

DISCOVERY NOTES: EMERGING INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY VOICETHREAD

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1. WHAT IS IT?

Widely used in K-12 and Higher Education environments, Voicethread is a web-based tool that enables users to upload a variety of content such as video, images, and documents that can then be commented on in the form of text, video, or audio posts. As a cloud application, no download is needed and all content and comments reside online through the site. However, there is an app available for use with Apple mobile devices.

2. WHO'S USING IT?

Here at RIT, a number of faculty have used this tool. Among them, Kelly Norris Martin of the College of Liberal Arts has been exploring the use of VoiceThread for her online, Visual Communication course. Her online students upload an image of their choice and evaluate its significance to the visual concepts they are addressing that week. Other universities such as Pennsylvania State University, University of Missouri, and Gallaudet University support student and faculty use of Voicethread and have integrated it into their LMS's (i.e., Blackboard, Angel, etc.) and university login systems.

3. HOW DOES IT WORK?

Users can upload video, documents, or images to a 'central stage' to be shared with others who are given access by the creator. Comments from all participants can then be asynchronously posted as text, audio, or video. Comments appear in chronological order as thumbnails of each person. Creating and sharing VoiceThreads can be done with a free account. However, there are individual and site license options available for higher education institutions that offer advanced functionality such as secured sharing and LMS integration (site license only).

4. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING?

Asynchronous and out-of-class learning activities such as presentations, demonstrations, faculty feedback on assignments, online tutoring, language instruction, project collaboration, reflection assignments, debates, and critiques are some of the ways Voicethread has been used in online and face-to-face learning environments. With the ability to upload a variety of media types, self-record audio and video, and write, it gives the faculty and student user a choice in how their concepts, ideas, and viewpoints are conveyed. One current limitation of Voicethread which might influence its use for an online discussion activity is that it does not allow users to reply to specific comments like you would be able to do on a text-based, threaded discussion board.

5. WHERE ARE THEY HEADED?

According to the [NMC Horizon Report: 2014 Higher Education Edition](#), video and audio creation tools such as Voicethread will continue to have a significant part to play in online education by enabling faculty "to capture important human gestures, including voice, eye contact, and body language, which all foster an unspoken connection with learners"(18).

A large part of Voicethread's focus continues to be providing universal access. They have developed Voicethread Universal, a site designed to accommodate screen reading software and other assistive technologies. The ability to caption video comments is available with the universal site, and they plan to incorporate this feature into the standard site as well.

References:



Source: <http://docs.voicethread.com/>



Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YbXGMx4Ftqo>