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Simmons

Instructional Screencast

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<http://screencast.com/t/pbDh64iJ8Je>

Google Drive is popular file storage and sharing application that enables users to store and access files from the “cloud.” This allows users to access their content from any computer and device worldwide. Google Drive also always users to create documents that can be shared and accessed online without the need to download and import into another application. The capability to preform collaborative work within the original document in real-time with auto-saves, and chat tools makes Google Drive a popular storage and sharing tool. The ability to work on documents without having to email others back and forth with different versions makes Google Documents a big time and space saver. Cloud storage tools like Google Drive are very popular, therefore it is important to teach people about them as we move away from external storage devices and towards more “cloud” storage.

As result, I wanted to create a screencast series that focuses on using the tools in Google Drive to share documents. Google drives as a storage tool is wonderful, but the ability to share and work on documents with others in a controlled web environment is an important capability in Google Drive that some people are not aware of. The screencast that I created focuses on Sharing Google documents privately. Although there are more public ways of sharing Google documents, I wanted to show users how to make their content private with others, while learning to control the type of access they want individuals to have. Once users have a basic understanding of how to control access settings, making them more public becomes easier. It is also important for users to understand visibility and access settings because it prevents users from accidently making documents public. This screencast’s goal is to teach users how to share their documents with others and to teach users how to use the access settings to protect Google documents from unintended users.

The intended audience for this screencast ranges from Google account users, students, and anyone looking for a collaborative tool and workspace. Given the online nature of Google drive and other collaborative tools, users should be familiar with the web environment and using other web 2.0 tools. This screencast is geared towards users who have some knowledge of collaborative tools, such as chat and email, but are looking for collaborative tools to speed workflow and accessibility from any location.

The choice of using a screencast to demonstrate this topic is important because it teaches users in an environment they are familiar with. It makes prefect sense to teach users about a collaborative tool, using another web based tool because users are already familiar with these type of technologies. A popular example is YouTube where users are familiar with how to upload, watch, and share videos. Since users are already familiar with using some web 2. 0 tools, users will benefit from screencasting as an instructional tool. One reason is that users have the ability to interact with the screencast in the same space they will use Google Docs. This is beneficial because it allows users to follow along, and interact with their Google documents as they watch and listen to the screencast. The screencast also allows users to go at their own pace. If a user needs to pause, process and reflect, they can without interfering with instruction. Screen casting also gives students the opportunity to repeat steps if necessary until the information is absorb. If users take the opportunity to pause and attempt the procedures mentioned in the screencast, users will create their own segments and address any issues before proceeding .The ability to watch the screencast in an environment that is confortable also encourages users to take their time and not rush through the screencast if they do not understand. The ability for users to control their learning experience is important because as Reace (2007) explains “the more student controlled and self-directed the more effective the tutorial is ( 487).”

Another reason screen casting is beneficial to this topic is because it uses technology as a teaching aid for different styles of learning. Screencasts are audible, viewable and interactive, so many types of learners would benefit. Chodock, T., Dolinger, E., & O'Connor, L. (2009) explain that multi-sensory learning is beneficial because we all to a certain degree have limited memory capabilities that alternative formats could support (25-26). Using a screencast to teach users how to share documents in google drive is a useful method because users can copy the instructor’s procedures step by step while listening and/or watching at their own pace.

In order to plan for this screencast, I needed to figure out who my audience is, what was important for them to know, and what are the goals of this instruction. Leeder (2009) explains that these are the most crucial elements when planning tutorials. I assumed my audience already had a basic understanding of the web, but needed further explanation about sharing Google documents. I wanted to explain all the different visibility and access settings in one screencast, but found that this would be too much information in one session. Too much information can cause cognitive overload, so important details could be missed. Tempelman-Kluit (2006) explains that even if the information is useful, it is not worth the risk of cognitive overload (367). I decided to screencast just private sharing because I felt it would be manageable in one session and I felt it was the most important way to share documents on Google drive. Since I did not want to lose users as I navigated back and forth through the different settings, I wanted users to keep in mind two goals as they watched me. I presented the two goals as objectives because they are observable when acted upon. According to Chodock, T., Dolinger, E., & O'Connor, L. (2009) required goals leads to increased engagement and motivation to complete a task (30). Therefore, I presented them before I started to navigate through Google documents so users would know what to expect in the screencast and then use these expectations to process the information presented in order to repeat them at a later time. At the end I recapped the objectives, and then followed with what was learned from the screencast. This accomplished two outcomes. One was to present information into two manageable segments. According to Tempelman-Kluit (2006) segmenting a learning task allows the information to process more efficiently and reduces cognitive overload (368). Although the majority of my screencast involved demonstration, I also used slides to introduce and end the session because it served as visually cues that segmented the screencast into parts. The second outcome served to confirm what was learned. Tempelman-Kluit (2006) explains that better recall is made when text and mental representations are presented simultaneously because it involves connecting two processing channels (365-366) The use of visual demonstration and audio supported the text during key moments. If there was any confusion, the recap served to simplify key information needed to proceed with the task because the users where able to draw connections from the pervious visuals. Setting goals for instruction is important because it organizes the information and detours from presenting information that is not vital for this session. It also helps create focus and keeps the instructor and students on track. It allowed me to create a screencast that focused on just two objectives that were manageable within a 5-minute slot.

For this screencast, my demonstration involved a procedural approach rather then a conceptual one. I felt that a procedural approach was necessary to accomplish my objectives because my time frame was to short to explain in deeper details the functions and impact that Google drive has on other types of cloud sharing tools. Such discussions are suitable for longer sessions with a different set of objectives than mine.

References

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