Using Screen Capture Technology to Develop On-line Course Material

The need to produce distance learning course materials comes from the desire and need of students to access educational materials at times and places more conducive to their schedules and life styles. Synchronous and asynchronous methods of distance learning are both viable means of delivery. However, methods of distance education that use synchronous means of delivery miss the “anytime, anywhere” axiom. One of the basic aims of the new educational technologist is to provide ways and means for faculty to deliver their expert information to students in a way that not only captures the essence of the teacher lead classroom but also illuminates the information by providing more in-depth illustrations. This paper will examine screen capture technology and how it can be used by educators at all levels. Topics that will be discussed will include -- what software products are available, the various delivery platforms used to stream the course material, and a brief explanation of how to use some of the software programs.

This technology is one of the many methods of asynchronous course development tools that are currently available. First, it must be stated that screen capture technology is not thought to be a technology that is good for all situations. It is important for all educators to understand the need to use the correct technology for the instructional outcome desired.

Screen capture technology in this paper will be defined as computer software programs that allow for the recording of computer desktop activity. The recordings can be in the form of full motion video or still images that can have audio narration or printed instructions. This software comes in various forms and is produced by several different software companies - the ones that will be discussed in this paper are currently the most popular on the market.

There are some basic reasons why the use of screen capture technology is a viable technique for online course delivery;

1. Ease of use for faculty.
2. Ability of students to see and do.
3. Ability to hear a lecture anytime and anywhere
4. Ability to review information as many times as needed.

Being “user friendly” is an important aspect of an educational technology instrument, because the object of the educational technology is to help the faculty deliver their course material without spending large amounts of time in development.

Recent studies have shown that students remember only about 10% of what they hear in a lecture or read, while they remember up to 90% of what they see and do. Giving students
the opportunity to see and react to information is one of the reasons why using screen capture technology is useful in developing educational course material.

The ability to deliver course material “anytime, anywhere” is the part of a distance learning program that makes it available to the student at the exact time and place needed. This feature is key to effectiveness of continuing and distance education.

The ability to review course material repetitively gives the online learner somewhat of an advantage on those who participate in classroom lectures. When a professor gives a lecture at a given time and a given place that lecture must be viewed by the student in that environment and at that time. If the lecture is a one-time event review must be from notes and memory. Both notes and memory can have some large areas of incorrect information. However, if lectures are recorded and illustrations are used to illuminate the lecture, multiple viewing should increase understanding of the subject.

Screen Captured Course Material as Learning Objects

What are learning objects and how are they used in education. There has been a good deal of work done on the definition and description of learning objects. The size and scope, content, design and technical implementation of learning objects vary so much it is difficult to exactly define what is and is not a learning object. For the purposes of this document the definition adopted by the New Media Consortium (NMC) as part of its Learning Object Initiative will be used: a learning object is any grouping of materials that is structured in a meaningful way and is tied to an educational objective. The “materials” in a learning object can be documents, pictures, simulations, movies, sounds, and so on (Johnson 2003). Screen capture technology can be used to develop learning objects that can be shared over the internet and via CD and DVD technology.