The = SECRET · TO CREATING · GREAT E-LEARNING 8 VIDEUS 8

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Introduction

If you have kids between the ages of six and twelve, you know all about the Rainbow Loom. It's a kit consisting of a plastic pegged board, a hook, and hundreds of teensy rubber bands that little fingers transform into colorful bracelets—and then slip onto every available wrist they can find. When your kids master bracelets, they move to peace signs, flowers, spiders, beetles, panda bears, turtles, coke bottles.... You get the idea. And what do they do when they want to learn how to create something new? They watch a YouTube video.

There's no doubt that it's much easier to learn how to weave a caterpillar on the Rainbow Loom by watching a video than it would be to read an instruction manual, even one with pictures. In fact, it's probably the prevalence of such videos that's helped fuel the Rainbow Loom craze. Videos make it simple and fun to learn new things.

Once upon a time, creating a video for an e-learning course would have been cost-prohibitive and time-consuming. But that's no longer the case. If you have a fairly new smartphone, chances are you can shoot HD video. You can record screencasts for free on sites like <u>Screenr</u>. And you can download free, simple-to-use video editing software. You no longer need a gaggle of experts and months of production time to create engaging videos and screencasts.

How-tos aren't the only lessons better given by video. If you need to teach a soft skill—such as collaborating with people who have different points of view—words on a slide simply don't suffice. They can't convey the subtleties of body language and facial expressions that play such an important role in human interactions.

Video is also a great way to hook your learners emotionally. Humans are social creatures, so we're more invested when we learn from another person. Personalize your content with a real person, and you'll have an easier time keeping learners engaged. This can even work for things like software training. Imagine recording webcam video along with a screencast using a tool like <u>Articulate Replay</u>. You could then personally guide learners through the software.

In this e-book, you'll learn how you can create great videos that engage your learners, without breaking your budget. Let's start by taking a look at the equipment you'll need.

Equipment

The first thing you'll want to do before you start recording a single frame is invest in an <u>external microphone</u>, because bad audio will ruin the best video ever produced. That doesn't mean it needs to be expensive. You might even already have one: your smartphone.

You can also use your <u>iPhone</u> or other smartphone with an HD camera as a camera. Just be sure to clip it steady so you don't record shaky video. If you're recording webcam video, then invest in an external HD-quality webcam. You can easily buy one for under \$100.



We use gray background paper for many of our videos. It instantly gives your videos a pro feel. You can buy a roll of seamless solid color background paper for under \$50.

Last, but not least, you'll want to invest in some lighting. You'd be amazed at what a difference it makes. Don't worry, you don't need to start calling video supply stores. You can <u>find everything you need at Home Depot for under \$100</u>. If nothing else, turn off any overhead lights and use three other well-placed light sources instead.

If you want more tips on producing great video, watch <u>these short</u>, <u>entertaining</u>, and <u>super helpful videos</u> from Wistia.

Environment

In an ideal world, you'd record in a studio or other controlled environment. But, in reality, most of us don't have access to a dedicated recording space. So here are some tips for creating your own recording space.

- Turn off A/C and fans, office machines, and notifications on your computer if you're recording on a webcam.
- Film in a conference room or an office with a closed door.
- Avoid empty rooms, though, as sound can bounce around and create unfortunate echoes.
- Don't sit in a squeaky chair.
- Turn off anything that rings or flashes lights. Better yet, remove them from your environment altogether.

If you're doing a screencast, you'll want to do a dry run to make sure that all of your screens are set up. If you need to jump from one application to another, you'll want to have them all open and sized to the recording window. And if you plan to add assets or files during your screencast, make sure they're in a single folder that you can access with a few clicks.

Preparation

You've set up the right equipment, your environment is ready. You're ready to roll, right? Not quite. Do you know what your message is? Do you know how you'll tell the story? While you don't need to memorize a script word-for-word, you should have an outline of the main points you want to cover. If you're filming someone else, you can prompt them with questions to cover the right points. If you're recording webcam video, try taping a bulleted outline to the side of your monitor so that you can see it while you're recording.

Finally, loosen up. The best videos look and feel natural, as if the camera isn't there at all, and we're just having a conversation. Some people have no trouble acting natural in front of a camera, but most of us turn into mannequins as soon as we know the camera's rolling. If you're going to be the one on camera, banish the editor in your head and try to just have fun with it. Be yourself. People like authenticity. And if you let yourself just be you, it'll come through. If you're filming someone else, do what you can to make him/her laugh and take the whole thing less seriously.

Special Tips for Screencasts

Not all videos involve people. In fact, in e-learning, you often just need to record onscreen actions, like you see in software training. These are called screencasts. Whether you're using Screenry Articulate Replay, or some other screencasting tool, here are a few tricks you can use to record better screencasts.

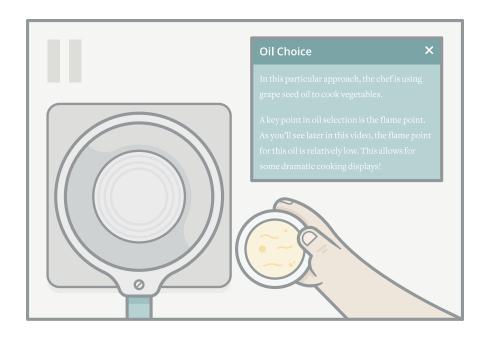
- Tell your learners where they should be looking. Don't just assume they'll follow your mouse. Explain each action as you take it. For example, "Now I'll insert a new slide by going to the menu and clicking 'Insert' and then 'New File."
- **Restrict the visual field.** Frame your recording window so that you're only showing what you need to show. Everything else is just a distraction.
- Hide personal and proprietary information. The easiest way to do this is to create another user account on your computer that you use only for screencasts. That way, you don't need to worry about hiding personal information such as folders or toolbars in your browser. Choose a solid background color for your desktop. Photographs and other images will just distract the learner.
- **Keep your mouse "quiet."** You don't want to inadvertently move your cursor all over the screen while you're talking. It's distracting and annoying to the learners. When you're not deliberately showing

- something, your mouse should be still. The best way to keep your mouse quiet is to remove your hand from it when you don't need it.
- Select the right aspect ratio. Screen recorders such as Articulate Replay and Screenr will let you choose the aspect ratio for your video. You should match the aspect ratio of your course slides.
- Use the pause feature to create a better flowing video. If your screencasting tool allows it, pause your recording if you have to click on buttons and open other screens during your demos. It'll let you set up your screens without distracting learners and will look more polished.

Interactive Video

Videos are great by themselves. But what if you could add explorable content to your videos? Even better! By adding interactivity, you turn a passive activity into an active one. You deepen your learners' engagement—and create opportunities to go deeper into the content.

For example, say you've developed a video that demonstrates cooking techniques. You could add icons to the video at various points, letting the learner click to pause the video and read additional information on the topic.



Or, if you've developed a video that shows a problematic interaction between co-workers, you could use interactive buttons to point out key points. "By citing Mae's age when criticizing her performance, Debbie not only puts Mae on the defensive, she breaks the law."

The video lets learners see what's happening, and the interactive elements let them drill into the topic if they need or want to. And if they don't need additional information, they can ignore the buttons or icons and just watch the video. This is a great way to provide two different experiences for learners with different levels of understanding. Experienced people can watch the video, while those with less experience can click on the interactive buttons to learn more.

So the next time you need to show learners how to do something, try creating a video with interactive icons instead of showing a slide of bullet points. Watch this short video to learn how to add interactive elements to videos using Articulate Storyline.

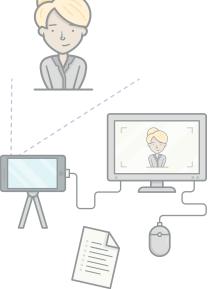


- Prepare your speaking points before you record
- Buy an external microphone or use your smartphone
- Invest in an external HD-quality webcam (under \$100) or use your iPhone
- Use background paper to give videos a profeel (under
- Invest in lighting; you can get everything from Home Depot (under \$100)









- Prepare your speaking points before you record
- Be yourself; people like authenticity
- Set all your screens up before you start recording a screencast
- Tell learners where they should be looking if recording a screencast
- Restrict the visual field to only what you want to
- Hide personal or proprietary information
- Keep your mouse still unless you need it to show something
- Select an aspect ratio that matches the aspect ratio of your course slides
- Add interactive icons to videos to increase engagement

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