



# Minnesota eLearning Summit

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## Video Postcards: Training at the Speed of Sight

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## Video Postcards: Training at the Speed of Sight

### Presenter

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### Overview

As an instructional designer, one of my roles is training instructional staff and faculty about various academic technologies. Video postcards – short video training episodes – are great for busy audiences because they are shorter than a workshop and more fun than a user guide. Video postcards can be viewed and reviewed at a time that is convenient for the individual instructor and can reach a wider audience than a workshop. This presentation outlines a process for developing video postcards and includes additional tips and resources.

### Example

“Video Postcard: Video Postcards Revealed!”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSsWHFnVZ0o>

### Production Process At-A-Glance

- Creating the Script
  - Use a 3-column script or storyboard draft layout: 1) notes about corresponding screen images; 2) the narrative text; 3) general notes
  - Helps assure clarity and brevity, which reduces editing effort
  - Supports accessibility; transcripts and/or captions can be created quickly from a script
- Recording and Editing the Narration
  - Use an external microphone or headset for best audio quality
- Gathering Visual Resources
  - Screen capture - recordings of the computer screen used to demonstrate software
  - Still images can be used to provide context or interest during narration
    - Be aware of copyright and intellectual property when selecting images
  - Live video - Brief clips of presenter/narrator bring personality into the finished product
    - Use web cam or mobile device for recording
  - Logos and call-outs (e.g. speech bubbles, arrows, shapes, labels, etc.)
    - Enhance or highlight what is happening on the screen, in synchronicity with narration

- Video Editing
  - Assemble all assets (audio and video) onto the timeline
    - A timeline is a chronological, linear sequence guiding when visual or auditory events will occur in a video
- Publishing Video
  - Choose the right venue and format to meet audience needs for access
  - YouTube and Vimeo are useful platforms for streaming videos on-demand
  - Check also your institution's hosting options
- Publicizing Video
  - Send a short email
  - Link to the video in other supporting and print training materials
  - Create a channel or directory of videos so they are easy to find

### **Production Tips: Audio Recording**

- Choose a recording space that is as free from ambient noise as possible. Use batting or blankets if needed to reduce echo or block sound pollution. Take the phone off the hook.
- Leave space to slice! If you make a mistake during recording, stop speaking, allow one or two seconds of space, and begin the previous sentence or phrase again. This will make editing (slicing) out the error easier later on.
- Make a test recording the first time out; use it to become accustomed to your own speaking voice, and to test sound quality on a variety of devices.
- Keep a beverage nearby for dry throats, and don't hesitate to use the pause button during recording if you need to cough or clear your voice.
- **A viable alternative to audio narration is pleasant background music and on-screen descriptive text.**

### **Production Tips: Screen Capture Recording**

- Clear your computer desktop. Remove any shortcuts, background images or icons that are not related to the subject matter at hand.
- Close or shut down any software programs that are not related to the task at hand. This reduces the processor load on your computer during recording, and eliminates the risk of a pop-up notification during the recording.
- Set screen recording resolution (screen size) to suit your eventual delivery medium. For example, YouTube recommended resolution is 1280 x 720 (widescreen)
- Resist using the mouse to gesture, but use it only to indicate specific screen actions that are part of the topic; a "wild" mouse can distract from the narration or goals of the video.
- Match screen actions to narration whenever possible.
- Leave space to slice! If you make a mistake during recording, stop the action and pause the recording. Reset visuals and restart recording, but allow one or two seconds of still screen recording, then begin the previous action again. This will make editing (slicing) out the error easier later on.

### **Production Tips: Video Editing**

- Review the finished product like a member of your audience.
  - Can audio be heard well?
  - Do all visual elements fit within the video frame?
  - Are visual elements visible?

- Does video narrative anticipate questions or provide alternative explanations when appropriate?
- Design with accessibility in mind! Include a transcript or captions for narrated videos.
  - Leave the lower quarter of the screen available for captions.
- Include contact information or links for handouts or supporting materials.

## Suggested Software and Resources

### Audio Recording and Editing

- Audacity: <http://audacityteam.org/>
  - Cost: Free
  - Platforms: Windows/Mac OSX
- Garage Band (Apple): <https://www.apple.com/mac/garageband/>
  - Cost: \$4.99
  - Platform: Mac OSX (also an iOS version available)

### Video Editors with Screen Capture Capability

- Camtasia Studio (TechSmith): <https://www.techsmith.com/camtasia.html>
  - Windows Version: \$299 (\$179 for education; bulk pricing also available)
  - Mac OSX Version: \$99 (\$75 education; bulk pricing available)
- ScreenFlow (Telestream): <http://www.telestream.net/screenflow/overview.htm>
  - Cost: \$99 (education pricing available)
  - Platform: Mac OSX (supports iOS screen capture)
- Adobe Captivate: <http://www.adobe.com/products/captivate.html>
  - Cost: \$29.99/month subscription pricing; \$299 single purchase price for education
  - Platforms: Windows/Mac OSX

### Lower-Cost Alternatives

These program offer a reduced set of editing tools, but could be used also in conjunction with the free editor in YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/editor>

- SnagIt (TechSmith): <https://www.techsmith.com/snagit.html>
  - Includes some basic, but limited, editing features for video
  - Also takes great still image captures
  - Cost: \$49.95 (\$29.95 educator; bundle pricing also available)
  - Platforms: Windows and Mac OSX
- Screencast-O-Matic: <http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/>
  - Cost: \$15/year for Pro Version (to access editing tools)
  - Platform: Access via web browser on Windows or Mac
- WeVideo: <https://www.wevideo.com/>
  - Cost: Basic editor is Free; paid license starts at \$7/month; education bulk pricing available
  - Platform: Access via a web browser on Windows or Mac
- SnapzProX (Ambrosia Software): <http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/snapzprox/>
  - Cost: \$69
  - Platform: Mac OSX

- iShowU (Shinywhitebox): <https://shinywhitebox.com/ishowu>
  - Cost: \$20 (more “feature-ful” versions with some editing capability available for upgrade at additional cost)
  - Platform: Mac OSX

### **Royalty-Free Images**

Here is a list of online resources for royalty-free images. Some resources require that attributions be included along with the use (e.g., creative commons). Please also note special search instructions, where applicable. Also, don’t forget to check with your institution’s public relations department for information about visual repositories they may provide.

- Free Images (A Service of Getty Images): <http://www.freeimages.com/>
  - Tip: Be sure to sort your search by the “Free Photo” option
- Flickr: <http://flickr.com>
  - Flickr's advanced search includes a method for searching only those images that are licensed under creative commons
- Creative Commons Content Directories: [http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Content\\_Directories](http://wiki.creativecommons.org/Content_Directories)
- Internet Archive: <http://www.archive.org/>
- Creative Commons Search (compiles the search results of other engines): <http://search.creativecommons.org/>
- Free Pixels: <http://www.freepixels.com/>
- Gratisography (photos by Ryan McGuire): <http://gratisography.com/>
- Free Refe Real Life Photos: <http://getrefe.tumblr.com/>
- New Old Stock (vintage photos from the public archives): <http://nos.twinsnd.co/>
- Unsplash: <http://unsplash.com/>
- MorgueFile (images are \$0.15 each): <http://www.morguefile.com/archive>

### **Free Royalty-Free Music**

- Incompetech (Music by Kevin MacLeod): <http://incompetech.com/music/royalty-free/>
- Bensound: <http://www.bensound.com/royalty-free-music>
- Purple Planet: <http://www.purple-planet.com/>
  - Many free tracks for use; including a link back to the Purple Planet site is required for use
- Audiopad’s YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/show/royaltyfreemusic/featured>
  - A collection of free electronica music (attribution required) from various artists