Chapter IX

Video

Introduction

Television and video have been used as teaching resources for almost as many years as they have been around. Some television programming and some video productions have been aimed directly at students, some have been partially intended for teaching and learning, and others have been not intended for this use at all. However, the intention of the maker of the program often has little correlation to the use of the program in teaching and learning. Television and video have provided opportunities for teachers to place moving images and sounds in front of students. The programs may have been of rare or dangerous events, interviews with people from other parts of the world, be they leaders, experts, or others. The benefits of the use of video in the classroom can be optimized through integration. Rather than simply screen a video or tune into a television broadcast, good teachers have always integrated these into the curriculum through devices such as worksheets, briefing, and debriefing activities.

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There are many other uses of video and television that are appropriate for teaching and learning and as video capture and editing devices become cheaper and easier to use it is expected that the role of video in teaching and learning will increase. With a few notable exceptions, in the past video in education were generally stand-alone programs. In recent times this role has changed as video can be embedded in Web pages and hence contextualized. Thus short clips that would be incomplete by themselves can serve educational purposes. Today educational video ranges from very short clips of phenomena or objects through to multi-part programs that may total several hours of highly edited video. A 30-second clip of one subject may serve one learning need while a 4-hour series might serve another. Today, as video recording technology has evolved to such a high degree, it is rare to see television broadcasts being used in classroom. More often teachers use video recordings as they allow not only playback at a time that is appropriate to the teaching and learning but also afford the opportunity to pause, stop, and replay sections of the program. The recent advent of video distribution via the Internet has increased the ease with which video can be used in e-learning. As long as bandwidth is sufficient students can interact with online video from any networked computer.

Other technological innovations will also, or have already changed the way in which video is used in education. DVD technology has allowed teachers to depart from the linear access of videotape. They can now use the menu structure of a DVD to navigate, almost instantly, to the desired section of a program or to a particular clip. If the video resources are to be shared within an institution they can be placed into a content management system (CMS) and be made available in the same way as from a DVD. The advantage of the CMS is that metadata, or data about the data, can be stored along with the video file. The metadata can be used to foster sharing of the resource through the informing of the learning design process.

Originally the majority of video programs that were used in teaching and learning were produced by professionals and purchased by the institution. However, as mentioned previously, with the increased accessibility of video capture, editing, and distribution methods, it is now quite possible that teachers and students will produce video programs for educational purposes. Video technology is also improving in ways that make it easier to obtain pictures and sounds of high technical quality. These changes in the technology will possibly result in more resources made by teachers and students, which in turn could mean that programs are more closely tailored to the needs of the students and the subject. Perhaps the barriers to teacher-produced video are changing from ease of operation to time.

As mentioned earlier, the past few years have seen the advent and widespread adoption of the Internet as a way to store and share video files. It is predicted that in the near future a significant proportion of video will be delivered this way. This has implications for the producers of video programs as they will need to be compressed for Internet delivery and formatted to suit the video players on viewers' computers. In Chapter X the topic of streaming is discussed and expanded to describe some

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