



Camtasia Relay[®]

Camtasia Relay Makes Online Learning Sustainable, Efficient



Takeaways

- Camtasia Relay allows the San Diego Community College District to efficiently make videos for online courses while staying compliant with state and federal captioning requirements, all within a tight budget.
- Faculty members quickly and easily capture their own content, which ensures consistency in their lessons and gives them complete control over their intellectual property and how it is shared.
- Captioning with Camtasia Relay is sustainable for the school financially and made easily available across the district's servers, allowing the district's limited number of instructional designers to better use their time helping faculty where it counts the most.

Introduction

In 1998, members of the U.S. congress passed legislation requiring all federal agencies to include closed captioning in electronic and information technology content. Shortly thereafter, the state of California passed similar legislation to further reinforce federal laws. This led many California educators relying on federal and state money to seek software to accomplish the often-tedious task of captioning their work.

The San Diego Community College District (SDCCD) was one of many organizations in need of a solution for captioning educational content. With a tight budget and little confidence in the longevity of grant money, they needed to find an affordable yet powerful solution. After comparing services and products, the district decided to purchase Camtasia Relay.

The Problem

Captioning services and software are a financial burden to many educational institutions affected by the federal update to section 508. To alleviate some of the financial pressure, the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office established a grant to fund captioning of educational content in 2003.

Over the next few years, SDCCD found that tech-savvy faculty started using products like TechSmith's Camtasia Studio to simultaneously record their computer screen and lecture audio (also known as screencasts) to share with students online. However, as educational content, these recordings were required to have closed captions.

The idea of creating screencasts became more popular with faculty across the district. David Giberson, one of three SDCCD instructional designers, found the amount of content that needed to be captioned quickly ballooned beyond expectations.

“When we first started captioning videos, we mostly had to worry about the videos in our libraries,” said David. “No one anticipated the volume of screencasts we create today, which makes the captioning process much more expensive than previously thought.”

David and two colleagues serve nearly 500 faculty members and 30,000 students in the district’s online learning programs. As online learning became more popular, David’s team found themselves in growing demand. Beyond the sheer volume of requests, the captioning process started to become financially burdensome too.

“We had one teacher who made a big effort to create videos for students,” said David. “He created more than 120 videos for two online courses with screencasting software that didn’t automatically caption the video. It ended up costing more than \$7,000 to caption with captioning services available at the time.”

Why the high price tag? Accurate captioning is a slow business. Industry standards set the average time for editing video captions at around five to six-times the length of the video when outsourcing the process to captioning services. These services generally charge \$3 to \$5 per minute. Even with a script, self-editing video creators can often expect to spend two to three-times the length of their video editing captions.

“The only financially sustainable solution we could see was to encourage video creators to caption their own content,” said David.

The Solution

David needed to find a solution that could help the district improve online and distance education efforts at a reasonable price.

“We looked at a number of solutions and it came down to two different solutions,” said David. “One solution was a server application running a proprietary captioning system. The other was Camtasia Relay, which gave us an integrated screencasting production environment that also had a captioning tool on the back-end.”

When the final decision was made, SDCCD found that Camtasia Relay offered more functionality at a smaller price tag than programs that only captioned videos. Initially, they hosted their content on TechSmith’s servers. But they soon realized that their own servers were perfectly capable of handling the production process, further reducing the cost to the district.

Camtasia Relay automatically generates captions for videos when users send content to their server. Relay will notify content creators that captions are ready to review, at which point they can login to the Camtasia Relay website to review the captions. Better yet, Camtasia Relay learns the user’s speech patterns and word choices and becomes more accurate the more often it is used.

David and his colleagues created a short video to walk faculty through the process of setting up Camtasia Relay in their classroom. The ease of setting up a Relay account has saved upwards of three hours per faculty member using the service, according to David.

By using TechSmith products to create this video — the same tools he’s giving to faculty — David has significantly decreased the time he spends repeating tutorials. This allows him to focus on more difficult questions they may have. And with hundreds of faculty to support, David needs to make the most of his time.

“We’ve also found that teachers like to keep much of their work in-house,” said David. “They like to be responsible for editing their own captions within Relay because it ensures their message remains the same. Nothing gets lost in the caption process and they maintain control over how the information is shared afterward.”

The Result

SDCCD faculty have created hundreds of videos for their students. And, if one teacher can rack up \$7,000 worth of caption services, it is safe to say that the district has saved thousands by captioning videos in-house.

Furthermore, the ability to roll out Camtasia Relay across the district allowed David and his colleagues to empower faculty with an easy-to-use but powerful teaching tool. David notes that students have come to expect videos from their professors so that they can better understand the information being presented to them.

“Many teachers like to use YouTube videos in their presentations,” said David. “Some of our teachers will embed or link to YouTube videos in their presentation. When they play the video during lecture, Camtasia Relay will listen to the YouTube video audio, just as it would with the professor. Once the lecture is over, the professor sends it to the Relay server to be automatically captioned, YouTube video and all.”

Education has taken a number of hits financially over the last few years, which makes some wary of the grant created by the California Community Colleges Chancellor’s Office. As with so many things in education, the grant is subject to change as well.

“Even if we knew for sure that the grant would never run out, we would still have a place for Camtasia Relay,” said David. “It’s simply much more efficient. We don’t have to fill out nearly as many application forms to request grant money for captioning our projects. Camtasia Relay makes the process much more practical.”

The district sends out a student satisfaction survey at the end of each year for online courses. Students consistently mention video in their responses and comment on the benefits of video in their online education.

Moving forward, SDCCD will continue creating and updating video content for students and faculty alike. And they can do so without being overly reliant on outside funding. David and his colleagues are able to provide tools and instructional videos to faculty that answer basic questions, freeing up their time to continue finding new solutions in the developing online education world.

About Camtasia Relay

With Camtasia Relay, instructors and presenters can use any PC or Mac in the classroom or conference room, at their desk, or at home. Audiences can view and listen to the recorded lectures and presentations online, via learning management systems like Blackboard, via iTunes U, or on mobile devices such as the iPod or iPhone. And with LDAP integration, IT staff can quickly and easily set up and assign recording profiles for their organizations based on the needs of the presenter and their audience.

Get product details, attend a webinar, download a free trial:

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