VIDEO FAQS -- INSTRUCTION-ON-DEMAND
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Abstract - Video FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) are short, locally-produced "movie files" that can be made available to students online, over a campus network, or on disk. Each Video FAQ answers a specific question or teaches an individual skill. Video FAQs are easy to create and can provide targeted, high quality "instruction-on-demand" to students. They can also help conserve valuable instructor time.

Index Terms - Video Frequently Asked Questions, instructional media, computer science curriculum

OVERVIEW

Anyone who has taught the same course more than one semester understands the benefit of having students be able to access instructional information without instructor guidance or intervention. Video FAQs allow educational institutions to create quality, targeted videos that meet the instructional needs of specific student populations.

SAMPLE VIDEO FAQ

The most popular Video FAQ at the United States Military Academy is "How to Map a Network Drive." Students are required to correctly execute this skill numerous times every semester. Prior to the creation of this Video FAQ, each instructor was asked to show students how to complete this task numerous times every semester. Students can now learn, or remember, on their own time at their own speed.

The basic steps in the creation of a Video FAQ are:
1. Organize the hardware and software to be used.
2. Script and practice the Video FAQ.
3. Record and edit the Video FAQ.
4. Obtain independent reviews of the final product.

BENEFITS

Creating Video FAQs and making them available to students can provide many benefits, for example:

- Students are able to access professional instruction "on-demand" 24/7. Each viewing saves instructor time.
- There is no student embarrassment or stigma for repeatedly requesting the same information.
- Students not currently enrolled in a specific course can still obtain desired instruction in specific topics.
- Video FAQs provide the opportunity to share additional information to students, such as enrollment, registration, and course changes.

CHALLENGES

In order to develop the most useful product for students, there are several concerns and challenges that should be considered during the creation of Video FAQs. For example:

- Differences in student computers, such as the operating system, available memory, and screen resolution.
- Video FAQs are not an effective method for providing correction to or receiving feedback from students.
- Video FAQs assume a base level of knowledge. Students without that knowledge will not benefit as much from using them.
- It can be difficult to adequately name and define what each Video FAQ teaches so that students can easily find the Video FAQs they desire to view.
- Rapidly changing technology can quickly make individual Video FAQs outdated.
- During production, developers of Video FAQs should pay particular attention to the following elements of each Video FAQ ensuring that: (1) it contains neither too much nor too little instruction within a single Video FAQ, (2) all steps are clear and logically flow one to another, (3) the narration is the correct volume and spoken neither too fast nor too slow, and (4) that the video images are targeted and easily read.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Our experience with Video FAQs continues to improve, and there are numerous areas for improvement and additional research. For example, we are currently investigating:

- How to improve naming, organizing, and cataloging Video FAQs.
- How to optimally script individual Video FAQs.
- How to improve student access to Video FAQs.

1 The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Military Academy, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the United States Government.
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