Chapter X

Recording Lectures, Streaming, Downloading, Podcasting, Vodcasting, and Webcasting

Introduction

There can be a range of reasons to record lectures or presentations, from the creation of resources to meeting the needs of distant students. Of course recordings are one-way. The information in them flows from the recorded file to students and student interaction with recordings is generally limited to interacting with the controls of the player, that is, they can pause, stop, and replay the recording in part or in its entirety. It can be argued that this interaction adds another level of access to educational presentations. While this low level of interaction can have positive educational outcomes it cannot be equated with interactions between students and teachers. Clearly the person-to-person interactions have the potential for far greater educational outcomes ranging from the answering of questions to the exploration and extension of the subject area. In cases where students are distant from teachers and interact with recorded resources other technologies and techniques are need to provide viable two-way communications channels between them. All learning technologies impose on teaching and learning activities and recordings of presentations are no exception. It is argued that recordings by themselves seldom, if ever,

are sufficient for effective and efficient learning in higher education. However, it is suggested that recordings when used in conjunction with other learning technologies and techniques can be a fundamental part of the learning experience.

The recording of lectures in higher education is not a new phenomenon. Lectures have been recorded in print for many years and in recent decades audio recording technology has been used. Audio and video recordings are also being used in the development of human resources as they are seen by some managers as a way to increase the return on their training dollars.

Just as there are a number of reasons to record presentations there are a number of technologies that perform this task. They range from simple technologies totally controlled by the presenter through to institution-wide systems that automatically record, process, and deliver recordings. The technologies are popular and many new terms have entered our language to describe them. Before they are explored definitions of them are provided for the sake of clarity.

Definitions

Streaming

Streaming is the playing of video or audio files as they are downloaded from the Internet. Most computers are sold today with software that will play audio and video streams. Downloaded files that are of the appropriate format can be played on these as well. For example MP3 audio and MP4 video can be played on most readily available computers.

Webcasting

Streaming can be of prerecorded materials or of live events. Generally recorded lectures are not streamed live due to the increase in technology and expertise required. However, sometimes circumstances warrant live streaming. The occasion might be a media-worthy event or perhaps is a visit by an important subject expert. Streaming of live events is called Webcasting.

Podcasting and Vodcasting

Streaming and Webcasting can be of audio or audio and video files. In the past few years with the increasing popularity of MP3 players a process was developed to

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