close them. Record about fifteen seconds of yourself into the microphone you'll be using, pronouncing lots of words with p's and s's. Playback the audio and adjust the volume level and position of the microphone – many editing programs allow you to even out the volume of pop sounds, but try to minimize this. Know where the pause button is on your editing program (this will become clear in a minute.).

As you begin, it's important not to worry about what your voice sounds like. Just avoid rambling, self-deprecation, long pauses, and saying "uhhh." Use the script if your mind blanks out. If you stumble over a word, simply wait a moment and begin the sentence again - this imperfection can be edited out later. if you get interrupted, mentally blank out or a webpage is slow to load, hit the pause button on your recording software. Unpause when you are ready to proceed. Even after you perform edits, your final video will probably not be perfect. Maybe a pause lingers a touch too long, a transition is jumpy, or you cut off the last microsecond of a word. Leave it - the patrons need the information now, not an artistic masterpiece weeks later.

I make liberal use of captions, arrows with captions and animation like red circles. When beginning the video and stating the goals of the tutorial, a caption that reiterates the lesson brings your point home. Animated red circles or arrows also help keep the user's attention, as well as showing exactly where on the screen to look (remember, they don't know.)

The use of zoom is a controversial matter. Zoom is just that, focusing on a small portion of the screen. I favor zoom because databases' screens are busy and the relevant portion of the screen needs to be magnified. An additional reason to zoom is the use of smartphones with small screens to view your tutorials. Detractors of zoom feel that it is disorienting. Feel free to make your own judgment call.

One common problem is when databases or your library webpage change their interface - rendering your tutorial obsolete! One way around this is not to make tutorials that use more than one database or the library webpage in the visuals (thereby reducing the number of changeable variables). You can edit saved files to remove the irrelevant material but it is not always a smooth process. When making a database tutorial, I typically do not include the process of locating the databases page on the library webpage. Instead, I suggest including a link to the databases page in the description of the video so the patron can access the database.

The most user-friendly and familiar way to present your videos is by creating a YouTube page. It is a familiar interface to most people and is incredibly easy to use. Include a disclaimer in the description of your video that access to this resource is limited to current university faculty, students, or staff. You'll avoid angry comments from the public at large about lack of access this way. YouTube videos contain an embed code that can easily be inserted Into software like LibGuides as well.

Finally, video tutorials look good in performance appraisals! They are evidence of outreach as well as documentation of your expertise in your subject area. The ease in which video tutorials can be used in LibGuides also enhances the quality of your library guides. Once you get experienced in making library tutorials, you will receive thumbs up ratings on YouTube, as well as receiving positive comments. Be sure to include those comments in your performance appraisals.