Screencasts Based on PowerPoint

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Description: I want to provide students with mini-lectures with voiceover that are mainly based on existing PowerPoint (or Keynote) slides. I want to highlight certain aspects of the slides by zooming in, circling, drawing arrows, etc., but I don’t really need to make many handwritten notes.

Options:

Windows Users:

Camtasia offers the most robust solution for recording and editing. It is easiest to add annotations and highlights during editing, rather than during recording, if the annotations are fairly simple--like adding text, arrows, highlights, and zooms.

Mac Users:

Camtasia for the Mac and ScreenFlow offer similar functionality, although there seem to be more Camtasia users on Furman’s campus. Neither Camtasia for the Mac nor ScreenFlow support embedded quizzes at this time.

Equipment / Software Needs: Laptop with Camtasia (or ScreenFlow), PowerPoint (or Keynote), a USB microphone headset. The headset keeps your voice at an even volume even if your head moves, since the mic is attached to you. We have had good luck with the Logitech H390 headset (wired $25-$30) and Plantronics 995H (wireless -$35-$50).

Distribution Options: The most versatile distribution format is .mp4 video file. Camtasia and ScreenFlow allow for direct upload to YouTube and Vimeo. For Furman users, BOX offers the most robust and secure option for distribution. This is a better option than uploading the videos to Moodle, if you don’t require quiz integration.

Considerations:

- TechSmith, the provider of Camtasia, has provided detailed guidelines for selecting the appropriate recording and production settings.
- If your slides contain images provided by your textbook publisher, you may need to consider putting the video behind a login like BOX or a private YouTube channel to comply with copyright restrictions. Contact the publisher for details.
- Look for images and audio with Creative Commons licensing that allow non-commercial reuse and adaptation. Contact the Copyright Officer for assistance.
- While Camtasia and ScreenFlow have powerful editing capabilities, striving for perfection can be a huge time suck. Balance production requirements with distribution needs. Some students have commented that imperfections (dog barking in the background, corrected mistakes, etc.) can actually make the screencasts more fun to watch.
- Consider posing scenarios or providing background information that give context and compelling reasons for students to want to know the information presented in the screencast.