

Faculty Can Design Media-Rich Online Courses

Can Help

With all the choices students have for reaching their educational goals today, it has become increasingly important for institutions to offer high quality courses in multiple delivery modalities to meet the needs of all students. This includes adult learners, transfer students, and Millennials -those born after 1980 who are comfortable with various technologies and multi-tasking.

For example, mobile phones can keep us connected with text messaging, voice mail, email, searching the web, sending photos and even video. And Web 2.0 tools such as wikis, blogs, podcasts, and social networking sites like Facebook, add another dimension of connectivity and collaboration. In fact, we so rely on media to keep us informed and entertained that it only makes sense to use media to enhance instruction, create interactivity, and build community among learners. These factors redefine the way we teach and learn today.

But the fact is that even experienced classroom instructors require assistance to get their materials ready for online delivery. And colleges have found that instructors moving to online teaching will benefit from design templates, academic quality standards and rubrics, integration of rich media, and participation in the instructional design process.

Ultimately, no matter the delivery mode, the goal is still to reach every student and enhance the learning experience.

To ensure consistent quality in online teaching and learning, faculty should be competent in course design, pedagogy, asset management, computer literacy, and in the use of course management systems. But instructors aren't always aware of the tools they can use to quickly and easily develop and enrich their



BY CHERYL CHAPMAN

INSTRUCTIONAL DESIGNER,
INTERNATIONAL TOUCH

online courses. Finding adequate resources for faculty is half the battle for the instructional designer, especially when forced to work within budget constraints. With the exhaustive list of tools available, the designer must research and test the options that will fit best with the needs of the students, faculty, curriculum and institution.

Content creation tools such as Dreamweaver, Flash, PowerPoint, and SandVox offer faculty and instructional designers a way to author online content, but for many the learning curve can be steep.

One considerably user-friendly authoring tool is SoftChalk LessonBuilder. This program allows instructors, content experts or designers to create professional, interactive web pages without knowing HTML code. It is designed to work as easily as a word processor. Features of SoftChalk LessonBuilder include pop-up text annotations, self-assessment quizzes, and interactive learning games and activities.

Online libraries and repositories can also be easily accessed from within the software interface using a federated media search tool. The instructor can then package the lessons for delivery via CD-ROM or publish online course pages up to the Blackboard course management system with a simple mouse click.

To further assist faculty in building effective lesson modules, instructional designers will frequently demonstrate how to integrate learning objects as an integral part of the

learning experience.

As with content authoring, however, it can be time consuming to find the right media for a lesson. Open educational resources (OER) offer one option for faculty looking for learning objects. In addition, the boom in streaming video usage has led to a variety of websites and services including YouTube, Hulu, and TeacherTube (YouTube is the second most widely-used search engine after Google). But tedious search, copyright, and compliance issues continue to plague many of these services.

One proprietary service that addresses all of these issues is the INTELECOM Online Resources Network. This streaming video repository cuts in half the time required to find short-form video clips for enhancing online courses.

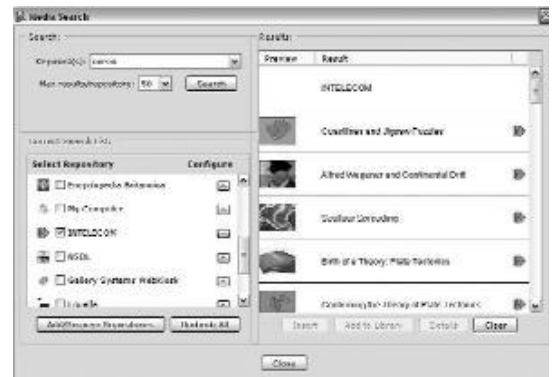
This is accomplished through a well-organized browse interface designed specifically for academic purposes.

Faculty can search a database of more than 3,000 captioned video clips by keyword, or browse and preview clips sorted by academic discipline and by course.

The instructor has the flexibility to add a permanent link to the video clip from the lesson, or access code for embedding a video player directly onto a course webpage.

To streamline the course development process even further, an instructor can search the INTELECOM Online Resources Network using the Media Library feature in SoftChalk LessonBuilder5. There is also a free Building Block for searching the repository available to users of Blackboard 8 and higher.

With the right tools available, faculty will be able to develop quality, media-rich courses with confidence. And ultimately the students will benefit from faculty involvement in the design process. ▲



Content authoring tools such as LessonBuilder make it easy for faculty to create media-rich lessons for their online students.

Energy Use *from page 13, col. 5*

alize 40 percent of those devices in a six-to-one ratio _ six devices are virtualized into one. They can immediately see their electricity bill go down by nearly \$900,000 annually, because the five not being used can now be taken down.

Other than the desire to lower energy costs, there is a larger even more expensive reason to look at

energy monitoring and managing capabilities such as Packet Power. As the volume of data explodes, requiring even more servers, there just isn't any capacity left in data centers to house them. Thus, companies that own their own data centers _ and most do _ must build a new one. To construct a 100,000-square foot data center can cost around \$100 million, said Bruce

Taylor, chief strategist of the Uptime Institute, a research and advisory group for the data center industry professionals. That is a commitment that few would like to make, especially in a recession.

"So the only way we are going to get the capacity we need if data centers continue to grow the way they have been growing in terms of pro-

cessing (power) is by buying back that capacity _ by becoming more energy efficient," Taylor said.

Still, some think Packet Power may have an uphill climb convincing data center facilities engineers of the product's utility.

Jason Schafer, a senior data center analyst at Tier1 Research, who has been briefed on Packet Power's

products but has not tested them, said he has been impressed by its simplicity and ease of use. But he worries that the people running the infrastructure side powering IT equipment are conservative and in general risk averse.

"Because uptime is so important right now, we approach new technologies with a bit of caution," he said. ▲