

Creating Online Tutorials to Reach a New Generation of Information Users

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Background

- No set of standards exists for creating online information literacy tutorials. Therefore, tutorials take many forms. Increasingly, streaming media tutorials created with screen capture software, such as Camtasia Studio or Qarbon Viewlet, are becoming popular.
- Streaming media tutorials have many useful features including: live screen capture of database screens, text in “call-outs,” arrows and circles to highlight important elements, audio narration, and more.
- Streaming media tutorials enhance learning and recall by combining audio and visual elements in a meaningful context. Tutorials are even stronger if redundant elements, such as extra text, music, or sounds are minimized.
- Although many online tutorials have interactive features, such as quizzes and games, there is some disagreement as to whether interactivity improves learning.
- Studies on the effectiveness of online tutorials for student learning have shown mixed results. More studies need to be done which compare online tutorials to in-person instruction. Also, more studies comparing tutorials created in different formats (ex. streaming media vs. HTML) are needed.

Study & Results

- Librarians at Wichita State University have created several tutorials, called “Wutorials,” with Camtasia Studio software. The tutorials are from 3—5 minutes long and demonstrate resources such as the library catalog and subject databases. The tutorials feature live screen capture and audio narration by a subject librarian. Wutorials can be viewed as Macromedia Flash movies on the library’s website.
- This study tested the reactions of undergraduate business students to a tutorial demonstrating the ValueLine online resource. The tutorial was introduced to the students during in-person bibliographic instruction sessions.
- After viewing the ValueLine Wutorial, student took a two-part survey. The survey results indicated an interest in more online instruction alternatives. Of 133 students surveyed, roughly three quarters felt that online instruction was conducive to learning. In the second part of the survey, students were asked to respond with their instruction preferences. Interestingly, face-to-face instruction was preferred nearly two to one over online instruction. This suggests that while conducive to learning, online instruction is not necessarily the ideal for students.

Resources

- View WSU Libraries’ “Wutorials” here:
<http://library.wichita.edu/reference/libraryinstruction/videotutorials.html>
- Camtasia Studio information: <http://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.asp>

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