Desktop Recordings

What is it?

Desktop recording, or screencasting, is a way of recording part of your computer screen or web, in addition to your voice. It can be used to record lectures in lecture theatres that don't have capability for automatic lecture capture, or as a way of recording presentations for your students to view before or after your lecture. Desktop recordings allow students to view course materials as often as they like in their own time. They can fast forward or rewind the presentation to control the pace of their learning. Screencasts can also be useful for maintaining student engagement in your course outside lectures and tutorials, particularly since using your voice or webcam image in the recording can give a more personal touch for viewers. Desktop recordings are particularly suitable for explaining complex tasks with a sequence of actions that must be completed in order.

What could you do?

• Make a welcome presentation for your students, introducing yourself and the features of the course on your Learn.UQ course site.
• Give a tour of your Learn.UQ course site or ECP. Show and tell students how it is organised, how to find resources and activities and show them the first step to begin their study. This can be incredibly valuable for students studying remotely.
• Undertake a flipped classroom approach by preparing mini-lectures for students to watch before lectures with any complex topics covered, so you have more time for discussion and hands-on practice in your face-to-face time.
• Demonstrate how to use software or other intricate concepts and provide step-by-step explanations.
• Provide instructions about how to undertake or submit an assignment.
• Make a recording to provide verbal feedback on student work.
• Add a screencast video to your blog or wiki as stimulus to begin discussion. Your learners could also make screencast videos to use as responses on the course blogs or wikis.
• Use a diagram to illustrate concepts. You can use a graphics program like Paint and a graphics tablet to record your writing and drawings while you give a voice over description of what you are demonstrating.

The University of Queensland
Institute for Teaching and Learning Innovation
www.itali.uq.edu.au
UQ systems technical support: elearning.uq.edu.au
Workshops for elearning tools and teaching with technology: uq.edu.au/staffdevelopment
Help make these resources better: send feedback to itali@uq.edu.au
This resource was developed by: Dominic McGrath, Kate McGain, Josh Darrah, Lorraine Parkin, Andrei Baltakmens, Mathew Hillier and Trish Andrews
Thanks to Ailsa Dickie, Nina Bianco and Anthea Legge
www.itali.uq.edu.au

Continue next page …
Tips

- Make your recordings short, generally aim for 5 minutes. Shorter recordings help students deal with information in smaller ‘chunks’ and are easier to record, review, change and access.
- Think carefully about the content you use with desktop recording. In some cases, presenting information using only text and images could be more useful for students, in other cases video will convey your message more effectively.
- Model how you want students to approach problems. Record working through examples while explaining each step. You can use simple drawing software, powerpoint or a webcam pointing at paper. Students generally value seeing how their lecturer approaches problems.
- For online course in particular include a webcam footage in your first recording to help develop the sense of a personal connection with your students.
- Check what you are recording - if using a webcam check your backgrounds, body-language and lighting, for screen recordings check to see if other programs, browser tabs, clocks etc are in the recording and make sure you want them there.
- When making your recording, record only the part of the screen that is important. See if your recording software allows you to zoom in and out during the recording.
- Plan what you want to say before you start recording, and think about doing a practice run first. This will make the final recording more polished.
- When you upload your recording, include a brief description to make it easier for students to find what they are looking for.

What have people done?

- MathsCasts is a mathematics desktop recording project from Swinburne University of Technology, The University of Limerick and Loughborough University
- Douglas Guilfoyle, an academic from University College London has prepared a number of law screencasts
- Michelle Pacansky-Brock from Mt San Jacinto College in the US uses a screencast to orient her students to their Blackboard environment