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Rapid content production and delivery in e-learning environments: use of Adobe Presenter, MS PowerPoint, Adobe Connect

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Abstract

With the rapid development of internet technologies, intelligent flexible learning model finds a wider area of usage. Many of the education institutions started to present their distance education programs over the internet. Content production is an important part of the process in online environments. Production of the content that will be delivered in online learning environments includes a comprehensive process. In order to deliver the content without any problem, the course materials should be accommodated for the internet environment. Instructor can make his/her face-to-face lecture notes more attractive with animations, simulations, visuals, audio and video additions when presenting them in an e-learning environment. Multimedia tools and applications should be taken advantage of towards providing an effective, attractive and efficient e-course production for the learner.

Education institutions need qualified staff in distance education for online programs. In many of the institutions there are a few personnel in distance education departments in the beginning, so contributions to content production by subject experts can be necessary. Rapid content production and delivery can be provided by using MS Powerpoint - which is used frequently by instructors- and some other additional software. Instructor's course lecture video, audio, visuals, tests, animation and music can be added to existing course contents to convert rapidly to online deliverable format. In this study, the process of delivering an instructor's lecture notes online with the addition of multimedia tools is mentioned with implementation examples.

Keywords: e-learning, Online Learning, Powerpoint, Adobe Presenter, Rapid Content;

1. Introduction

Due to the advantages of it, using e-Learning environments becomes widespread in formal education as well as distance education programmes. In a word, e-Learning is a learning environment on which course materials-instructor-students come together synchronously or synchronously with the help of the internet technology. Production of the content for e-Learning environment is a comprehensive process taking a long time and requiring team work. In this process are different teams and role definitions. Basically, we can talk about 3 fundamental teams in content production - designing, production and implementation. Content goes through this production process before becoming issuable in e-Learning environments. If there is not any production team, the instructor of the course takes role in the whole instructional designing process.

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2. Background

Up to present so many models are developed about instructional designing. Most favorite ones are ADDIE, Kemp, ASSURE and Dick & Carey Models (Taylor, 2004). All models have common basics. ADDIE is the plainest model among them. It is composed of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation and Evaluation stages. The instructor who is responsible for the course can carry out Analysis, Design and Evaluation stages without any problem but he may face with difficulty in Development and Implementation stages. Multimedia objects will be used in the course content to publish. In order to make learning more permanent; sounds, stabilized- animated picts, video, conversational animations or simulations may be used together with texts. All components used in course preparation must be compatible with internet publishing.

Instructional designer administers the Development stage and creates the materials. If there is not any team for content building, he must prepare the content within the bounds of possibility and knowledge of him. In general experienced teams are assigned for building the content to publish in on-line environments. However, an instructor who tries to perform his online environment course as it was in formal course undertakes all the assignments. In such situations, fast and functional content prepare software may be used. Instructor decides which multimedia object, such as text, simulation, records, video, animation, live image, synchronously used tools etc., will be presented in internet environment.

3. Problem Statement

Production of the content to publish in e-Learning environment requires a comprehensive process. Instructors who do not have qualified team to prepare and present the content must carry out the whole process on their own. What should an instructor do to prepare and publish the content by oneself if he is inexperienced in computer and internet?

4. Purpose

In this study, implementation experience which may be a solution to the problem mentioned above is reported. Content preparation and presentation methods for on-line environments with some kind of software were viewed.

5. Rapid Content Creation

The instructor of the course is also the designer and the developer of the course. (*) In this process, he, first, needs to prepare the content to publish. Screen design of the content to publish should be designed considering prior experience. In short, the instructor forms a flow chart by scripting the content. This is defined as storyboard preparation.

The storyboard act as a guide that shows which component does the course, unit or the content includes, what kind of interactivity is required in any stage. It also defines the location and amount of the graphics and text. That is why it is an important stage to be completed before implementation stage (Okur, 2010). Microsoft PowerPoint which is one of the mostly used software may be used to generate storyboard, in other word screen design of the content. In order to attach multimedia objects to the content, Adobe Presenter software, which may be uploaded as an additional menu to MS PowerPoint, can be used. The prepared content can be published via Adobe Connect virtual class software. It is possible to use other equivalent software instead of these three.
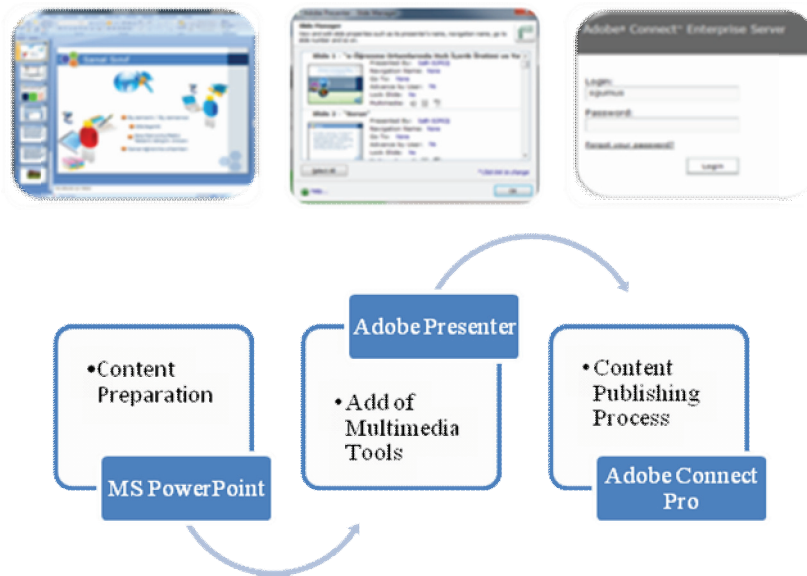
Figure 1. Instructional Design Process

5.1. MS PowerPoint Usage

MS PowerPoint may be adduced as software that may be used to create learning content. Due to this software, course content may be rapidly exported to the pages, textual markup of the content may be done, actions such as attaching pict, pict editing or editing facility can easily be practiced. It is frequently used among instructors.

5.2. MS Powerpoint and Adobe Presenter Usage

Instructor may attach record, video, animation or simulation to the pages of content which was prepared by MS PowerPoint, preparation software. He can attach record in any pages he wants. He can record images with a webcam in any pages too. He can attach swf files prepared by him or copied ones. He can attach test in the end of the content. By using Quiz option offered by Adobe Presenter, it will also be possible for him to assess the course material he prepared.

Course content with multimedia objects can be published in three different environments. It is probable to send content to removable CD or desktop file, Adobe PDF document or Adobe Connect Software.

Figure 2. Adobe Presenter menu as an additional to MS PowerPoint

5.3. Publishing Prepared Content in Virtual Classes

No sooner does the internet technology become widespread, on-line learning environments in distance education are getting developed and popular. Globally, universities and institutions use web for their educational activities. Institutions, students or workers from any stages are encouraged to join on-line learning activities (Khan, 2001). On-

line e-Learning anvironments are described as 'educational communication and interaction environments where instructor and learners do not need to be in same place (or sometimes in same time). Virtual classes are on-line learning environments which enables instructor to use materials of formal learning environment in distance education. In short, they are learning environments providing synchronous communication and learner-learner, learner-instructor or learner-course content interaction via internet. In virtual class software, instructor can share the content he prepared with learners synchronously or asynchronously. It is possible for the instructor to teach his lesson with synchronous interaction in on-line courses. He can also give an on-line presentation. On-line presentations are not interactive. They can be dealed, recorded or played afterward if required. You need to make the material suitable for internet publishing in order not to face with any problem when you publish it in on-line learning environments. For instance, text of the course, presentation documents or videos can be convert rapidly via some software. A instructor does not need to have a high level web technology competence to do this converting procedure. He can rapidly convert his materials of formal course to documents compatible to online course.

In Fig.3, you can see the learner's interaction with instructor, content and other learners. He performs this interaction from the interface of the virtual class used(Clark, 2007). While designing learning environments, the designers need to consider having high level interaction and communication in order to achieve an effective learning.
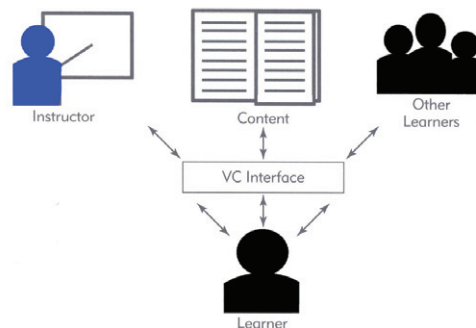

Figure3. Student centered teaching environment in virtual classes

6. Sample Usage of Virtual Class from Anadolu University

In Anadolu University are teams that produce, design, develop, check and publish content for Distance and Open Education Programmes. During the process, different kind of software is used apart from the ones mentioned above. Anadolu University has used virtual class environment in distance education programmes since 2005 (Mutlu, 2005). In 2010-2011 academic terms, Anadolu University uses virtual class environments more than 600 hours per week for over 200 groups from many distance education programmes. It is anticipated that the number of the departments using such environment will increase in the following years. Abovementioned rapid content production technique is used for some courses supported by distance education.

7. Conclusion

Rapid content production and presentation can be provided via MS PowerPoint, which is use frequently by the instructor, and some additional software. Instructor's lecturing video, his voice, visuals, tests, animations or music can be attached to the ready course content and it can be converted in a format suitable to publish in internet. Especially the institutions lack of sufficient staff to produce content for on-line environment, the instructors who want to use on-line environments as a backup to their formal courses and the instructors who does not follow technology closely but want to publish their course in on-line environments can use such software easily.

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