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# DIY — SCREEN CAPTURE GUIDE



WILEY

EDUCATION  
SERVICES

Screen captures are a great way for you to deliver a PowerPoint presentation, model how to solve problems in software programs like Excel or SPSS or to walk students through an online resource that you use in the field. Those kinds of videos can make students feel like you're right there with them, sharing your knowledge. A high-quality screencast will hold your audience's attention for longer and enable them to retain more information.

Making a great screencast isn't difficult, and a little extra effort can go a long way towards improving your final product.

Here are some top tips for creating an effective screencast video.

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## **AFTER YOUR RECORDING**

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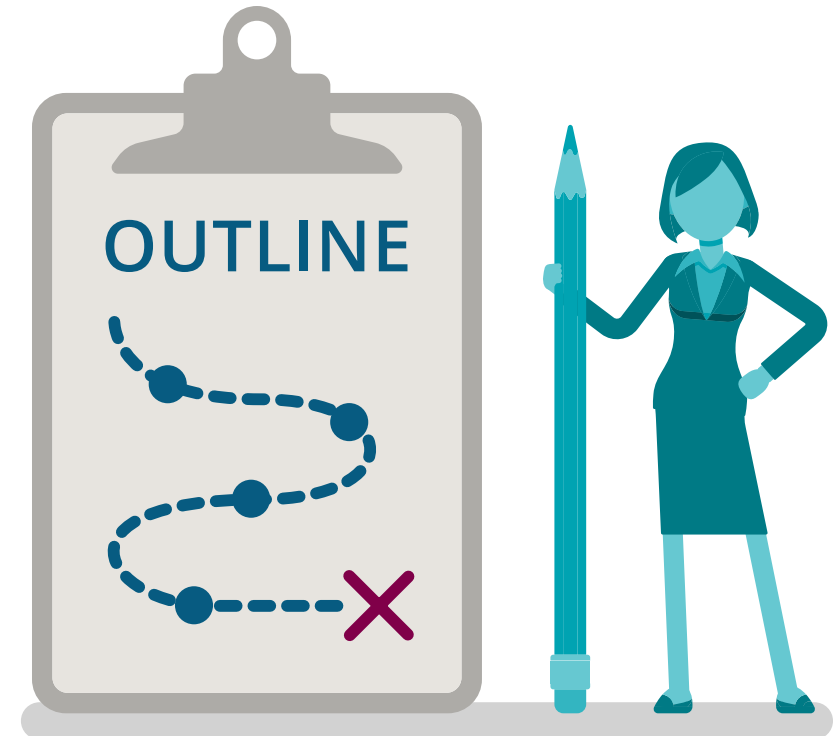
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01

## CREATE AN OUTLINE BEFORE RECORDING

You may be tempted to just wing it, but even making just a rough outline forces you to organize your thoughts and design a “roadmap” for your screencast. There’s no faster way to lose your audience than rambling or jumping back and forth between thoughts. Making a script will also reduce your “ums” and “ahs.”



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02

## RECORD IN A QUIET ENVIRONMENT

Nothing is more unprofessional or distracting than a dog barking or child crying in the background!



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## PRACTICE ONCE OR TWICE BEFORE RECORDING

Nobody can make a perfect screencast on the first try. While you certainly don't want to over-rehearse, going through your talking points once or twice will help you speak more smoothly (e.g., you won't have to struggle to find the best word or phrase during your recording).



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## **CLOSE OUT ALL OTHER APPS AND TABS, GO FULLSCREEN**

This will do two things:

1. Free up your computer's processing power so that your screen recording software can run more smoothly, and
2. Eliminate the possibility of distracting notifications.



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## GRAB A GLASS OF WATER

If you're recording a long screencast or do multiple takes, your mouth will quickly get dry.

And don't be shy about taking a sip of water when you need it. Your students won't mind!





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## TEST YOUR RECORDING SOFTWARE

If you record a 5-minute screencast only to realize the audio wasn't picked up, you were speaking too loudly/softly, or your settings weren't right, you will pull your hair out.

We recommend doing a 10 second test capture before you do the real thing; just so can verify that everything is working like you expect it to. We don't want you to pull your hair out.



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## ONLY RECORD WHAT YOU NEED

If the content of your screencast is contained in one tab or application, there's no need to record your entire desktop. Only recording what you need will get rid of unnecessary "visual noise" and reduce your video's file size.

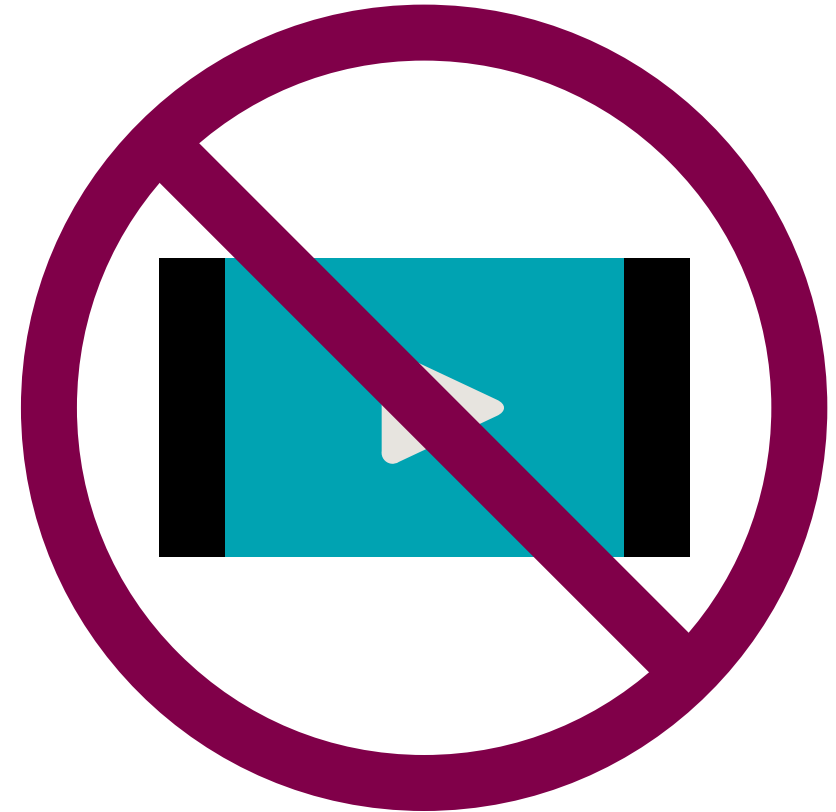


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## RECORD WITH STANDARD DIMENSIONS

In most cases, you'll want to record with standard dimensions (e.g. 720p or 1080p) to make sure it displays correctly on video hosting sites like the ones we use in the LMS and doesn't have black bars around the edges. Most screencast software (Camtasia, Screencast-o-matic) allows you to automatically resize your browser tab to preset dimensions. You can also use a Chrome extension like [Window Resizer](#).



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## TELL YOUR VIEWERS WHAT YOU'LL COVER

Before you get into the meat of your presentation, give your audience an idea of what they'll learn. This will help them get oriented and know what to be listening for.

If you don't do this, they'll be unsure where you're going and won't know what's important and what isn't.



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## KEEP IT SHORT

Research for online video used in marketing indicates that people's attention spans drop off a cliff after [2-3 minutes](#). The way that you're using video in your courses is different than marketing, but it's still good to remember that shorter is generally better.

Even though we can't give you hard and firm parameters for how long is too long, our experience is that if you do have a long screencast, breaking it up into manageable chunks makes students happier!

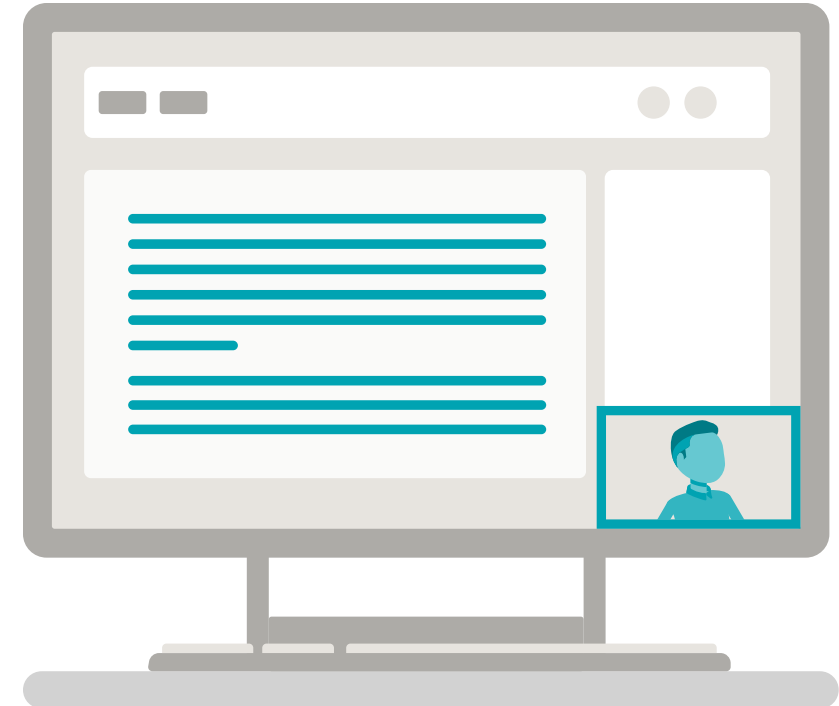


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## EMBED YOUR WEBCAM WISELY

While embedding your webcam is a nice way of making your screen recording more personal, it can be overdone. Remember, your viewer will most likely be watching your face whenever they see it. This is great during introductions, conclusions, and other moments when there isn't much on-screen action, but could be distracting during the meat of your screencast. Most screencast software will allow you to toggle your webcam on demand.



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## SPEAK SLOWLY

Rehearse once while consciously speaking more slowly than you regularly do. Then when you record, slow it down even more. Seriously. We're all naturally inclined to speak more quickly when we're giving a presentation.

Plus many platforms allow students to [adjust the playback speed](#) if they prefer.

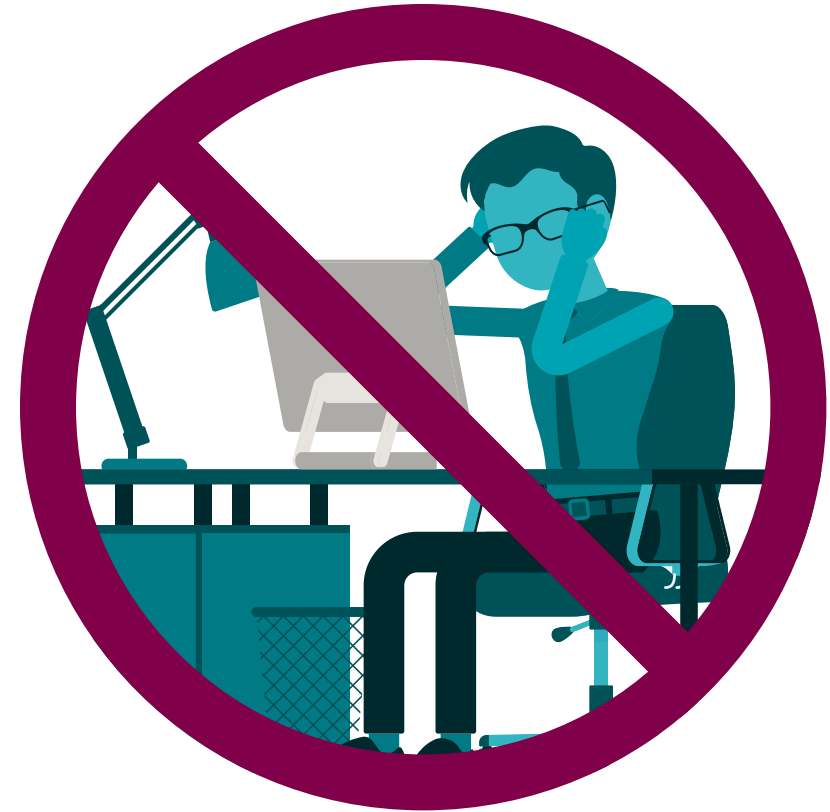


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## DON'T WORRY IF YOU MAKE A MISTAKE

Depending on the context of the video, it's totally fine to slip up once or twice. It makes you seem more like a real human! If you make a large mistake that you don't want in your final video, **don't end the recording**. Pause for a few seconds and start that segment over. Then cut the mistake out after you're finished recording. Most screencast software will allow you to make simple edits like trimming out sections or stitching together videos.





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## USE A GOOD MICROPHONE

Screencasts with poor audio quality are hard to listen to. The good news is that you don't need an expensive, fancy microphone. Simply using basic headphones with a built-in mic is much, much better than simply using your computer's internal microphone.



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## ZOOM IN

Don't assume that your audience will watch your video in full screen (in fact they probably won't). This is especially true if you're recording a web page with small text. You can zoom in on your Chrome browser tab by pressing Control (or Command) +. Your audience will thank you.



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## USE ANNOTATION TOOLS

Most screencast software includes annotation tools for tab recordings that allow you to focus a spotlight on your mouse, draw with a pen tool, and more. These tools can be tremendously helpful for directing your viewer's eyes where you want them to go.

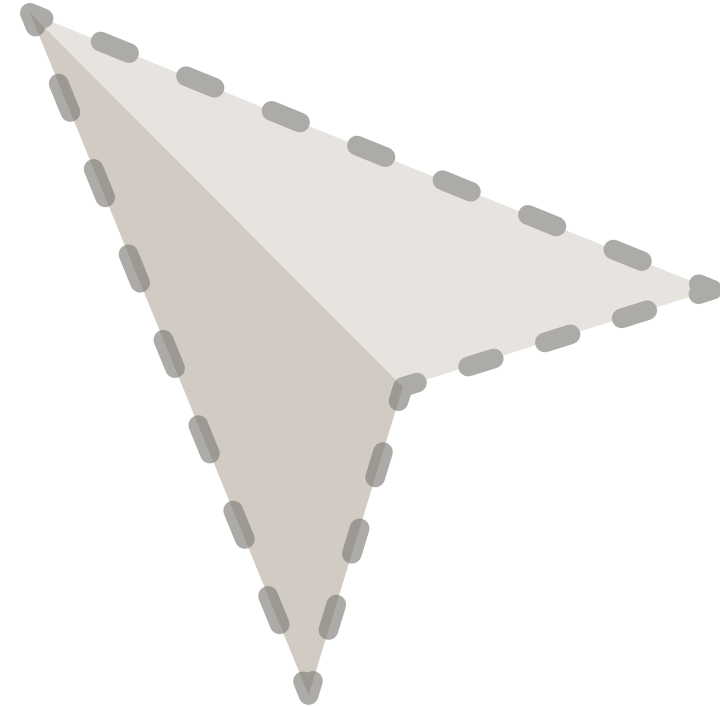


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## LIMIT MOUSE MOVEMENTS

Excessive mouse movements are distracting. For most screen capture applications, you can adjust settings in the toolbar to hide the cursor when the mouse is not being used. We definitely recommend it.



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## USE KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

Similarly, the more you use keyboard shortcuts to do things like enable and disable annotation tools, switch tabs/applications, etc, the less often you'll have to move your mouse.

Be sure to consult your screencast software user guide for tips and tricks as well as keyboard shortcuts.

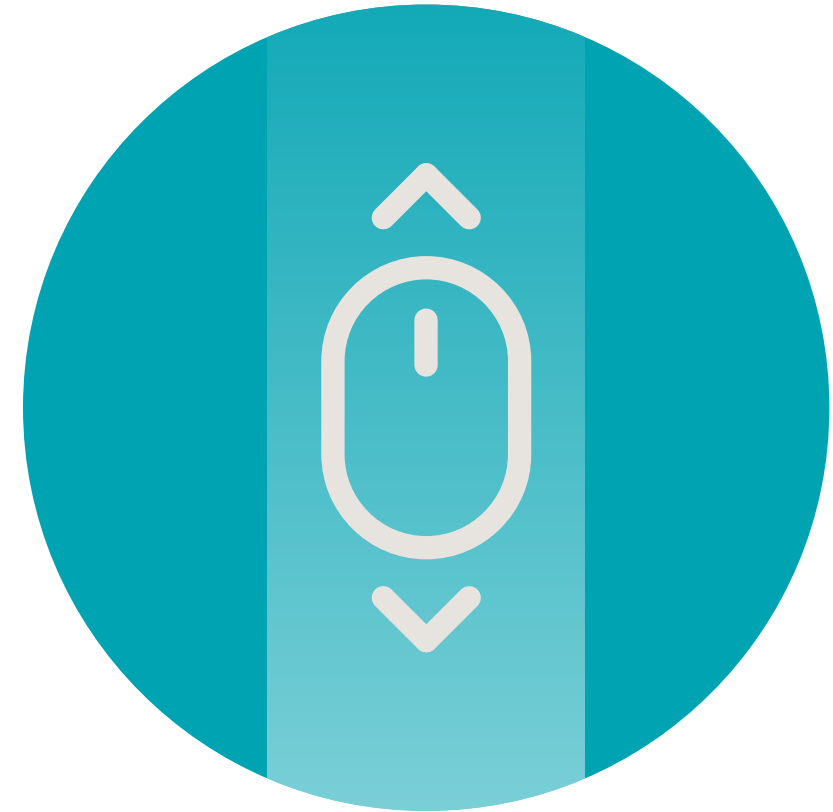


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## SCROLL SMOOTHLY

Watching someone scroll up and down websites quickly and haphazardly is disorienting. We recommend installing the [SmoothScroll](#) extension, which does exactly what its name suggests. This will allow your viewers to follow your movements more easily and adds some polish to your recording.



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## NARRATE INTERFACE NAVIGATION

If your screencast includes a software walkthrough, be sure to narrate what you're doing within the software so your viewer can follow along. Your viewer will likely be following along and pausing your video to recreate certain sections of the walkthrough.



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## **DON'T BE AFRAID TO PAUSE**

If you need a second to gather your thoughts, think about how you'll present your next point, sneeze, or go to the bathroom, just pause!

All screencast software will allow you to pause and resume your recording on the fly.





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## END WITH A SUMMARY

Recap your recording and tell your viewers what they should have learned. This will help them remember **all** of your key points — not just the last 1 or 2 that they heard — and make your presentation more effective.



**“IN  
CONCLUSION..”**

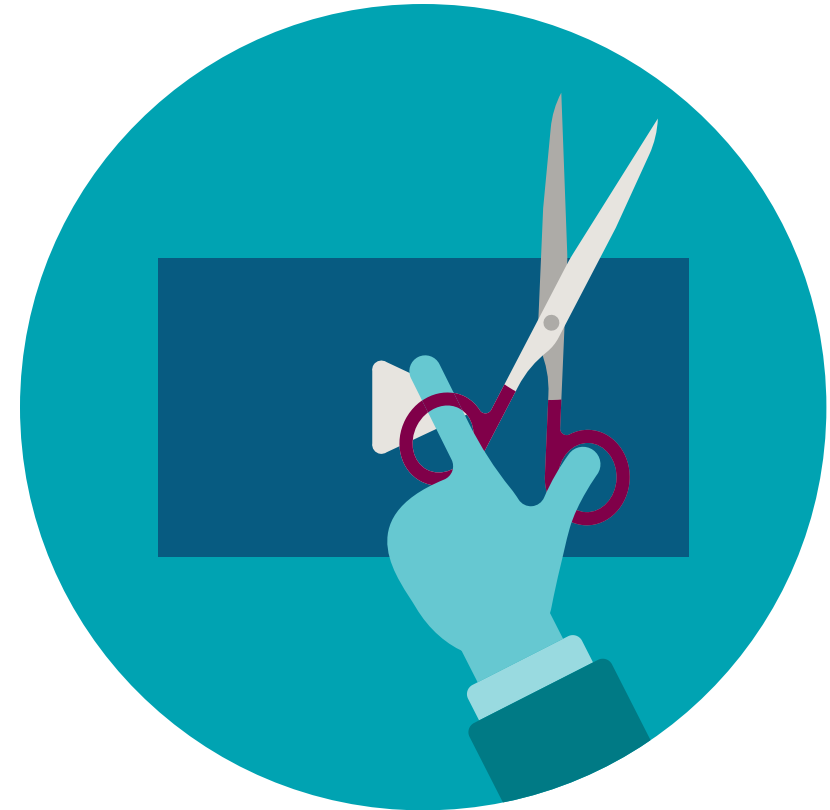
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## TRIM YOUR VIDEO

Your screencast should start promptly when your viewer clicks play and end as soon as you sign off. Dead air at the beginning and end of screencasts is a waste of time and unprofessional — nobody needs to hear that!

Trimming your video takes just a few seconds and has a major impact on the quality of your recording.



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## GIVE YOUR VIEWERS MORE RESOURCES

Because a screen recording is just that — a **recording** — you obviously won't be able to answer any questions your viewers have. That's ok, though! Simply provide additional resources for them to check out after viewing your video (e.g., in the video's description, on your website, in an email, or the discussion forum), and encourage them to do so at the end of your recording. That way, they'll know exactly where to go next.

