Captivating your audience: Using eLearning software for the creation of learning objects

Jayanthi Joseph and Diana Blackwood, Curtin University, Perth, WA

Today we are going to show you how we used Adobe Captivate at Curtin University Library. I am Jayanthi and this is Diana. We have used Bitstrip to produce these avatars and we hope you can see the striking resemblances here!

Normally we would use a PPT for our presentation but no prizes for guessing why we are using Captivate here.

Before we continue we would like to acknowledge the contribution of our colleague Rosalind who is the Captivate queen in our Library.

So why Captivate?

With the shift to blended learning in higher education, Curtin Library sought to capture our large student cohort (over 60,000) to increase information literacy skills through the provision of innovative learning objects. Adobe Captivate software was initially chosen to create interactive tutorials for new undergraduates. Six years down the track we are still finding new ways to use this software and engage with our wider student body. Diana will elaborate on this further.

What is Captivate?

Adobe Captivate is an authoring tool that can be used to create online learning content such as videos, quizzes, interactive tutorials and software demonstrations. It allows you to go
seamlessly from storyboarding to a responsive eLearning design that also integrates well with Learning Management systems.

An added bonus was that the use of Captivate doesn’t require any programming knowledge. This was great news for us as we had struggled with programming applications such as Dreamweaver. Another plus point was that Captivate supports HTML 5 publishing so output can be used on multiple devices such as phones and laptops.

You can publish Captivate projects in a number of ways:

- As mp4 for videos or to YouTube directly
- To two files HTML/ SWF. HTML version is compatible with iPads

Files however need to be saved to a server so that they can be linked into Libguides.

The cost of the product differs depending on whether it is a one-off purchase or yearly subscription. The latest version is Adobe Captivate 9 and the software is available at a discount to eligible students, teachers, staff, and educational institutions ($399).

**How to use the software**

There are a few options in Captivate which can be selected when you login.
1. The first option is to create **a responsive project**. This allows you to create a project whose content and design can be viewed across multiple devices. What is great is that Captivate dynamically changes to the size of the screen depending on whether the client is using a desktop, tablet or mobile.

   **Desktop**

   ![Desktop](image1)

   **Custom tablet**

   ![Custom tablet](image2)

   **Custom mobile**

   ![Custom mobile](image3)

2. The second option is to create a project using **a software simulation**. This involves creating a Captivate project by recording events in an application such as EndNote or a screen area on your computer.
For example you can have a demonstration of your Library website or a database search with accompanying audio.

3. You can also create projects from **PPT presentations**. Here you can import a PPT presentation, choose the slides you want and then record over them.
This is the PPT we use for our Get Connected workshop. It is possible to import a PPT presentation such as this into Captivate.

4. **A blank project** enables you to create your own slides as we have done for today’s presentation. There are a few choices on the type of slides that can be selected such as blank, image or question slides.
How have we used Captivate at Curtin University

You can see a snapshot on this slide of some of the projects (both big and small) that we have worked on at Curtin using Captivate.

• **Interactive tutorials for undergraduate information literacy**

Our first foray into the world of Captivate was to use the software to create interactive tutorials ([http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/i-tutorials](http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/i-tutorials)) mainly for 1st and 2nd year undergraduate students and which covered basic skills such as *Understanding your reading list* and *Finding items on your assignment topic*. You are no doubt familiar with this kind of basic information literacy tutorial.

Previously we had created tutorials in other formats such as web pages but the migration to Captivate allowed for a great level of interactivity including mouse over captions and explanations, and other participatory elements. The example on the screen shows that students have to enter keywords in the search box in order to find the book in question to be able to proceed. These tutorials were popular with undergraduates and also with postgraduates coming back to study. Having consulted with academics during their creation, the uptake via our Learning Management System Blackboard, was significant.
• **EBP Pyramid**

In developing the Evidence Based Practice LibGuide Jayanthi and I for some reason got it into our heads that didn’t want to use the standard multi coloured EBP pyramid that was around at the time. [http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/c.php?g=202374&p=1332718](http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/c.php?g=202374&p=1332718)

Ros our afore-mentioned colleague, offered to design a pyramid using Captivate that allowed rollovers describing each level. At the time we thought it was pretty cool!

• **Amazing Library Race Quiz**

A much more ambitious and time-consuming project was the development of the Amazing Library Race quiz. The Unit-coordinator of a large core interprofessional Health Sciences unit, Foundations of Professional Health Practice, approached us with her idea to create a race around the library to find information. The practicalities of a cohort of 2500 students running around our already busy and crowded library were a bit mind boggling!

Consequently a virtual race and interactive quiz was developed and added to their unit specific LibGuide. The quiz has two parts -1. Finding Information and 2. Referencing ([http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/c.php?g=202381&p=1332711](http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/c.php?g=202381&p=1332711))
Here you can see the instructions for the student to get started and the various checkpoints they have to go through. The quiz is mandatory for all students and tutors are able to assess their competency levels by examining their quiz scores.

The success of this quiz has led to the creation of more learning objects for this unit also using Captivate such as videos on more advanced database searching skills. There is also a Library presence in Blackboard. It was really encouraging to hear at our latest debrief with the unit co-ordinator, that that the quality of the student’s assignments had markedly improved this semester. She has generously attributed this in part to the Library being deeply embedded in the unit.

- **Online videos**

The Health Sciences team were approached by another academic, this time from Nursing who teaches a postgraduate unit for Curtin Singapore students. She asked that we create a suite of videos on database searching due to low levels of skills being demonstrated by her students. This coincided with a Library survey of higher degree by research students into our F2F research training workshops which indicated a strong demand for videos from off campus students. Our only current offering being our Research Support LibGuides.

Consequently, we have started converting our Become a Supersearcher F2F workshop into a series of videos. These will be published on the Curtin Youtube channel and hosted in LibGuides along with supporting materials.
• Referencing guides

A longstanding initiative has been to make our referencing guides interactive and QUT were generous in offering to share the programming behind their interactive referencing guides. However, this offer was not able to be taken up due to lack of IT support and financial constraints at Curtin. Sound familiar? However, as they say ‘necessity is the mother of invention’ and Library staff once again considered whether Captivate could be used as an interim measure. This has now been achieved and our new guides are ready to be launched for Semester 2. (http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/getting-started)

Here’s the Vancouver referencing guide that we have developed. Instead of having to scroll through a long pdf you can now click on a category such as books, then select the reference type you are interested in (click on books again). On each screen we have provided additional information such as number of authors and DOI.

![Vancouver referencing guide](http://libguides.library.curtin.edu.au/referencing/getting-started)
Using quizzes in Captivate

For assessment you can use a variety of question slides such as Multiple Choice, Matching or short answer question slides.
We will now demonstrate this feature by testing your general knowledge now. Let’s see how you fare!

1. Corn is the most produced crop in the world followed by wheat and then rice
2. You need 200 muscles to take one step
3. Kangaroos are only an inch long at birth
4. Your fingernails and hair do not keep growing after you die (your skin shrinks and so they appear longer)
5. Lightning can strike twice in the same place
6. Goldfish have a memory-span of at least three months and can distinguish between different shapes, colours and sounds (No RCTs have been conducted as yet).