

Thursday, July 31, 2008

Quick Tips

Safe Instructional Videos: Too much to ask for?

TeacherTube provides student-safe instruction videos. Better yet, most school district content filters recognize TeacherTube as a safe Internet destination.

Access TeacherTube; at TeacherTube; Sidebar For the isolated school district content filter that blocks access to TeacherTube; we describe a way to download videos and save them to a CD or USB drive. Here is what you need:

First download the software that you need to manage this process:

Download the software

Second, download a free FLV Player from Applian

Download the FLV Player, or this Recommended One from CNet.

Note: These FLV Players may install a Toolbar if you just select the defaults. Be sure to uncheck the Install Toolbar options!

Next, run the Xilisoft Download YouTube Video application

Enter the YouTube URL in the Xilisoft application.

Save the output.

Play the video.

In addition, TeacherTube offers a companion product, Teacher Tube Desktop (in the Beta testing phase). This is a social networking tool.

TeacherTube and Teacher Tube Desktop provide cost-free access to over 25,000 educational videos. And hundreds more videos are added by teacher members each month (as compared to the thousands that are added to YouTube; each second.

But, TeacherTube videos are child-safe, unlike Google's two, big video-serving behemoths.

Sidebar Here is how innocent searches on YouTube go astray.

A recent search for the term "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" turned up multiple renditions

Besides the obvious interpretations by Madonna, versions by Chinese, French, English, Ukrainian singers were available. Great so far!

Since the goal was to find a variety of accents as a demonstration for a foreign language course, this set of videos provides an outstanding instructional resource

Where the project went haywire was when YouTube began to suggest other videos that might be of interest.

And, instead of maintaining the "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" search term, the YouTube system began supplying searches based on words such as the singer's name.

So, let's say that the French singer's name was Sheila Souffle. The YouTube algorithm, in all its wisdom, serves up a video about a "dish" named Sheila. But, Sheila is not a turkey with dressing, and not someone whose little piggies are in a blanket, or restrained by a wrap of any kind. Sheila is in-the-raw, au natural.

The reason that TeacherTube videos are safe is that real people monitor the content on TeacherTube.

Not so on YouTube; where so many videos are submitted that Google would have to employ hundreds of thousands of reviewers to keep up with the pace. If that were to happen, the videos would not remain "free." Strengths of TeacherTube; TeacherTube's content can be used by instructors.

But, if you do the math, you discover that 25,000 videos is a "drop in the bucket" compared to the needs of the curriculum.

However, this is a great start for a company that has only been in business for a bit over a year.

TeacherTube also partners with content-owners such as the American Institute for History Education.

Unfortunately, finding the "right video" is fraught with the same challenge as finding the "right lesson plan" on the Internet. That is: is it quicker and easier to create your own if you have a structured, modular plan.

With videos, you just need the ability to cut, edit and trim videos that you find so that the segments fit your curriculum; also to ensure that unwanted segments never reach your students' eyes and ears.

Of course, video editing is time consuming, tedious, even with superior tools.

So, summer is the time to get a head start on adding video to your instructional repertoire.

The other challenge with creating instructional video is that huge amounts of content are required for a standard (180 student attendance day) school year.

That is the reason that TeacherTube's 25,000 videos seem like an "echo in an empty bucket." TeacherTube also provides a number of "Channels" i.e., curriculum areas.

Visit the TeacherTube Channels here.

But, if a teacher created the thousands of videos that would be required to drive a year-long course, this collection of

intellectual property would be worth a lot (really lot) of money. Even more money, if that collection of intellectual property increased demonstrable, observable student achievement.

Few teachers (and fewer school districts) are willing to share a year's worth of instructional content with the world without financial remuneration.

This leaves teacher scrambling across the Internet to acquire instructional content, and makes TeacherTube; a rapidly rising destination for time and resource-strapped teachers. TeacherTube; DesktopThe TeacherTube;Desktop is an interactive environment. This program works with a suite of applications, including a video server system that can manage a video user community.

This Web 2.0 application allows teachers to add any of the TeacherTube; videos, plus a slew of gadgets (Widgets

And all this requires only the ability to browse the Web, and the ability to upload, copy and paste.

SidebarTeacherTube; Desktop is in Beta test mode, and offering free accounts to the first 1,000 teachers that sign up.

Sign up at Teacher Tube; DesktopHigh-End VideoLike Techsmith;'s offer of a trial of Snagit 9, Xilisoft; offers a trial of its converter software.

Xilisoft; offers an army of specialized converters, but for less than the price of two specialized converters, you can get a multi-function suite of tools.

Here is what the Xilisoft Video Converter Ultimate product can do… Main Functions: Convert between almost all popular video formats, such as MPEG-4, AVI, H.264, DivX, XviD, RM, FLV, SWF, MOV, 3GP, WMV, etc.

Convert between almost all audio formats, such as MP3, AAC, AC3, M4A, WAV, WMA, etc.

Convert video to almost all audio formats, such as MP3, AAC, AC3, M4A, WAV, WMA, etc.

Convert pictures of certain formats to video formats like AVI, RM, FLV, SWF, MOV, 3GP, WMV, WAV

Extract pictures from video files, and outputting them as JPG, PNG, GIF, BMP, SWF, etc.Key Features:Offer powerful video effects editing functions, including crop video size, edit video effects, add and adjust video subtitle, and add video watermark; 2.Clip any video or audio segment to convert, and merge them into one

Allow to convert one source file to several, or merge several source files into one

Can preview and compare source video and video customized

The snapshot provides you with image snapping, and also you can grab picture by setting the duration

Provides rich profiles for you to choose, and enables you to customize and save your profile for future use

Can customize the size of output audio and video file for different devices

Provides batch conversion and multithreading to convert multiple files at the same time

Can run in background for more efficiencyTo download the free trial…Xilisoft; Video Converter Ultimate Free Trial

Posted by Classroom Toolkit Newsletter in Quick Tips at 08:00