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## 7 Things You Should Know About Screencast-o-matic

### 1. What is it?

Screencast-o-matic is a Java-based web application used to create screencasts on Windows, Mac, and Linux operating systems. Specific benefits of using Screencast-o-matic over other free screen recorders are the highlighted cursor and click indicators, ease of use, the ability to add captions easily, the ability for creators to add notes and for viewers to add comments, and the fact that there is no application to download.

### 2. How does it work?

Go to <http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/> and simply click the Start Recording button. Drag the recording frame and adjust its size to the appropriate recording area, and begin recording. Perform the actions you want others to see on your computer screen and narrate into a microphone as you work (or include system audio from the computer). If you have a built-in camera, you can include video of yourself or something else in a “picture-in-picture” manner. You also have the ability to add a text file for captioning and share your video with your audience. Videos can be saved in MP4, AVI, or FLV formats and then uploaded to Screencast-o-matic’s web space or YouTube.

### 3. Who is doing it?

Educators are using screencasts to record lectures, provide demonstrations, present orientations to an online class, tell digital stories, and give feedback on student assignments, among other things. They are also creating assignments that require students to produce a screencast. Of the various screencasting applications, Screencast-o-matic is especially appealing for educational purposes because it is very easy to use and provides an easy way to include captions. People involved in tech support find screencasting a very efficient way to show users how to solve a problem.

### 4. Why is it significant?

Screencasts are very useful for demonstrating software use and other computer functions, presentation of lectures or short lessons, or providing rich feedback on students’ work. Screencast-o-matic videos can be created and viewed anytime and anywhere a user has an Internet connection and a browser. Students can view them at times that are convenient for them, so they work well in online and hybrid courses. They can be viewed and reviewed for reference by students, so they work well for presenting lessons or instructive demonstrations to any student. In general, screencasts create a more engaging environment for a student who is working online, giving a lecture or demonstration a more personal, face-to-face feel.

## 5. What are the downsides?

Screencast-o-matic videos cannot be edited directly in the application where they were created unless you purchase a Pro account, which costs \$12/year. (The videos can be edited in a video-editing program if they are saved to your computer.)

Screencast-o-matic is Java based, so users may have trouble creating or viewing videos if Java is not installed and updated on their computers.

## 6. Where is it going?

One significant complaint among educators about screencasts is that they are not interactive unless one uses expensive software such as Camtasia to insert quizzes and other interactive features. Interactivity may be the next step for free screen recording tools in general.

## 7. What are the implications for teaching and learning?

Anyone who has ever found value in a screenshot (a still image demonstrating the location and function of something on a computer) can imagine how useful a screen recording might be to teaching and learning. Content in a screencast has the potential to be richer, more engaging, and more accessible to all users than a face-to-face lecture or a simple text document or image. Because of its ease of use, Screencast-o-matic requires little or no training for instructors to get started. Screencasting should be one of the tools in every instructor's technology toolbox, and Screencast-o-matic is a good screen recorder to begin with.

