

Design and Development of Multimedia Based User Education Program: The Advantages of YouTube

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ABSTRACT

User education is one of the essential activities of the library to optimize the use of library services. This paper discusses the use of multimedia based videos for the promotion of library services and activities with the help of emerging trends and technologies and the power of Web 2.0 especially YouTube. Through this paper, it is tried to demonstrate the procedural aspects of promoting user education through developing multimedia based user education program and utilizing the services of YouTube as media of marketing and communication at Jaypee University of Information Technology, Solan, Himachal Pradesh, India.

Keywords: Multimedia, User Education, Library Services, YouTube.

1. INTRODUCTION

User education is an essential task of any library to make its resources visible and available to outreach. Academic libraries are making great efforts to open the gates to information as widely as possible to let students and faculty freely and ably seek and retrieve the information they need. There is recognition that information education is at the heart of the university's educational mission. Students will need skills to obtain, use, and apply information in efficient, effective, and critical ways in order to be successful. Information literacy education is being adjusted to help students gain such skills in an electronic information society. User education is broader than reference service in regards to exploring, collecting, and using information resources by users (Sun&Rader, 1999).

Library orientation programmes are one of the most common practices by the librarians to educate the new entrants. Librarians give presentations, lecturers, posters, demonstrations etc about the new resources, services and activities. But very often such media is not possible always, because of many

reasons. The library orientation programmes in academic system is not gaining success in many aspects. The burden on the library staff, time consuming activities to repeat the orientation programme - especially for those who have missed it at the beginning, and also the librarian may or may not get time schedule during the academic session are some of the issues (Madhusudhan& Singh, 2010). This has poses the pressing demand for a methodological approach towards instructing the users of the library not only in academic but any library system to adopt the power of Web 2.0 technology which is gaining rapid importance in the emerging trends and technologies in libraries and information services to educate its user for better utilization of the library resources. Under this situation the emerging web based information literacy (Zhang, 2006) and Web 2.0 environment can be helpful in promoting multimedia based user education program, and YouTube could play leading role in promoting the use of library and its services without the help of library staff (Godwin, 2009). This paper discusses some of the methodological approaches for creating multimedia based applications and use of YouTube videos as effective methods for user education at Jaypee University of Information Technology (JUIT), SolanHimachal Pradesh.

2. MULTIMEDIA BASED USER EDUCATION

The development of online library outreach, marketing of library services and communication with the mass user about the services and collection of the library through multimedia has become more relevant than ever within academic libraries today. With the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies, the users now have the ability to access libraries 24/7 through numerous tools and platforms for online video creation and sharing. According to a 2011 Pew Study, 71% of online American users have watched videos at video sharing sites such as YouTube or any other video sharing website (Moore, 2011). This increased usage of video illustrates the power of multimedia and its ability to provide personalized content experiences (Cramer, 2011). Implementing a personal touch within outreach, marketing and communications is possible, in particular, when libraries push their content out to users by creating additional access points through sites such as YouTube and also by making their videos accessible on the library's website. Of course, establishing an online video presence requires a long-term commitment within a library if it is to produce regular and up-to-date video communications that can attract a user-viewer community (Little, 2010).

The services of the library where multimedia can play an important role are virtual references service, course management system, tour of the library, Searching the catalogue, resources awareness, effective use of reference management system, electronic journals subscription and access are some of the scope where user education is essential and crucial. In these areas the libraries very often have to make the user aware of the procedural aspects. Making each individual user aware of the services, system and procedure is not possible. At this point the power of multimedia based user education could be quite useful.

So, considering the importance of the user education to new entrants and those who wish to know about the services and system of the library, the Learning Resource Centre, JUIT, has taken the responsibility of harnessing the power of multimedia and YouTube to educate the academia about the happenings of the library, marketing the services, and communicating with the users by creating multimedia video and uploading them over YouTube (<http://youtube.com/lrcjuitsolan>), an online channel created for this purpose.

4893. CREATION OF MULTIMEDIA BASED USER EDUCATION METHODS

User education and reference services are common service point in academic libraries. Unlike interactions at a physical reference desk, reference librarians face the added challenge of communicating with users who cannot see what is on the librarian's computer screen. The PowerPoint (PPT) presentation slides, Screencasts are some of the methods that break down this visual communication barrier by providing a way for the user to have an image or video of a librarian's computer while searching for resources. Recoding of activities of the library reference services in live mode and live demonstrations are useful methods for interaction with the users in library and later offsite demonstration through the portal like YouTube, is one of the better solution can be seen (Carr & Ly, 2009).

“Screencasting” is a method of capturing the actions performed on a computer, including mouse movements and clicks on web browser links, in the form of a video. Using online screencasting tools, the video can be shared via e-mail attachment or a web link, or be uploaded to a server for continual use. Screencasts may also contain audio narration which is recorded simultaneously with the actions are performed on screen or added after the video is completed. Additionally, still images of the computer screen, or “screen shots,” may include captions, highlighting or call-out boxes to draw the user's eye to a specific place on the image (Oud, 2009).

The combination of these two methods is being used at JUIT for the user education program. The detailed procedural aspect is being discussed in section ahead.

3.1 Choice of Services

The choice of the services is one of the important tasks necessary to undertake for the benefit of library users. The services like the demonstration of circulation systems; activities of the library; specialised services; access of scholarly materials such as journals needs to be highlighted so that the users can use them effectively. Other services are way guide, layout plan, reprographic service, document delivery service are always needs to be promoted from time to time to the users. These are also the crucial part of JUIT library activities and the users of the library have always asking for these services and resources. So the multimedia based video promotions are being prepared to promote these services for the benefit of the users.

3.2 PPT Creation

At JUIT, for the promotion of the activities are done through the preparation of presentation slides in MS PowerPoint. The PowerPoint presentation provides a large avenue of presenting through animation and effects. So the demonstration becomes more interactive with voice and animation effects.

3.3 Text Reader

There are two methods for annexing the voice in the presentation. One is the direct recording of the sound/voice with audio recorder and other method is use of text reader software. The JUIT is using text reader software available freely for the purpose of converting desired voice through text encoding and getting output as voice. Thereafter, these voices are annexed with the presentation at the appropriate place.



3.4 Conversion

The third aspect is the conversion of the presentation in the form of video or direct use. Since, there is no provision of uploading presentation over YouTube; the presentations are being converted into video through the open source software into video. This is simple and light method in comparison with screencasting which produces heavy video files.

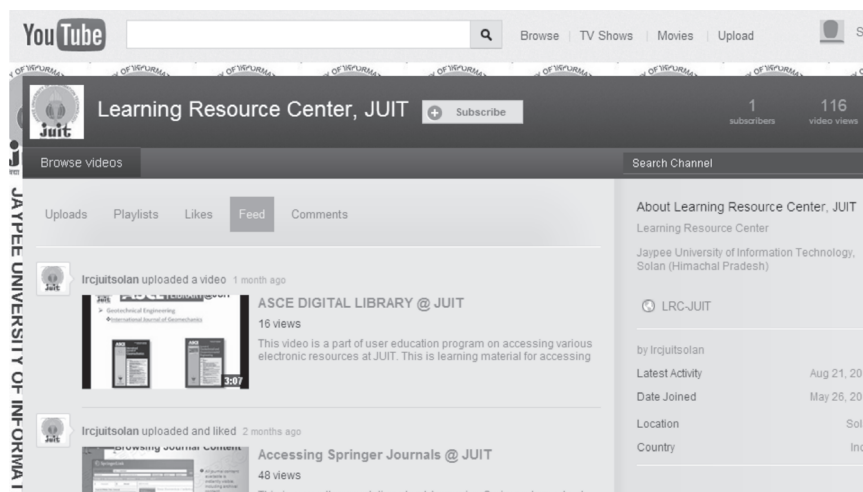


Figure 1: The Learning Resource Channel on YouTube

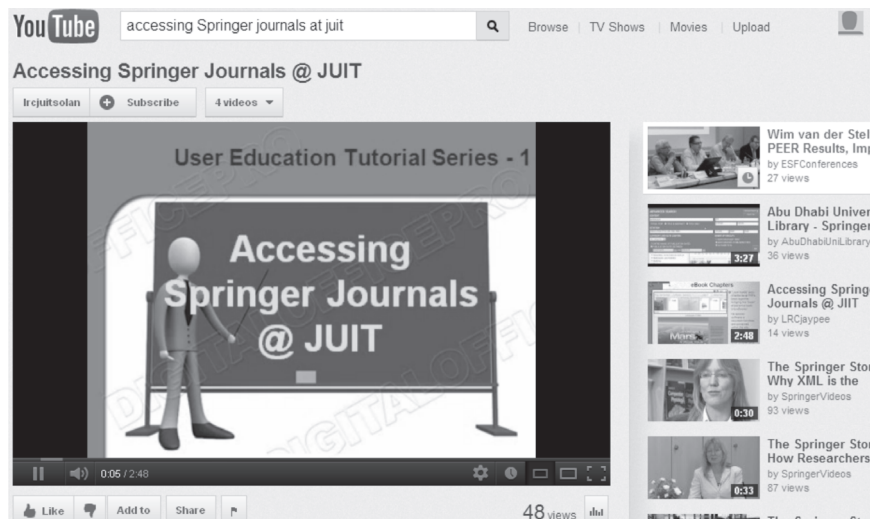


Figure 2: E-Journals promotion video on YouTube

3.5 Uploading videos on YouTube

Once the videos are ready, these are being uploaded to YouTube, where a channel has been created in the name of Learning Resource Center ((<http://youtube.com/lrcjuitsolan>). A metadata is created for each video, with appropriate tag.

3.6 Accessing the Video

There is another facility for embedding any video on personal webpage, blog, facebooketc for two way promotions. Firstly, those who visit institute website, blog or Facebook can access the video through the link, and secondly there is no need to host the video on local server and creating different page of the video. Hosting at a single place and embedding at different place is the key benefit of the YouTube. An embedded video link has been provided on the library website, where user can directly view the videos, without visiting YouTube (Figure 1 and 2).



Figure 3: Video Embedding on Library website

4. DISCUSSION

The technological advances and emergence of Web 2.0 tools have led the library and information centers the opportunity to develop and disseminate specific messages to their users. The channels used to communicate with the communities are through the library website leveraged with multimedia applications and streaming websites such as YouTube. The use of streamingvideo allows libraries to market their resources and services in a more visually pleasing formatwhich may appeal to many users when compared to the more traditional text-only basedmessages they may have been accustomed to receiving. With an abundance of users alreadyonline and who anticipate their usage of videos to increase, libraries now have an opportunityto connect with their unique user communities. The academic

fraternities within academic institutions are such a group where this opportunity can be beneficial.

Those libraries that are in tune with their user communities' online and library usage habits will want to also push their messages out to these users through streaming video. The use of presentation slides, streaming videos, screencast, flash videos with special effect are the methodological aspects which provides avenue for creation of multimedia based user education. Numerous Web 2.0 technologies and platforms provide libraries with many options for video creation. Even still, this may present a challenge for libraries without experienced staff in marketing and promotion within this medium. However, those libraries without staff specifically assigned for promotional video creation may be able to create an online presence for their library by collaborating with campus departments or other associated communities that may have resources to support such projects. This multimedia based user application program is gaining popularity amongst its user. The library is looking forward to gaining an evaluative step to measure its impact on the users of library. Such kinds of initiative and evaluative results might be helpful in providing and improving the library services to unreached. Those libraries that develop their messages through video have the opportunity to not only increase awareness of their resources and services but also to communicate their messages in an interesting and visually pleasing alternative format.

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