

Informal Screencasting:
Results of a Customer-Satisfaction Survey
with a Convenience Sample

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Abstract

Purpose

Informal screencasting (i.e., capturing your actions on a computer screen with the goal of showing others how to accomplish tasks on a website or in a given software environment) is defined and described. Customer-satisfaction survey results from 103 faculty, staff, and students are presented.

Design/methodology/approach

An online survey revealing customer satisfaction with informal screencasts was made available in spring 2010 to faculty, staff, and students of a mid-sized public university in Arlington, Texas, USA. Results are compiled, analyzed, and presented here.

Findings

Most participants' reactions to the librarian's informal screencasts were positive or quite positive, but many participants still noted that they would prefer to receive email instructions in answer to their questions.

Research limitations/implications

The survey was not distributed to a representative sample of the population; instead, the author solicited participants via email, so the participant pool was a convenience sample, which could introduce bias in the results.

Originality/value

This survey is the first to assess academic library customers' attitudes toward informal screencasting as an instructional tool, as far as the author has been able to determine after an extensive literature search.

Keywords: Screencasting, distance education, library instruction, academic libraries, computer-based instruction, information literacy

Paper type: Research

Introduction

For almost the entire history of libraries in the United States, the institutions were perceived as quiet, studious spaces for serious scholarly research; this statement is particularly true for academic libraries. Ross and Sennyey (2008) eloquently captured this fact when they wrote, “Until the advent of the Internet, academic libraries had no competition and their patrons were a captive audience. Students and faculty either learned the protocols and organizational principles of the library, no matter how esoteric or complex, or did without” (p. 146). Furthermore, before the 1970s, most literature about how librarians should perform reference work was focused on their knowledge of information sources, not on how they interacted with clients (Ross, Nilsen, & Dewdney, 2002, p. 5). In the 1970s and 1980s, however, librarians began to realize that change was needed in their institutions, but it was not until the rise of the Internet in the 1990s that those in the profession truly began to panic as they saw dramatic decreases in gate counts and circulation statistics (Carlson, 2001). How might the field of librarianship go about changing these downward-trending numbers? Ross et al. (2002) have made a compelling argument that reference services must improve:

Librarianship must take a service orientation. We are convinced that the institutions that will survive the 21st century and beyond are those that serve their clients and give them the help they need. If libraries don't provide helpful information services, users will turn to other service providers who are more service oriented. (p. 5)

Furthermore, Ross and Sennyey (2008) wrote, “In recognition of the new competitive environment in which libraries now operate, many libraries are already experimenting with new service models, workflows, and building redesigns” (p. 151).

One new service model that librarians have experimented with in recent years has been screencasting, which Reitz (2010) has defined as follows:

Screencast

A term coined in 2004 in reference to a digital videorecording of computer screen output, often including voice-over narration. Useful for demonstrating and teaching software applications and Web site features, especially in computer based training (CBT) systems, screencasting requires software (either a desktop client or Web-based service) designed to capture and synchronize video and audio files and compress the data into a format that can be shared. Although software such as Lotus ScreenCam was developed as early as

1994, large file size and limited editing were cumbersome. More recent software supports compact file formats and provides more sophisticated editing capabilities.

As discussed in this article, informal screencasting (i.e., capturing your actions on a computer screen with the goal of showing others how to accomplish tasks on a website or in a given software environment) is an opportunity for libraries to impress patrons in a way that greatly aids their information-seeking process and saves time for librarians. Typically, library staff answer email, chat, or SMS questions by typing lengthy instructions for users to follow; this method is time-consuming and frustrating for library staff and patrons alike. New free screencasting tools make capturing online video and audio as simple as clicking a button and demonstrating a database search, just as one would in face-to-face transactions. Librarians can personalize the screencast, addressing patrons by name and answering their specific questions, making patrons feel valued and giving them the sense that their questions are important. Because these screencasting services force librarians to keep the screencast short and often do not allow editing, most screencasts can be made in under fifteen minutes. Librarians can then upload the screencast and send the link to the patron. This process is much faster and easier than traditional screencasting, which requires high-end software, training, and often a great deal of time to edit and perfect the videos. This article provides a summary of the library literature pertaining to all types of screencasting in libraries, a description of the customer-satisfaction research project on screencasting done at the University of Texas at Arlington, the results of the research, and implications for the future.

Literature Review

Screencasting has been discussed in the library literature since the early 2000s, but it has been only within the past five or six years that it has become a readily accessible, viable option for most librarians. In two early, very brief articles, Carroll (2002) and Watson (2004) introduced the idea of screencasting, though neither used the term; Carroll called them *viewlets* (because she specifically wrote about a tool called ViewletBuilder made by Qarbon), and Watson called them *video screen recordings*. Cox (2004) appears to be one of the first in the library literature to focus specifically on Camtasia as a screencasting tool; in his article, he gave a brief history and literature review on streaming video and provided an overview of streaming video creation using Camtasia. Notess (2005) described screencasting and discussed both high-end and freeware tools and noted the advantages of screencasts and different uses for them. Ferguson and Ferguson

(2005) discussed Camtasia as an instructional tool in the larger context of several other tools that can be used to help distance learners. Also in 2005, Goodwin published an article about Camtasia in which she touted it as a superb tool for achieving buy-in from stakeholders in a library website redesign since it allowed her to record the actions of participants in usability studies. In a similar vein, Mack et al. (2004) used Camtasia as part of a website redesign project. Clark and Kou (2008) briefly described and reviewed Adobe Captivate and Camtasia, discussing the pros and cons of each for medical librarians, and Murley (2007) published much the same article for law librarians. Betty (2008) used Captivate to make tutorials and Google Analytics to assess their use; he had many convoluted problems with Google Analytics for which he provided complex solutions. In the United Kingdom, Wales and Robertson (2008) were the first to publish an article focusing on use of screencasting at an online-only university. They documented the process they went through to develop online tutorials using Captivate, including a pilot program. They recommended four phases: planning, storyboarding, production, and review, which included immediate feedback from users as well as feedback from a survey at the end of the course (Wales & Robertson, 2008, p. 372). In the end, they concluded that their process may be overcomplicated and lengthy and stated, “Perhaps, we should cease looking for that perfectly honed version and strive instead to create a ‘good enough’ version” (p. 378).

The year that screencasting appears to have really become a buzzword across the profession seems to be 2009, as evidenced by the following nine articles. Kroski (2009) published a short article in *School Library Journal* in which she defined screencasting and briefly described available software and how it could be used in a K–12 setting. Buczynski (2009) made the argument for providing video tutorials but did not describe personal experience doing so. Carr and Ly (2009) focused on virtual reference services and described their experiences with using Jing (which exists in both free and paid versions) to make screencast tutorials as a case study but offered only anecdotal evidence (e.g., chat transcripts) of their users’ opinions of them. Farkas (2009) offered a very brief introduction to and overview of screencasting. Griffis (2009) outlined a few free screencasting tools and noted that files from them can often be imported into Camtasia or Captivate for greater flexibility and customizability. Oud (2009) took a somewhat different and more ambitious tack, delving into cognitive psychology research to describe how screencasting and other multimedia tools can be used effectively in instruction. Although Oud pointed out the need for assessment of multimedia

screencasts, she did not include any in her article. In the first of three short articles for the “Product Pipeline” column in *Library Journal*, Rethlefsen (2009a) summarized the features librarians should look for in free screencasting tools and reviewed and rated five of them. In the second article, she reviewed and rated one low-cost tool (Jing Pro) and two premium tools (Adobe Captivate 4 and Camtasia Studio 6; Rethlefsen, 2009b). In the last article, Rethlefsen (2009c) focused on Twitter but also described two tools that can be used to tweet screencasts (Screenjelly and Screenr).

Publications from the past couple of years have proved that librarians are still quite interested in screencasting. Price (2010), for example, focused solely on Jing—its advantages, its features, and how to use it; Price also detailed the process of uploading Jing screencasts to Screencast.com. Writing for science and technology librarians, Sparks (2010) defined screencasting, gave examples of how it could be used in instruction, summarized features of four free screencasting tools, and gave a handy table that easily showed all this information at a glance. On the opposite end of the disciplinary spectrum, Tewell (2010) published an article about screencasting for art librarians in which he analyzed “the availability and quality of video tutorials among 290 academic libraries serving art students” (p. 53). He found that 48% of the libraries he studied offered video tutorials and of those, most offered screencasts; he concluded by encouraging art librarians not only to make more video tutorials, but also to make them more inventive by adding live-action sequences and encouraging students to be part of the process. Williams (2010) broadly discussed several tools that librarians can use for online information literacy instruction, including blogs, podcasts, screencasts, web-based board games, and the virtual environment of Second Life. For their Information Literacy and Technologies Program, Hernández and Domínguez (2010) developed a blog that included screencasts. However, they did not describe their screencasts; their article focused on assessment of their blog as an adjunct to their information literacy instruction. They noted that the students and librarians who were surveyed about their blog were able to find the screencast transcripts they had provided; no other form of assessment of the screencasts was mentioned. Jacobsen (2011) described his process of making one-off screencasts (similar to this author’s) and briefly described three free online screencasting tools but offered no assessment of his end products.

The Current Project

This author first learned of the availability of free screencasting software tools in the summer of 2009 and began using Screenjelly to make screencast videos shortly thereafter. The choice of which screencasting tool to use was based on the following criteria: cost, ease of use, accessibility from various workstations (e.g., the reference desk, office, home), and level of user-friendliness. For the purposes of this article, *informal screencasts* are defined as simple, three-minute, unedited video screen captures with audio voiceover. Most were made as a specific response to a reference question from students or faculty members at the University of Texas at Arlington (UTA). A few screencasts were made that illustrated technical problems with databases or other library systems; the URLs for these screencasts were sent to the UTA Library Systems Help Desk personnel so that they could readily understand the problem. A couple of screencasts were instructional and served as answers to frequently asked questions (e.g., how to tell if a journal is peer reviewed) and were embedded in the UTA Library's LibGuides pages. In all, this author made 39 screencasts using Screenjelly¹; total number of views for the screencasts was 346, ranging from 0 to 66 ($M = 8.87$ views). For an example of a recent screencast made by this author, please see "Guide to Informal Screencasting" at <http://libguides.uta.edu/screencasting> or the same video on YouTube at <http://youtu.be/PeilgMQ2I4k> (the YouTube version will be much lower resolution, and thus details will be harder to discern).

Regarding the similarity of this author's use of screencasting to that of other librarians, discussions in recent library literature demonstrate that many librarians in academic, K-12, and special libraries are using screencasting in much the same ways and with the same goals (Carr and Ly, 2009; Farkas, 2009; Ferguson and Ferguson, 2005; Griffis, 2009; Jacobsen, 2011; Notess, 2005; Oud, 2009; Price, 2010; Rethlefsen, 2009a, 2009b; Sparks, 2010; Tewell, 2010; Wales and Robertson, 2008; Williams, 2010). Thus, even though a probability sample was not

¹In the spring of 2011, Screenjelly.com died a quiet death. Steiner Sports apparently owns the domain now, and the URLs to videos made by this author are no longer valid or functional. By performing a Google search on what was the URL for the page that listed all of this author's Screenjelly videos, a cached version of the page was available. It was thus possible to obtain their titles, the date they were uploaded, their URLs, and the number of views for each. Viable free alternatives for Screenjelly are Screenr and Jing. Many others are listed here: <http://alternativeto.net/software/screenjelly/> and here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparison_of_screencasting_software

recruited for this study (see below), the findings herein can be somewhat generalized to other libraries.

At first, no formal attempt was made to gather any feedback from constituents regarding their opinions of the screencast videos, although many students and faculty spontaneously responded with enthusiastic and positive comments via email. After approximately 30 screencasts were made and uploaded, a more formal assessment of screencasting seemed to be in order. Therefore, the research problem being investigated here was as follows: until this point, research related to library screencasts has failed to assess academic library users' opinions and preferences related to screencasts as an instructional tool. The research question was, quite simply, what are academic library users' opinions and preferences related to screencasts as an instructional tool?

Methodology

In January 2010, it was decided to make available a satisfaction-style survey on screencasting to the faculty, students, and staff members of the departments with which this author works as a subject librarian at UTA: Interdisciplinary Studies (INTS), Linguistics and TESOL (LING), Modern Languages (MODL), and Philosophy and Classics (PHIL). The survey was also made available to all the employees of the UTA Library. An exemption from coverage under the federal guidelines for the protection of human subjects from the UTA Institutional Review Board (Protocol #2010-0317) was applied for and received on March 29, 2010.

Recruitment

On April 20, 2010, an email was sent to the following entities or persons: an email list for the INTS Program that included all students, staff, and faculty in the program ($n = 650$); an email list for the LING Department that included all students, staff, and faculty in the department ($n = 129$); the head administrative assistant of the MODL Department (with the understanding that she would distribute it to all MODL faculty and students; $n = \sim 250$); the faculty and administrative assistant of the PHIL Department ($n = 13$); and the entire staff of the Library ($n = 120$). Because each academic department or program has only one to five staff members, the numbers of Library staff receiving the request to participate in the survey by far outweighed non-Library staff members. At a minimum, total email recipients and thus number of possible respondents to the survey was approximately 1,116 persons, and because no attempt was made to recruit a probability sample, this was a convenience sample. Thus, the extent to which this

sample represents the opinions of the general population is not known. See Appendix A for the text of the email message that was sent. The request was repeated via email to the same recipients on April 29, 2010; this email stated that the survey would be extended by one week, until May 7, 2010, at which time a final reminder was emailed to the same recipients, notifying them that the survey would close that day, which it did.

Survey Instrument

Appendix B is a copy of the survey, which was conducted exclusively online using the service Survey Monkey; copies of the survey were not provided in person nor via postal mail. The survey was in two parts: a demographic section and an opinion section. The demographic section dealt with the respondents' sex, age, and campus classification; all three of these questions were mandatory. These demographic variables were chosen because they would reveal the most useful information about participants in relation to their opinions about the screencasts. The opinion section consisted of eight questions, all of which were optional: one yes/no question, two 5-point Likert-type scale questions, two multiple-choice questions for which respondents could choose up to three responses, one multiple-choice question that allowed only one choice, and two open-ended questions for which respondents could write in an answer. In this section, the term *screencast video* was used first, and then the term *videos* was used because participants are more familiar with that word than with *screencasting*. The first question in this section asked participants whether they had seen one of this author's screencasts before; if they had not, they were directed to watch one so that they could complete the rest of the survey. The next two Likert-type questions were designed to elicit a holistic view of participants' opinions of the screencasts: they asked participants how favorably they viewed the videos and how useful they thought they were. The two multiple-choice questions asked participants to check off up to three responses for what they liked most and least about the videos; they were also given an opportunity to write in a response on each of these questions. These questions were included so that the survey would yield data about what was working well and what needed improvement in the screencasts. The next multiple choice question asked participants to indicate how they preferred to receive an answer from the librarian when they asked a question; it was included so that participants would have a way to explicitly state how they preferred to receive information. The final two open-ended questions allowed respondents to make suggestions for improving the

screencasts and to add any final comments they wished, which gave them the opportunity to express any opinions that up to that point had not been solicited.

Results

The survey results were first examined for all respondents and then broken down in three different ways: (a) by age; (b) by campus classification; and (c) by those who responded “yes” to Question 4 (i.e., those who had had an actual information need and had received a screencast tailored to that need; the yes group) and those who answered “no” (i.e., those who had not received a personalized screencast video and thus were working in a hypothetical situation, as it were; the no group).

Demographic Section

A total of 103 survey recipients responded, which yielded a response rate of 9.2%. This percentage is based on the total possible number of recipients, which is an approximation; thus the actual response rate may have been slightly higher or lower. Respondents included 76 women and 27 men (73.8% and 26.2%, respectively). Table 1 shows the percentages of respondents by age. The largest age group was the 46- to 55-year-old group, and when those responses were broken down by campus classification, it was revealed that participants in this age group were from the UTA undergraduate student ($n = 13$), faculty ($n = 4$), and staff ($n = 10$) populations. The results of the campus classification question (see Table 2) show that the largest group of respondents was UTA staff members ($n = 42$), and the combination of UTA faculty, staff, and graduate student respondents ($n = 61$) was much larger than the undergraduate respondent category ($n = 40$). It is interesting to note, however, that taken alone, the UTA staff respondent category ($n = 42$) and the undergraduate respondent category ($n = 40$) are almost equal.

**Table 1. Participants’ Ages
(in Years)**

Age	%	<i>n</i>
18–25	11.7	12
26–35	17.5	18
36–45	22.3	23
46–55	27.2	28
55+	21.4	22

Table 2. Participants' Campus Classification

Classification	%	<i>n</i>
Undergraduate student	38.8	40
Graduate student	7.8	8
Faculty	10.7	11
Staff	40.8	42
Other (please specify)*	1.9	2

*One respondent was an undergraduate student *and* a staff member, and one specified that she/he was a librarian, which is considered staff at UTA.

Opinion Section

The first question in this part of the survey (Question 4) simply asked, “Have you personally received a Screenjelly video in response to a question you sent to me via email or some other method?” The yes group comprised 26.8% participants ($n = 22$), and the no group comprised 73.2% ($n = 60$).² The no group was informed they could click on a URL that took them to a page listing all of this author’s Screenjelly screencasts and choose one to watch so that they could complete the survey after having seen a screencast.

Regarding how favorably participants regarded the screencast videos (Question 5), a majority of all respondents (66.7%, $n = 50$) rated them as either “very good” or “excellent” (see Table 3), and 0 respondents checked the “poor” category. The largest percentage of the yes group, however, answered this question with “excellent” (45.5%), whereas the largest percentage of the no group answered this question with “good” (35.8%).

²Although the demographic questions were mandatory, all the questions on the satisfaction portion of the survey were optional, so the total number of respondents to any given question will not necessarily equal 103.

Table 3. Participants' Opinions: "Overall, How Favorable or Unfavorable Is Your Opinion of the Video(s)?"

Level of Favorability	%	<i>n</i>
Poor	0.0	0
Fair	1.3	1
Good	32.0	24
Very good	32.0	24
Excellent	34.7	26
Total		75

For the usefulness question (Question 6), again, a majority of total respondents (84%, $n = 63$) responded quite positively, checking either "useful" or "very useful" (see Table 4). Of the 22 people in the yes group, 68.2% found the screencasts "very useful" versus 37.7% of those giving the same response in the no group.

Table 4. Participants' Opinions: "How Useful Do You Find the Videos?"

Level of Usefulness	%	<i>n</i>
Not at all useful	0.0	0
Somewhat useful	8.0	6
Neutral	8.0	6
Useful	37.3	28
Very useful	46.7	35
Total		75

Question 7 asked respondents what they liked the most about the videos and allowed them to select up to three responses; there was also an "other" response that allowed them to answer in their own words. A total of 75 participants responded to this question. Table 5 illustrates the results, showing that the following were the top three responses: "demonstration of how to find what I need" (61.3%), "ability to see what the librarian is doing" (58.7%), and "ability to watch it more than once" (49.3%). Additionally, on this question, 77.3% of the yes group responded that what they liked most about the screencasts was the "ability to see what the librarian is doing," whereas 71.7% of the no group responded that they most liked the

“demonstration of how to find what I need.” When responses were broken down by campus classification, 55.6% of undergraduate students and 83.3% of graduate students responded “demonstration of how to find what I need.” However, 77.8% of faculty and 75.8% of staff most liked the “ability to see what the librarian is doing.”

Table 5. Participants’ Opinions: “What Things Do You Like Most About the Videos (If Anything)?”

Choices for “Like Most”	%	<i>n</i>
Personalized answer to my question	37.3	28
Demonstration of how to find what I need	61.3	46
Length of time it takes to watch	21.3	16
Ability to watch it more than once	49.3	37
Ability to see what the librarian is doing	58.7	44
Ability to simultaneously hear her instructions	44.0	33
Don’t know	5.3	4
Other (please specify)	1.3	1
Total		75

Table 6 shows that when participants were asked in Question 8 what they liked least about the screencasts, only a little more than half the total number of participants responded ($n = 56$), and they were again allowed to choose up to three responses. Of all respondents, the largest percentage (35.7%, $n = 20$) chose “difficult to see and/or hear what’s going on”; the second and third largest percentages were “other” and “don’t know” (32.1%, $n = 18$; and 30.4%, $n = 17$, respectively). Most “other” write-in responses had to do with the participants’ difficulty in making out details on the screen, although a couple said that there was nothing they disliked about the screencasts (see Appendix C for a full list of these write-in responses).

Table 6. Participants' Opinions: "What Things Do You Like Least About the Videos (If Anything)?"

Choices for "Like Least"	%	<i>n</i>
Video is too short	3.6	2
Difficult to see and/or hear what's going on	35.7	20
Video doesn't play for me	3.6	2
The video site's (i.e., Screenjelly's) user interface is not intuitive	12.5	7
Length of time it takes to watch	12.5	7
Don't know	30.4	17
Other (please specify)	32.1	18
Total		56

Question 9 dealt with how participants preferred to receive answers to questions emailed to a librarian, and respondents could choose only one response (see Table 7). A total of 75 participants answered this question, and by far, the majority (72.0%, $n = 54$) preferred to receive an answer via email. The next largest category was "personalized screencast," with 16.0% ($n = 12$) preferring this method. The write-in comments for the "other" response included two from graduate students: "email first, then personalized screencast if need be;" "If it is simple, an email is preferable. If it involves a few steps then screencast works very well;" and one from a staff member: "for me it would depend on context, but in general i imagine i'd [sic] prefer email." Furthermore, only 18.2% of the yes group stated that their one most preferred way of receiving an answer to their questions was via a personalized screencast. When results were broken down by age, a majority of the 18- to 25-year-old group still preferred email (62.5%), but 25% of them preferred instant messaging. In the campus classification breakdown, email was still most preferred, but 22.2% of undergraduate students and 18.2% of staff chose personalized screencast.

Table 7. Participants' Opinions: "When Emailing the Librarian to Ask a Question, What Is Your One Most Preferred Way of Receiving a Response?"

Choices of Response Method	%	<i>n</i>
Email	72.0	54
Phone call	2.7	2
Instant messaging	4.0	3
Personalized screencast	16.0	12
Personal visit	1.3	1
Other (please specify)	4.0	3
Total		75

The last two questions on the survey were open ended. The first asked participants for their ideas regarding how the videos might be improved, and 27 people responded. Most of their answers had to do with improving the quality, size, and/or detail of the video image; a few mentioned that the librarian should speak or perform actions more slowly to make it easier to follow along (see Appendix D for a complete list of responses). The last question asked whether participants had any "other comments or suggestions about the videos," and 31 people wrote in responses to this question (see Appendix E for a complete list of responses). Most of these responses were quite enthusiastic and included comments such as, "What an amazing resource;" "What a great tool!" and "best of all worlds: email response, video demonstration, personalized answer, voice to complement the email text and the visual demo."

Discussion

The responses to the Library Screencasting Satisfaction Survey were on the whole positive and encouraging. Most respondents gave a high favorability rating to the screencasts. It was interesting to note that the largest percentage of the yes group (i.e., the group that had an actual information need) rated the screencasts as excellent, compared with the largest percentage of the no group, which rated them as good. This result could indicate that whether an individual had an actual information need influenced their perceptions of the screencasts.

Regarding the usefulness of the screencasts, they again received a high rating. When results were broken down on this question to the yes group and the no group, however, the yes group gave a strong usability rating, whereas the no group was not quite as enthusiastic, again indicating that the lack of an information need colored participants' opinions on usefulness.

When participants answered the question concerning what they liked most about the screencasts, they converged on the fact that they are a visual demonstration (rather than a textual description) of a process that can be viewed multiple times. These characteristics of screencasts are highly advantageous for those students who learn best by watching and listening compared with those who learn best by reading. The yes group and the no group again differed in their responses to this question, with a majority of the yes group indicating that seeing what the librarian was doing (i.e., the process) was the most liked aspect of the screencasts and a majority of the no group answering that being able to find what they needed (i.e., the end result, even if hypothetical) was their most liked aspect. This difference again indicates that the presence of an actual information need influenced these participants' opinions about the screencasts. It also suggests that a study that targets only those who received a screencast in response to a real information need may be merited. On the other hand, when broken down by campus classification, a majority of students (both undergraduate and graduate) liked the screencasts best because they helped them find what they needed, but the faculty and staff best liked seeing the process. So in this case, students are zeroing in on the results, whereas faculty and staff seem to prefer learning about the process of finding information.

As to what they liked least about the screencasts, participants indicated that it was sometimes difficult to see the picture and/or hear the audio. This response is likely at least partially the researcher's fault since participants were not instructed to click on the button that would cause the screencast to play in full-screen mode, and a quick review of the write-in responses in Appendix C verifies this hypothesis. In everyday practice, however, this researcher's standard method of informing patrons that a screencast has been made for them is via email, and patrons are always instructed to watch the screencast in full-screen mode. One of the responses to this question also brought out the fact that library patrons are not able to watch the screencasts and follow along at the same time, and several commented that the verbal instructions were not clearly audible or too fast, so librarians would do well to monitor the voiceover aspect of screencasts. It must be noted, however, that the Screenjelly software allowed recordings of only up to three minutes, so speed was of the essence.

The responses to the next question were somewhat puzzling since by far the majority said they would prefer that the librarian answer their questions via email—puzzling because most respondents had a very positive reaction to the screencasts in questions before and after this one.

Perhaps the wording of the question was confusing to them, and they thought that an email response could be a simple notification that the librarian had made a screencast for them? Perhaps they did not perceive the question to mean that an email response would be a textual description of actions they needed to take to resolve their issue or find the information they needed? If so, then the question should have been worded more clearly, and the contradictory results here would thus likely be due to faulty survey construction. Researchers planning to undertake a similar customer-satisfaction survey in the future should be careful to word this question in the clearest possible way. Another note regarding this question: conventional wisdom might posit that another explanation as to why the majority of responses to this question were email rather than screencasts is that the majority of participants were in a somewhat older category (46- to 55-year-olds), and this age group perhaps prefers email, compared with younger people who are 18–35 years old. A recent study by the Pew Internet and American Life Project does not support this explanation, however. These researchers found that 96% of 18- to 33-year-olds use email versus 91% of 46- to 55-year-olds (Zickuhr, 2010). It is interesting to note when looking beyond the number-one response for this question (i.e., email) that the 18- to 25-year-old group's second most preferred method of contact is instant messaging, and the second most preferred method of contact for the undergraduates and staff members was personalized screencast.

Responses to the last two open-ended questions were gratifying and extremely helpful in terms of giving screencast creators direction on how to improve screencasts. In particular, it seems important to avoid “off-putting” phrases such as “I want you to . . .” and to provide explanation as to why a certain action or choice is best so that users can generalize instruction to other situations. Librarians and educators should also try to slow down when speaking and to speak clearly. Additionally, it is essential to use a screencasting tool that will yield a high-resolution video capture in which details are easily discerned and to instruct recipients to watch the screencast in full-screen mode. A couple of the suggestions (editing the screencasts or adding highlight boxes to important areas on screen) are beyond the capability of most free screencasting software, including the features Screenjelly had.

Conclusion and Implications for the Future

The positive aspects of informal screencasting videos are numerous: they save time for librarians answering reference questions both synchronously and asynchronously since they

eliminate the need to write lengthy emails with step-by-step textual instructions. Most patrons are impressed that someone made a video just to answer their personal question, which provides an enormous boost to the customer-service reputation of the library. Many patrons perceive them as superior learning tools since they can actually see what the librarian is doing on screen and hear instructions in her voiceover. Finally, with just a bit more planning and polish, librarians can make informal screencasts that can be used as generic instructional tools posted to the library's website.

One downside to using free, web-based software such as Screenjelly is that one never knows when or if that company might cease to exist, as Screenjelly did. Free online services are sometimes tiered, however, and have a paid option that is usually quite reasonably priced and allows users to download their screencasts so they can be archived, and sometimes even imported into video-editing software such as Windows Live Movie Maker (part of the Windows 7 operating system), iMovie for Macs (also part of the operating system), or high-end programs such as Captivate or Camtasia. Jing (<http://www.techsmith.com/jing/>) is a good example of this type of tiered service. Librarians who want to investigate other options are encouraged to explore what is available on the open Web now and in the future since new screencasting services seem to be developing fairly frequently.

Responses to the Library Screencasting Satisfaction Survey reported here were overwhelmingly positive. Survey participants appreciated the fact that they could not only see what the instructor was doing but also hear verbal descriptions of the on-screen activities. They also responded very positively to the fact that the screencasts can be personalized for individuals' questions. Thus, librarians and other educators should avail themselves of this budget- and time-friendly resource that can make such a difference in the scholarly pursuits of their students and faculty members.

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Appendix A: Request for Participation in the Satisfaction Survey

Text of email request for participation in the satisfaction survey. Email was sent on April 20, 2010.

For wide distribution to all INTS, LING, MODL, and PHIL students and faculty and to all Library staff:

I am conducting a short satisfaction survey regarding the Screenjelly screencasting videos I have made in response to email questions students and faculty members have sent to me; in the case of videos for Library staff, they have accompanied and illustrated help desk tickets. I would greatly appreciate it if you could respond to the survey questions located here http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/library_screencasting; please note that **you can take the survey even if I have not made a video specifically for you** (the survey will give you a link to watch a video, and then you can give your opinion). This survey should take no more than 10 minutes of your time, and I will compile the results and present them at a poster session at the American Library Association's Annual Conference this June. **The survey will remain open until Friday, April 30, at 5 p.m.** Thank you in advance for your help.

Consent Statement

You are being asked to participate in a survey research project entitled "Library Screencasting Satisfaction Survey," which is being conducted by Jody E. Bailey, a librarian at the University of Texas at Arlington. This survey is anonymous. No one, including the researcher, will be able to associate your responses with your identity. Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to take the survey, to stop responding at any time, or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You must be at least 18 years of age to participate in this study. Your completion of the survey serves as your voluntary agreement to participate in this research project and your certification that you are 18 or older.

Questions regarding the purpose or procedures of the research should be directed to Jody E. Bailey at (817) 272-7516 or jbailey@uta.edu. This study has been exempted from the University of Texas at Arlington's Institutional Review Board (IRB) review in accordance with Federal regulations. The IRB, a university committee established by Federal law, is responsible for protecting the rights and welfare of research participants. You may contact the chairperson of the UT Arlington Institutional Review Board at (817) 272-3723 in the event of a research-related injury to the subject.

If in the unlikely event it becomes necessary for the IRB to review your research records, then the University of Texas at Arlington will protect the confidentiality of those records to the extent permitted by law. Your research records will not be released without your consent unless required by law or a court order. The data resulting from your participation may be made available to other researchers in the future for research purposes not detailed within this consent form. In these cases, the data will contain no identifying information that could associate you with it, or with your participation in any study.

Appendix B: The Screencasting Customer-Satisfaction Survey

Over the past few months, I have made several Screenjelly screencasting videos (i.e., videos that capture a demonstration on a computer screen along with simultaneous voiceover narration) in response to reference or research questions students, faculty, and staff have sent to me or as a way of showing our technical services staff a problem I am having. Please complete this short survey to give me your honest opinions about the usefulness of and your satisfaction with the video(s). If you have not yet seen one of the videos, you will shortly be given a URL where you can view one. Note: You must be 18 years of age or older to complete the survey.

Jody E. Bailey, MA, MLIS
Reference/Instruction Librarian
Central Library, Room 312
University of Texas at Arlington
jbailey@uta.edu
Ph: 817.272.7516

Demographic Information

1. I am
 - Male
 - Female

2. My age is
 - 18-25
 - 26-35
 - 36-45
 - 46-55
 - 55+

3. My campus classification is
 - Undergraduate student
 - Graduate student
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Other (please specify)_____

Your opinions

This part of the survey will gather your opinions about the screencasting videos I have made. Remember that you may choose to stop responding at any time or to skip any questions that you do not want to answer.

4. Have you personally received a Screenjelly screencasting video in response to a question you sent to me via email or some other method (e.g., as part of a help desk ticket)?
- Yes
 - No

If you answered “No” but would still like to participate in this survey, please open a new tab/window and copy/paste the following URL in the address bar (you will be able to view one or more of the videos here): <http://www.screenjelly.com/user/8TWHajzoruw>

5. Overall, how favorable or unfavorable is your opinion of the video(s)? Please choose ONLY ONE response.
- Poor
 - Fair
 - Good
 - Very good
 - Excellent
6. How useful do you find the videos? Please choose ONLY ONE response.
- Not at all useful
 - Somewhat useful
 - Neutral
 - Useful
 - Very Useful
7. What things do you like most about the videos (if anything)? Please choose UP TO THREE responses.
- Personalized answer to my question
 - Demonstration of how to find what I need
 - Length of time it takes to watch
 - Ability to watch it more than once
 - Ability to see what the librarian is doing
 - Ability to simultaneously hear her instructions
 - Don't know
 - Other (please specify)_____

8. What things do you like least about the videos (if anything)? Please choose UP TO THREE responses.

- Video is too short
- Difficult to see and/or hear what's going on
- Video doesn't play for me
- The video site's (i.e., Screenjelly's) user interface is not intuitive
- Length of time it takes to watch
- Don't know
- Other (please specify)_____

9. When emailing the librarian to ask a question, what is your ONE most preferred way of receiving a response?

- Email
- Phone call
- Instant messaging
- Personalized screencast
- Personal visit

10. How do you think the videos could be improved?

11. Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the videos?

Appendix C: “Other” Responses to Question 8, “What things do you like least about the videos?”

1. When I enlarged it to the full-screen, it took a minute to figure out how to get back.
2. ScreenJelly screen doesn't expand. Or did I mis [sic] something? Librarian spoke a little too quickly to follow along.
3. What's not to like? I thought it was great!
4. I had to use a different computer. Mine would not download Flash properly.
5. video was very clear after i [sic] maximized it
6. Sounds like the speaker is occasionally getting too close to the mic.
7. It was be nice if you could increase the screen jelly its [sic] hard to see the wording or symbols
8. Had no problems viewing it
9. video was too small, so I realized halfway through that I needed to enlarge it by typing ctrl +
10. small size of screen-it is hard to see the words
11. nothing.
12. There was some use of terminology that the recipient may not of [sic] understood.
13. print is so tiny, I guess that's the “Difficult to see/hear” - also, I didn't notice, but is there a pause button? I'll look again in a second.
14. The videos are not too long. By length I mean the waiting time that is captured on some when your connection was slow.
15. sound was soft at first. went very fast..dialog and clicking..but I am “older”, not a student.
16. hard to see well without making it fullscreen, which makes it impossible to follow along while it plays
17. oops, though i [sic] could have gone full-screen to watch the video, but then again fullscreen doesn't stick if you click off to something else
18. Primarily hard to see the screen

Appendix D: Responses to Question 10, “How do you think the videos could be improved?”

1. Picture quality.
2. a closer view to the screen might help
3. Make more of them
4. wider screen, provide contact info at end of session/viewing
5. A minor criticism: hard to see smaller items in screencast
6. Need to be able to expand the video screen so you can see what the Librarian is doing. Talk a little slower so we can follow you.
7. Ability to easily enlarge the video would be nice.
8. I received one, and I really have no criticism.
9. More compatible to all computers.
10. A method to slow the playing speed.
11. Recommend avoiding the phrase “I want you to.” Felt off-putting. Not sure why. Too commanding, perhaps. Or condescending. Maybe “I recommend” or “I suggest” would feel better from this end.
12. I think that they are find [sic] and another good way of receiving help.
13. don't know
14. Tip included at the beginning that we might need to enlarge the page by typing ctrl +
15. make screen larger
16. Video doesn't play in full-screen view on my laptop, and I have a pretty good video card with plenty of memory. Audio still plays OK.
17. I especially liked the video on statistics re educational level of prison population.
18. maybe include an explanation of why you are choosing different boolean [sic] operators and asterisk, etc. when doing journal searching.
19. They are excellent
20. Maybe speak a little slower? and/or make the picture a little bigger? But, all in all the videos are AWESOME and very very helpful! I love to format [sic], Jodi's voice, and the fact that I feel like I am getting such a great answer to my question whether it be on linguistics or tomatoes ! Wonderful resource!
21. a little bit slower when there are huge results.
22. Not sure. I watched a couple of videos, and they all seemed very helpful.
23. Not so much the videos, just the sites' navigations are very “text oriented”. One can get lost simply by looking at the screen as a result of so many things to look at.
24. Can you edit the videos? For example, edit out the pause when the demo source computer is running slow. Can you use a highlighter? Example, the mouse arrow spinning around selected text makes me dizzy.
25. I think they are great, and make it easy to send to other users if needed (but that might require them not to be so personal, which is a really nice touch!)
26. a little bit larger screen to view what the librarian is showing
27. no suggestion

Appendix E: Responses to Question 11, “Do you have any other comments or suggestions about the videos?”

1. Excellent videos and I love how you can see the past history of previous questions.
2. I never used it during the last semester but I will definitely use it starting the next semester. It is a great program!
3. Way to Go!
4. Overall, good concept.
5. I've not seen this used before and think that it's a great idea!!!! I like the way you tell what you are doing and at the same time, I am able to “see” what you are doing!
6. None, they are very good. I like them.
7. I think it is an ideal way to communicate. I assume the library can archive it and use the same one when the same questions are asked. I like that I can go back to it, too.
8. What an amazing resource. This is great for students like me who do most of their academic work off-campus.
9. Fantastic idea! Instructions on a specific topic could come in handy for late-night studiers and new learners. Great way to re-use instruction and possibly meet the needs of a lot more students in one fell swoop. Kudos!
10. Your efforts experimenting with a new form of instructing people are appreciated. I feel embarrassed to report that I have not tried them.
11. Keep up the good work.
12. Videos are clear and sound is good
13. No
14. Smart idea. I especially like that they can be watched more than once. I also like that the voice sounds casual rather than rehearsed.
15. good job.
16. none
17. These are good. I was wondering if you already knew what level of instruction the student needed.
18. This is great! I didn't realize that screenjelly [sic] videos from Jody were available. What a great tool! And a great reference librarian. ;)
19. I think these are great. takes into consideration aural and visual learners. Per question 9, it is the best delivery form.
20. Loved it! It was clear and showed the problem very clearly.
21. I want to do one - it is soo neat
22. Now, after looking at it again, yes...maybe a little slower & make sure there is a way to pause it so you don't lose your place. Jodi is so fluid with her directions & clicks, but I could lose my place... I'll watch some more....Thanks sooo much!
23. I really like the option of having personalized video responses.
24. Fantastic. I could always play it over and over to get it all in.
25. I wasn't aware of Screenjelly until now but think it's a great tool to use when answering people's questions
26. Great supplement for help desk tickets. I would emphasize “supplement”. A concern from a tech support perspective is a ticket still needs enough accompanying descriptive text to be useful. The ticket archives are sometimes referenced to find issue patterns. If I look back through previous tickets and just have a link to a screencast it is difficult to group issues quickly. I don't want to have to watch a video everytime [sic] to refresh my memory.

Another question is the permanence of the videos. If I click on the link in a month or year will the video still be available?

27. i'd love to see more of them, and it makes me wonder if i could request several for students in my particular courses who need them
28. seems really cool. I imagine the link to the video is in the email response, which seems really handy.. best of all worlds: email response, video demonstration, personalized answer, voice to complement the email text and the visual demo.
29. thought it was great. It summed up a lengthy email into just a few minutes that incorporated visual and audio details of instructions.
30. Fantastic application! Takes half of the trouble out of troubleshooting help desk tickets! This means I can, in some cases, resolve and respond to the problem much more quickly.
31. they are great. I didn't know about them until the survey.