

Thomas Nelson Community College
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PODCASTING @ TNCC PILOT PLAN

Introduction

Podcasts are digital media files, shared over the web, for the delivery of audio and video content to students. Podcasts can be downloaded and played back on portable media players (iPods or MP3 players), personal computers and even some cell phones. The use of podcasts in educational settings has become increasingly popular and can be attributed to the pervasiveness of portable media players, cell phones and laptops among college students. Podcasting is beneficial to student learning in that it offers students additional study tools to supplement their face to face and distance classes. Additionally, students are afforded convenient access to relevant course materials.

Description of the Pilot Project

Thomas Nelson Community College will leverage podcasting technology in a three phase roll out. This will begin with a pilot group of pre-selected instructors.

- Phase 1: Audio only,
- Phase 2: Audio/video
- Phase 3: Enhanced podcasts (Audio files with accompanying still images, chapter marks and other contextual information)

Phase 1 of the pilot will begin in the fall 2007 with Phase 2 continuing with the pilot group, plus a limited number of additional members, in the spring of 2008. Phase 3 will begin in the summer of 2008 and expand to 15 additional participants in the 3rd annual TNCC's Camp Connected. The pilot group will become mentors (Camp Counselors) in the final phase.

Objective

The primary objective of the TNCC Podcasting Pilot Project is to create a library of multi-disciplinary supplemental educational resources to include:

- Recordings of face-to-face course lectures,
- Supplemental faculty-authored content to assist students in understanding difficult subject matter and/or to reinforce course content,
- Remedial faculty-authored content that provides students with opportunities for additional review and/or practice,
- Information to highlight programs, new initiatives, and relevant TNCC events.

Scope

The scope of this pilot project is to work with specific academic division instructors and support personnel to capture lectures and other relevant content for publication (iTunes U and/or RSS) accessible to students and other interested parties. Instructors for the pilot were chosen based on

interest and/or recommendation of division deans. Six instructors and two college support personnel were chosen for phase 1 of the pilot.

- Brenda Allen – Communities and Humanities
- Marty Zahn – Allied Health Sciences
- Norm Hahn – Business, Public Services and Social Science
- Art Billingsley – Mathematics, Engineering, and Technology
- Dawn Hayden – College Wide Initiatives
- Jan Klingberg – Instructional Design
- Alicia Lowery – Foreign Language
- TBA – Foreign Language

The pilot faculty will create 5-10 initial content items in advance of the deployment of TNCC iTunes U and will continue to add 1- 4 items of content per month during the course of the semester. Content authored by TNCC faculty will exist within an open, freely accessible system, providing the easiest access possible for student users.

Policy Statement

TNCC seeks to make instructional podcast content as freely accessible as possible. With this goal in mind, all content authored by TNCC faculty and staff during this pilot project will be licensed under Creative Commons, a best practice approach for podcast licensing. Ownership of content produced in the pilot will mirror establish VCCS policies of Intellectual Property.

- <http://myfuture.vccs.edu/Portals/0/ContentAreas/PolicyManual/sec12.pdf>
- <http://www.creativecommons.org>

TNCC's intention when utilizing this license is to permit content creators retention of intellectual property rights while at the same time granting the college and public users maximum and unfettered access to the content.

Faculty and Staff participating in this pilot program, as well as follow up efforts, will be asked to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between themselves and the College, relating to their rights to content and the College's usage rights.

Pilot Project Guidelines

Participants involved in the pilot will attend 2 to 3 training session and monthly progress meetings. Participants will be asked to mentor and encourage others with podcasting activities on campus and become Camp Counselors at the 3rd annual TNCC Camp Connected. Participants also will be asked to complete a survey, permitting the project to be evaluated and improved. Faculty participating in the pilot may be asked to meet with the podcasting instructors and other faculty members to share their experiences. Faculty feedback and involvement in the project are valued and are key factors in developing a successful program.

Scheduling of content uploads will be managed by the Web Services Project Manager so that recordings are optimally formatted and adhere to technical best practices. Management and configuration tasks will need to remain centralized for consistency.

For the pilot project, no space limitations will be in place. However, if some recordings or materials occupy large amounts of storage space, the Web Services Project Manager and/or Instructional Designers will work in consultation with the participant to limit or remove content.

Measurement and evaluation methods

Surveys will be sent to participants in the pilot project to determine needs, ease of use, benefits, and areas that call for improvement. Interviews may be conducted mid-way through Phase 1 to gather feedback and assess the system and support.

Students of participating pilot faculty may be asked to complete a survey to determine benefits, ease of use, availability, drawbacks encountered in how they listened to the lectures, desired improvements, etc.

Measurable Outcomes

- Gradual improvement of retention rates in courses using podcasting.
- Gradual improvement of grades over previous semesters with courses taught without podcasting.
- Increased demand for courses involved with pilot.
- Greater proficiency is using educational technology tools.
- Improvement in student satisfaction rates for courses using podcasting.

Pilot Project Timeline

- **Pilot Phase 1 (September 2007, audio only)**
 - Pilot to include a total of eight participants, selected from a variety of disciplines.
 - Training on basic audio recording and editing will be provided to pilot participants.
 - 6 Apple MacBook and MacBook Pro computers, 2 desktop iMacs
 - Corresponding Bluetooth and USB headsets
 - 3 iPod Nanos with attached microphones (in class lectures)
 - GarageBand and Audacity applications
 - MP3 format with target profile of 44.1 Khz, mono, 64 kbps
- **Pilot Phase 2 (January 2008, audio/video)**
 - Pilot will be broadened slightly to include four additional faculty members
 - At this same phase, faculty wishing to pilot video podcasts as well as audio format will be provided training and empowered to do so.
 - 4 additional MacBook and MacBook Pro computers and/or iPods (contingent upon funding)
 - Corresponding Bluetooth and USB headsets
- **Second Phase 3 (June 2008, audio, video, and enhanced)**
 - 15 Apple Macbook Pro computers offered to teaching distance learning faculty at TNCC Camp Connected 3.0

- Corresponding Bluetooth and USB headsets
- GarageBand and Audacity (audio podcasts)
- iMovie (video podcasts)
- MP3 format with target profile of 44.1 Khz, mono, 64 kbps (audio)
- QuickTime H.264 format for video with a target profile of 320X240 at 300kbps

iTunes U Process Flow

Step 1

- Instructor passes authored content to Web Services
- Web Services uploads and categorizes content into iTunes U instance on behalf of instructor
- Instructor disseminates information about the new content and service to students via both face-to-face and distance sections
- TNCC will maintain a point-of-entry website (podcasts.tncc.edu) which will serve as a jumping off point to TNCC's iTunes U instance

Step 2

- Web Services or the Instructional Technology Office will configure authorship accounts on the iTunes U instance on behalf of faculty on an individual basis
- Instructors will be responsible for uploading of authored content to TNCC iTunes U
- Instructor disseminates information about the new content and service to students via both face-to-face and distance sections
- TNCC will maintain a point-of-entry website (podcasts.tncc.edu) which will serve as a jumping off point to TNCC's iTunes U instance

Contingency Plan

(if iTunes U is unavailable for Fall 2007)

1. TNCC maintains an Apple Xserve server, currently leveraged as a streaming media delivery platform.
2. Instructors will record and author content with the same software tools outlined previously.
3. Authored content will be taken into the Podcast Maker application with additional meta data be added to the content element and made part of a traditional podcast feed.
4. Faculty will establish a VPN connection to TNCC (if off campus), or leverage FTP transfer, placing this content and RSS XML on a prescribed location on this system.
5. TNCC will maintain a point-of-entry website (podcasts.tncc.edu) upon which these podcast feeds and content will be placed.

Alternatively, TNCC may elect to leverage Podcast Producer and Podcast Server, part of the forthcoming OS 10.5 Server and client to produce a similar result.