

Screencast Guidelines

Example:

Rebuilding Fedora Indexes Screencast contributed by [Chris Wilper](#) from [DuraSpace](#)

Guidelines:

A screencast is a video of someone showing how to do something on a computer. Screencast software captures what is happening on the computer screen along with an audio recording of the speaker explaining what he/she is doing. Screencasts are an effective way of providing the user communities quick tutorials on specific tasks or functionality.

This guide will help you through the five easy steps to creating a screencast:

1. Planning a screencast
2. Choosing screencast recording software
3. Making the recording
4. Producing the final screencast video
5. Posting the screencast video

Planning a screencast

First, select the topic of your screencast. Good topics for screencasts are ones that show people clear steps for completing specific tasks online. The viewer will be watching a recording of your computer screen, following your mouse movements, and listening to your explanation of what you are doing. To the extent that your recording is clear, interesting to watch, and instructive, your screencast will be a success. Here are some suggestions for planning your screencast:

- Pick a topic from the KnowledgeBase table of contents for [DSpace](#) or [Fedora](#) and give your screencast the same name as the KnowledgeBase topic you've selected.
- Limit what you tackle. An effective screencast lasts about five minutes. If it is necessary to go longer than five minutes, you may want to consider dividing your topic into two or more screencasts, if appropriate (e.g., "Getting Started with DSpace Access Controls, Part One" and "...Part Two").
- Decide if you need to write out a script for yourself or perhaps jotting down a simple outline or some reminders will be sufficient. It may be easier not to juggle a written script while you're navigating through the flow of screens. There is no need to go overboard on the formality, but the audience should be able to easily follow your points.
- Download/configure your computer software for the screencast. In addition to the screencast software (see below), you will need to have an application environment set up for whatever you are going to demonstrate (e.g., internet connection, if required; applications installed, test data pre-configured, etc.)
- Rehearse your presentation a couple of times before recording it to optimize your instructional points, mouse movements, timing and how to use your selected screencast capture software (how to start, pause, un-pause, stop, etc.)
- If possible, plan to use an audio headset with a microphone for the best quality audio recording. Logitech USB headsets work very well, but most any USB headset should do nicely.
- The optimum video resolution for your finished product is 1280 x 720, also known as widescreen, 16/9, or High Definition (HD) video. Try to record at this resolution and define your video output the same way when you save your recording to maximize the viewable details by the viewer
- Save your screencast output as MP4, AVI, FLV, M4V, or MOV.

Choosing Screencast Recording Software

There are a number of software products suitable for creating screencasts. Some of them are open source or otherwise freely available for download, others are licensed for a fee.

We recommend the following tools:

Tool	Cost	Platform	Containers and Codecs	Notes
Screen cast-O-Matic	Free (Pro is \$12/year)	Windows, Mac, Linux	MP4, AVI, FLV (also save directly to YouTubeHD or Screencast-o-matic.com acct)	Runs from browser (Java applet), but records any screen/desktop activities. Has an easy setting for recording in "Full HD" resolution (1280x720). Can auto-letterbox smaller resolution recordings when saving. Very easy to use. Can highlight mouse cursor & all mouse clicks. 15-minute recording limit (Pro is unlimited). Videos are branded with a small logo in lower left corner (Pro version is free of branding).
Camtasia Studio	\$299 / \$179 education pricing (30-day free trial available)	Windows or Mac	MP4, M4V, AVI, FLV, Silverlight, MOV, RM	The most fully featured screencasting software out there, and very easy to use. But, it comes at a higher price.
Quicktime	Free for Mac	Mac	MP4, MOV	You have the option to save at HD 720p (1280x720), which is our preferred resolution. Other options include 480p (640x480 resolution) and HD 1080p (1920x1080 resolution). Mac users can easily import into iMovie to make further edits.

Additional options include (in no particular order):

Tool	Cost	Platforms	Containers and Codecs	Notes
FFmpeg	Free	Linux	Anything except apple pro	Pure command line tool. For Ubuntu, must build from source (directions), and then command lines like these . FFmpeg is also suitable for format conversion and audio overlay.
recordMyDesktop	Free	Linux	ogv (must transcode results, can use transmageddon)	Works out of the box on Ubuntu 11.10
xvidcap	Free	Linux	mpeg(4), avi, mov, others, with sorenson, divx, mpeg, others.	Default versions do not work with pulseaudio, and thus recent Ubuntu installations (Ubuntu 11.4 and 11.10). Workaround is to install from source , and launch with padsp. Provides a GUI, easy to use
CamStudio	Free (Open Source!)	Windows	AVI or FLV	Lots of options/configurations available (most often compared to Camtasia in terms of options). Not always as easy to use or user friendly as other free screencasting tools (see Screencast-O-Matic or Jing), but it definitely comes with options & tools comparable to Camtasia.
Jing	Free (Pro is \$14.95 /year)	Windows or Mac	FLV (Pro version also offers MP4)	Easy to use, but has minimal options. Seem to only be able to record either full-screen or a specific window (no options to record a selected area or part of screen). 5-minute recording limit. Videos are branded (Pro version is free of branding).
Open Broadcaster Software	Free	Windows	MP4 or FLV	A bit of a learning curve, but a ton of options available. For screencasting, you'd want to change the "Broadcast Settings" to "File Output Only" (which tells OBS to record to a file). Can record from multiple sources at once (e.g. Desktop & Webcam). Also supports live streaming (to various online streaming services – mostly for gaming). Here is a decent tutorial for configuring OBS for screencasts . (Tim Donohue uses OBS for most of his screencasts.)

Making the Recording

Here are some suggestions for making a successful screencast recording:

- Do a quick test first. Fifteen seconds or so will give you a good indication of whether your audio recording level sufficient.
- Pause a 5-10 seconds before you begin speaking.
- Speak slowly in a natural voice.
- Begin with a one-sentence introduction of yourself and your subject (e.g., "Hi, this is.....and I'm going to show you.....").
- Viewers will be focused on your mouse pointer, try not to make extraneous movements or move around too fast.
- With each on-screen action, tell people what you are doing to make sure they are following you (e.g., "Next I'm going to..." , "Now we will look at...").
- Small flubs or pauses are not necessarily reasons to restart the entire screencast! You don't need to deliver an award-winning performance, just one that effectively conveys what you are trying to teach. If you are using a screencast product that includes editing capabilities, you can usually cut out the portions you don't want to be in the final recording.
- No need for a concluding sentence if it's clear where your lesson ends, but a brief recap of what you have shown is fine.
- When you are finished speaking, pause a couple of seconds before stopping the recording.
- Be sure to save your recording right away!

Producing the Final Screencast Video

Your screencast will require some post-production work before it is ready for "prime time". It's not a lot of work, but it does require learning some more features of the screencast software. Minimally, we need go through the following steps:

- Creating a title slide
- Fading from the title slide to the recorded lesson
- Fading from the end of the lesson to a closing slide (which can be a re-use of the title slide)

In addition, you may want to do some light editing of the recording -- deleting small mistakes, unexpected pauses, dead space, etc.

If you prefer not to do this part yourself, that's fine. DuraSpace will do it for you. Simply send the video to jjmarkow@duraspace.org along with the title, your name, and your organization for the credits.

If you do want to try the post-production work, and your screencast software allows you to do this, here are some guidelines.

Please use the DuraSpace Screencast Slide Pack to create your Title, Closing and optional Organizational Slides. This slide pack is available [here](#).

Title Slide:

- Duration: 5 seconds

Transition From Title to Lesson:

- Insert a fade to black
- Duration: 2 seconds

Closing slide:

- Insert another 2 second fade to black before the closing slide
- Duration: 2 seconds

Optional: Organizational Slide. You may add an Organizational Slide right after the initial Title Slide using the [slide pack](#) if you wish to add organizational branding to your screencast. Please use the following guidelines if adding an Organization Slide:

- Logo no greater than 20% of screen dimensions
- Duration not to exceed 3 seconds

Posting the Screencast Video

Once you have finished the recording and post-production of your screencast video you can post it to a publically accessible location (local repository, YouTube, etc). The screencast can then be inserted into the relevant KnowledgeBase page by using the following syntax in the wiki markup view:

To insert a link to a video or presentation slides, use the following code:

```
{widget:url=http://www.insertyourlinkhere.com}
```

If you prefer (or don't have a place to store a publically accessible video), DuraSpace can store them on our YouTube.com account. For help please contact Valorie Hollister at vhollister@duraspace.org.