

Tools for Creating Video Tutorials**

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Ms. Murley reviews and compares two tools for creating video tutorials and presentations, Camtasia Studio 4 and Adobe Captivate 2.

¶1 In my last column for *Law Library Journal*, I discussed ways that librarians can use podcasts to provide research instruction and other library services whenever the patron needs them.¹ However, we frequently need to do more than tell patrons how to do something; we need to *show* them. In this column, I will review and compare two software packages that make it possible for you to combine your audio with video or slides to do just that.

Overview

¶2 Camtasia Studio 4 from TechSmith (www.techsmith.com) records a video of what you display on your computer screen. Adobe Captivate 2 (www.adobe.com/products/captivate) creates a series of screenshots or slides. Both have free thirty-day trials, so you can experiment with the software before buying it.

¶3 To compare Camtasia Studio 4 and Adobe Captivate 2, I experimented with two projects: a short demonstration of subject and keyword searching using a law library online catalog, and a photo tour of the law library using a PowerPoint slide show I had previously created. I also tried various techniques for combining the audio and video: recording the audio portion of the projects at the same time as and separately from the video portion, both working from a script and speaking spontaneously.

¶4 Both products have many features for enhancing videos that I haven't tried, or even discovered, yet. For example, both have captioning tools to make videos more accessible to users with visual impairments. And both offer several options

* *Editor's Note:* "Technology for Everyone" is a regular feature of *Law Library Journal*. In each article, author Diane Murley reviews a tool that can help law librarians do their jobs even better.

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1. Diane Murley, *Podcasts and Podcasting for Law Librarians*, 99 *LAW LIBR. J.* 675, 679–80, 2007 *LAW LIBR. J.* 40, ¶¶ 20–24.

for making tutorials interactive. I was unable to compare all of the features for this short article. If you are interested in using one of these tools, I recommend that you take advantage of one or both of the free trials offered by the companies.

Camtasia Studio 4

¶5 Camtasia Studio allows you to create a video by recording all or part of your computer screen, by recording a PowerPoint presentation, or by importing media files. You can record video and audio at the same time or separately. You can narrate a video you previously recorded, but, as far as I could tell, you can't add video to a previously recorded audio file. I will explain later how I got around this limitation.

¶6 One of the easiest videos to create with Camtasia Studio is a Web page tour; in fact, it was recommended as an initial Camtasia Studio video in the first e-mail tip I received from the company.² In addition to the Camtasia Studio Tips e-mail series, to which you can subscribe when you download a trial copy of the software, there is an excellent collection of Quick Start Videos to which you can connect from the Camtasia Studio help menu (http://video.techsmith.com/camtasia/latest/edu/howto/enu/howto_cs4.html). The TechSmith online "Learning Center" (www.techsmith.com/learn/default.asp) also has written and video tutorials, written documentation, user-to-user forums, and instructor-led training. The user-friendly Camtasia Studio Help file has a table of contents, an index, and a search function.

¶7 For my first Camtasia Studio project, I recorded a short tutorial on subject-searching in the law library catalog. I chose to use a script while I recorded the audio. I tried recording the audio and video at the same time, but looking back and forth between my single-page script and the screens that I was navigating proved to be too much, and both the audio and video were choppy. Recording the video first and then narrating it might have worked if I had more experience with the software, but I found that having to split my attention was too distracting for my first recording.

¶8 I couldn't find a way to add video to my audio recording, so I recorded the audio first and then recorded the video without sound while I listened to my audio recording in order to get the timing right. I then combined the video and audio tracks using Camtasia Studio. To add transitions, I had to split both the audio and video into several clips. I also could have imported several smaller video and audio files and combined them into a single video. An unexpected benefit to having separate audio and video files was that I was then able to edit the tracks separately.

2. E-mail from Camtasia Studio Team to Diane Murley (June 25, 2007, 1:30 CDT) (on file with author).

¶9 Recording a PowerPoint presentation with Camtasia Studio works very much like recording an online demonstration, except that you start with your visuals already prepared as PowerPoint slides. Camtasia Studio records your slides as you move through them, along with any pointing, highlighting, or changes that you make to the slides.

¶10 One of my favorite features of Camtasia Studio is the ability to produce videos in a variety of formats, including Flash and a special iPod/iTunes video format. All editing is done to a project file, which is then produced as a video. The same project file can be used to produce videos in multiple formats. I think that producing research tutorials in a format that can be played on a video iPod will be helpful to students who want to watch the demonstration and follow along with the tutorial on their own computer.³

¶11 TechSmith licenses Camtasia Studio 4 for \$299 for a single user, or \$319 when bundled with SnagIt. Individual academic licenses are reduced by \$20, but multiple-user licenses are reduced 20% to 50%.

Adobe Captivate 2

¶12 Rather than create a single video recording, Adobe Captivate creates a series of screenshots. This approach is better for some types of tutorials and not as good for others. Adobe Captivate has several project types, including Software Simulation for capturing the computer screen, Scenario Simulation for interaction-based training, and projects created by importing image files or PowerPoint slides. There are also templates and wizards for creating other types of projects.

¶13 Adobe Captivate Help has a table of contents, an index, and a search function, and it seems to be pretty user-friendly. There are several Getting Started tutorials to which you can connect from the Help menu. The online Adobe Captivate Support Center (www.adobe.com/support/captivate) has a searchable Knowledgebase, TechNotes, Support Topics, Developer Center, documentation, and community forums. Adobe also offers free online seminars, linked from the opening screen when you open the software, but when I checked the schedule the next available seminar was more than a month away, which didn't help me with my thirty-day free trial.

¶14 For my first Adobe Captivate project, I attempted to reproduce my library catalog demonstration, narrating without a script while I demonstrated subject searching. Because Captivate creates a new screenshot whenever you take any action on the screen, such as clicking on a link or filling in a search box, recording the narration while I recorded the screenshots did not work for me. When I opened the project for editing, I found that the audio was split whenever a new screenshot was recorded, frequently in the middle of a sentence or even mid-word.

3. For examples of research videos in this format, see postings in the Research Weblog (<http://iml2.bc.edu/weblog/irene/>) maintained by Irene Good, Educational Technology Specialist and Legal Information Librarian, Boston College Law Library.

¶15 For my second attempt, I recorded the library catalog screenshots without audio and then added the narration. This was much easier in Captivate than it was in Camtasia, even working from a script, because you don't have to synchronize the narration with a moving video. Just record as much explanation as you need for each slide. When you publish the project as a video, the slides and audio clips will fit together as a single video.

¶16 One feature of the Software Simulation project type that I especially liked was the captions and highlighting that Adobe Captivate automatically adds to the screenshots to explain the action that has been taken (e.g., "Select the Subject item" or "Law Library page appears"). I frequently had to edit these captions to make them more specific, but having them automatically appear helped me remember when an explanation was appropriate. Captions can also be added, reformatted, or deleted.

¶17 Creating an Adobe Captivate video from a PowerPoint presentation is very easy. Simply import the PowerPoint slides and add narration or explanation to each slide as needed. There is no need to go through your slides to create the screenshots.

¶18 Adobe Captivate 2 starts at \$599 for a single user, or \$199 for the education edition.

Comparison

¶19 The choice between these two software packages may turn on what you or your employer is willing to purchase. For individuals eligible for an educational license, Adobe Captivate 2 is cheaper. For other individuals, Camtasia is much cheaper. You may also want to explore free options such as Screencast-o-Matic (www.screencast-o-matic.com), Wink (www.debugmode.com/wink), or CamStudio (www.camstudio.org).

¶20 The next factor to consider after price is whether most of your projects would work better as film clips or screenshots. Camtasia's screen recording shows everything that happens on your computer screen. Captivate's screenshots can be limited to those screens about which you have something to say. Camtasia is probably better for a PowerPoint presentation or a general tour of a Web site or piece of software. Captivate is probably better for tutorials where you want to train someone to do something specific with the Web site or software.

¶21 Finally, you may want to consider your learning curve. I thought that getting started with Camtasia was easier, and I found the tutorials and other self-help tools more user-friendly. I had a little more difficulty getting started with Captivate, partially because of technical glitches and partially because I didn't find the tutorials to be as helpful. On the other hand, once I got started in Captivate, I was able to figure out the features fairly easily. Captivate used to be a Macromedia product, and I have previous experience with Dreamweaver and Fireworks, so the Captivate design seemed slightly familiar. If you don't have much experience with

learning new software, and if you won't have anyone to help you learn, you are probably better off going with Camtasia.⁴

Conclusion

¶22 Either Camtasia Studio 4 or Adobe Capture 2 would make an excellent addition to any librarian's toolbox. Both can help you make demonstrations and tutorials available to library users when and where they need them. And you will save time for both you and your users by having videos available to demonstrate tasks that you explain frequently, so your users can learn how to complete the task immediately when they need it.

4. See Pimp My Tutorial, program presented at 2007 Conference for Law School Computing, Las Vegas (June 20, 2007), available at <http://wiki.cali.org/calicon07/index.php?n=Sessions.343> (remarks of Kerry Fitz-Gerald and Tyler Fox) (discussing the ease of learning Captivate and the strengths of both Camtasia and Captivate).