Using DVD for the Documentation of Educational Grants

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Abstract: This paper gives the technical, logistical, and assessment procedures for documenting grant-funded educational programs with DVD. Using examples of successful practice, the paper gives an overview of the technology and procedures specific to creating DVDs as grant assessment artifacts, including methods to add context, complementary video, and mixed media. There is also a focus on the areas of formative and summative grant evaluation that especially benefit from the medium of DVD.

Overview

Grant-funded projects are becoming increasingly important across the country. State budget cuts, resistance to tuition increases, and a trend in funding that ties money to specific outcomes have contributed to an emphasis on the acquisition, development, assessment, and documentation of public and private grant-funded projects. The conventional documentation and assessment medium has been printed reports. Although the imminent demise of the printed word has been greatly exaggerated, the Digital Versatile Disk (DVD) is an excellent medium to document particular grant activities and complement the paper report.

The DVD has many advantages in for sharing documentation and assessment. A DVD can include, text, images, and video that can be accessed in a variety of ways. It is more portable and durable than paper or VHS tape. It has (at a minimum) over seven times the storage space than a CD-Rom. Besides the revolution in home entertainment, by the late 1990’s computer DVD’s outsold home DVD video machines, and they have become more popular in PCs than CD-Rom drives (PC Technology Guide, 2003). This makes them a nearly ubiquitous piece of technology, combined with their storage capacity, versatility, portability, and durability, DVDs make an excellent medium for sharing documentation media.

Grant Assessment

The most powerful aspect of the DVD is the ability to share video segments with relevant context, to organize the content as logical menu choices, and to allow the viewer nonlinear access. The DVD can add substantive audio and video related to the objectives and outcomes of the project. Physical outcomes of a grant (workshops, seminars, facilities, meetings, etc.) can easily be presented to future funding agencies just with a simple video clip or a multimedia DVD. External evaluators, agencies, and foundation officials will get the real picture of the project with DVD documentation. Furthermore, this video can be augmented by a variety of other media on the DVD.

The documentation of a DVD can provide material for both the evaluation of an existing grant and material to apply or reapply for a grant. Formative and summative evaluations are common grant assessment requirements.
Most formative and summative assessment reports to both governmental and private funding agencies require documentation of the extent to which grant objectives have been met and the factors influencing the project’s success. Furthermore, many refunding and initial grant applications require the following:

- Rationale for the grant
- Qualified personnel
- Adequate existing resources
- Support from administration
- Potential impact

The DVD has the ability to enhance all of these aspects of assessment, both for the funding agency’s requirements and for internal documentation, reflection, and improvement.

References

