

## Delivering Information to Students 24/7 with Camtasia

*This article examines the selection process for and use of Camtasia Studio software, a screen video capture program created by TechSmith. The Camtasia Studio software allows the author to create streaming videos which gives students 24 hour access on any topics including how to order books through interlibrary loan.*

How does one engage students in the library research process? In my brief time at the Downtown Phoenix campus library of Arizona State University (ASU) I have found a software program that allows librarians to bring the classroom to the student. Screen capture programs allow you to create presentations and publish them for students to view on their own time. Instead of telling students how to do something, we need to show them.<sup>1</sup> Recent studies show there are numerous benefits to using streaming video in higher education. Students that receive streaming video instruction as well as traditional instruction show dramatic improvement in class.<sup>2</sup> This article takes a look at how I selected one software program and created a streaming video using the application.

I examined three software applications that help create video tutorials and presentations: Cam Studio, Macromedia's Captivate, and

TechSmith's Camtasia Studio. I first experimented with Cam Studio, which is open-source software. There are limitations to what you can do with software that is free. The screen size is too small and the file size it can create is limited. Macromedia's Captivate is good if you want to create a series of screenshots with accompanying audio. I did not choose this streaming video program because I was unsure of the software's capability, and I had no one to provide technical support.

The third choice, the open-source Camtasia Studio, was the software I selected. There were several reasons why I preferred this software. I had more familiarity with it, and the software is very easy to load and is user friendly. It also has the ability to record a video of everything that is happening on your computer screen.<sup>3</sup> Another reason I selected Camtasia Studio was because of the availability of an ASU software technician who had experience editing the streaming video. Most users view Camtasia's video through Adobe Flash, but the program also can produce Windows Media, Quicktime, DVD-ready AVI, iPod, iPhone, RealMedia MP3, WEB, CD, Blog, and animated GIF formats.<sup>4</sup> Camtasia performs screen captures in real time. You are able to simultaneously use slideshow software, navigate to a website, and narrate step-by-step instructions.

The full version of Camtasia Studio runs around \$300. In addition to the software program, you also must have a combination headset and microphone. A stick microphone will work, but the combination headset will help eliminate any noise that can be picked up by a stick microphone. I purchased a Logitech Extreme PC Gaming Headset for about \$20. When you purchase the Camtasia license online at <http://www.techsmith.com/>, the customer service department will e-mail you the access code along with a link from which you can download the software. The CD-Rom loaded with the Camtasia software

arrives about ten days later.

My first Camtasia Studio project was a tutorial on how to use the university's interlibrary loan system. Here are the basic steps I took to create a streaming video:

1. *Preproduction.* This involves the creation of a script.
2. *Production.* The actual capturing of the video and audio content. Have all websites and programs open and minimized at the bottom of the screen in order to easily select them during the video capturing.
3. *Postproduction.* This is the most time-consuming and involves editing the video and compressing the file for delivery to users.
4. *Publishing.* Posting the video to a Web server and assessing the material's success.

To see the full 3 minute 53 second streaming video "How to Order an Article that ASU Does Not Own" go to <http://www.asu.edu/lib/tutorials/illiad/index.html>.

## Implementing Camtasia Studio

Once Camtasia Studio is installed on your computer, double click on the Camtasia Studio icon. It will bring up a Welcome window where you can select from the following (see figure 1):

- start a new project by recording the screen
- start recording a PowerPoint presentation
- start a new project by importing media files
- open an existing project

I have selected "start a new project by recording the screen."

On the left hand menu there is a task list, and you can select one of the

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Figure 1. Welcome screen and what do you want to do?



Figure 2. Record the screen



Figure 3. Screen recording setup



Figure 4. Recording options

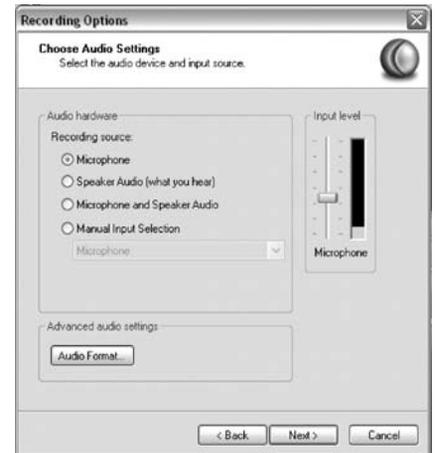


Figure 5. Choose audio settings

following (see figure 2):

- record the screen
- record the PowerPoint

I have selected “start a new project by recording the screen.”

This will bring up a window, “New Recording Wizard Screen Recording Setup.” It asks you what you would like to record (see figure 3).

- region of the screen
- specific window

- entire screen

I have selected “entire screen.” When you click on the “next” button, it brings up a recording options window (see figure 4).

Select from the following:

- record audio
- record camera

I have selected “record audio while recording the screen.”

Next you see a window that lets

you choose audio settings from the following (see figure 5):

- microphone
- speaker audio
- microphone and speaker audio
- manual input selection

I have selected “microphone” (see figure 6).

The next window is titled “Tune Volume Input Levels.” Use the input level lever to set the audio input level (see figure 7).

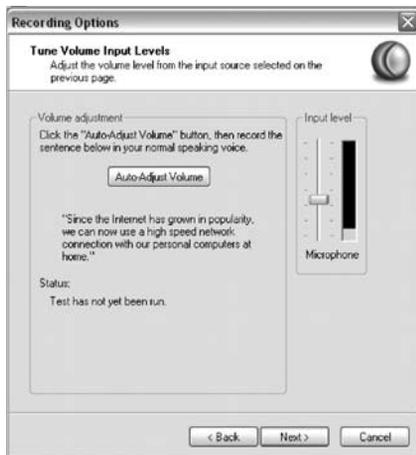


Figure 6. Audio volume levels

The “Begin Recording” window appears, which includes instructions on how to start and stop recording.

You have the choice of clicking the “record” button on Camtasia Recorder or clicking the F9 key to start recording. To stop, click the “stop” button on Camtasia Recorder or click the F10 key (see figure 8).

Finally click on either “record the screen” or “record PowerPoint.” To view your streaming video, click on the saved icon where it says Clip Bin or go to Camtasia toolbar and click on View. Then click on Clip Bin, then click on Thumbnails. That’s all there is to it.

## Summary

I found Camtasia Studio to be very user friendly, although I cannot emphasize enough how important it is for librarians to collaborate with their IT staff. This software enables you to bring the classroom to the student when they need it. You may have instructed a class on library research, but many of these students

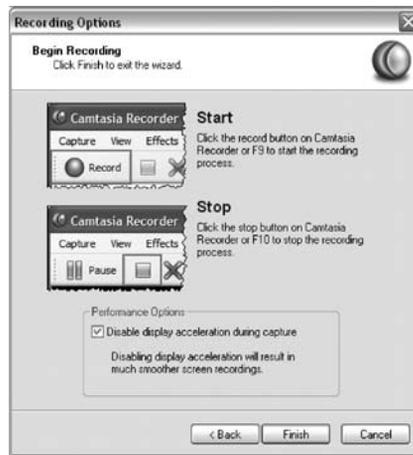


Figure 7. Begin recording

may have already forgotten where to begin. Streaming video allows students to access presentations 24/7.

Here is a checklist of things to think about when selecting software:

- What do you want to accomplish with the software?
- What kind of access are you trying to give?
- Do you want audio, video, or both?
- Is it easy for the student to access and understand?
- Have you researched the software to make sure it meets your needs?
- How much money do you want to spend?
- What additional equipment is necessary?

Finally, and most importantly, work with your IT staff on all phases of your project. By developing a collaborative relationship with them you will have fewer bumps in the road. Use your imagination: the sky is the limit.



Figure 8. Camtasia recorder

## References

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3. Christopher Cox, “From Cameras to Camtasia: Streaming Media without the Stress,” *Internet Reference Services Quarterly* 9 no. 3/4 (2004).
4. John D. Clark and Qinghua Kou, “Captive/Camtasia,” *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 96, no. 1 (2008), <http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=2212324> (accessed June 24, 2009).