PODCAST TOOL ASSESSMENT AND TRAINING PACKET CREATION:

Durgee Junior High School

Created by:

Janice Murray

April Steenburgh

Julie Sul

Lindsay Cesari

Brief Summary of the Overall Collaborative Technology Project

The project team included Ms. Lindsay Cesari-Library Media Specialist, Janice Murray, April Steenburgh, and Julie Sul.

The overall project was to find a suitable application for podcast making and create a training packet for that application at Durgee Junior High School.

There were four phases to the project:

Phase I - Testing:

Graduate student members of the team tested six potential programs to be used for podcast creation for the iTouch--Moviemaker, Photostory, Jing, Garage Band, iMovie and SmartBoard Tools Recorder. April tested Moviemaker and Photostory. Janice tested Jing and Garage Band. Julie tested iMovie and SmartBoard Tools Recorder.

Phase II - Assessment/presentation of results

Team members noted their findings and presented the results to Ms. Cesari. Ms. Cesari ultimately chose PowerPoint due to the faculty's familiarity with the program and her desire to promote podcast production at the school.

Phase III - PowerPoint Presentation/Podcast Creation

A PowerPoint presentation and a Podcast tutorial on how to create podcasts from PowerPoint presentations were then created. Rough drafts of both were submitted to Ms. Cesari for content review prior to creating the packet.

Phase IV - PowerPoint Presentation/Podcast Revision & Packet Creation

Once the team received Ms. Cesari's comments, revisions were made to the PowerPoint presentation and podcast tutorial. The packet was developed based on the content included in both. All completed materials were submitted to Ms. Cesari.

Needs Assessment

The team learned of the need for this project by looking at the potential projects listing on the LMS. The team asked Ms. Cesari why she wanted to create podcasts at the initial meeting. She explained that the library has iTouchs that students sign out during study halls and she currently loads content created outside of the school onto them. She is hoping that with increased in-school podcast making abilities, the need for iTouchs will also increase and that will justify the purchase of more iTouchs.

Project Goal

The goal of the project was to produce a packet and podcast tutorial on how to create mp4 podcasts from PowerPoint presentations.

Learning Objectives of the Project

The project had a few learning objectives. One was to figure out how to successfully create an iTouch compatible mp4 file from a PowerPoint presentation in as few and as simple steps as possible. The other was to learn how to create a tutorial packet and podcast based on the process, providing an example of the process's accuracy to 100%.

Target Audience

Ms Cesari will be using the training packet and podcast the group developed throughout this project in order to teach school staff how to make podcasts for classroom use. The concept was modeled from Tennessee Department of Education's podcasts, providing accessible and interesting ways to present class material to students. The teachers will benefit most directly from the project, as the group has developed a packet and accompanying podcast to train

teachers in podcast creation. Ms Cesari will use these materials to familiarize school staff with the process so they can begin to create podcasts of class material for students.

Technology or Technologies Used to Complete This Project

For the first round of testing, a variety of multimedia programs were used. Programs were suggested by Ms Cesari and tested by the group members. Programs initially tested were PhotoStory3, MovieMaker, Jing, iMovie, GarageBand, and SmartBoard Tools Recorder. Group members each tested two programs on their home computers, paying attention to layout and ease of use as well as product output of each. Group members were involved in all aspects of podcast creation- images, visual effects, audio, and file format. Microphones and iPods were the main tools used in addition to the computers to evaluate and test each program. Group members met at the school and worked/tested on their equipment as well.

Challenges Faced

The biggest challenge faced involved the platform difference between the Windows machines being used by both the group and the school and the Apple format needed for podcasts. The expected outcome of the project was to select one program out of the six suggested by Ms. Cesari. The result of the testing, however, was a combination of programs that were determined to both best meet the needs of the project as well as maintain a user friendly intuitive interface that would be easiest for Ms. Cesari to use for training purposes.

Every program tested by the group contained some aspect of what would be helpful in creating the final product, but when the group met for the second time to discuss these findings, it was determined that PowerPoint, a program that had not been in the original testing phase, would be the most suitable starting point for the podcast project, as it had the benefit of being familiar to the teachers who would be using it. Development then involved focusing on how we could best use PowerPoint and what other programs would have to be involved, as PowerPoint does not have an innate function that would allow us to save the project file as the required MP4.

The team struggled consistently with questions of ease of use and format. The bulk of the programs used were only able to support a Windows media file. Some Apple OS programs were tested but they were outside of the reach of the project. These were either too complicated and involved beyond the reach of the project or were only compatible with Apple computers. This was a problem as the school hosts Windows based computer programs.

Results

After testing, it was decided the way that best method of teaching the podcast creation process for teacher use would involve an initial creation of slides/images in PowerPoint, narration and desired effects to be added with PhotoStory, and two format exports using MovieMaker and Zamzar.com. Both a training packet and tutorial podcast were created by the group for Ms. Cesari to use for training school staff in the process of making podcasts.

In attempting a similar sort of project in the future, it would ensure a smoother process if research was done on the part of the team prior to sitting down to test the suggested programs. The group dropped most of the programs in favor of one that had not initially been a part of the suggested programs, and that one proved the most helpful in facilitating production of the anticipated final product. It would have provided a stronger start to the project had group members taken time to research what programs were widely used in podcast production on a Windows platform in particular.

The group, instead, tested programs that proved useless due to the fact that the school did not have access to Apple machines. If the group had been able to develop a list of Windows programs as opposed to working off of the given list, the final product may have been more streamlined. All of the suggested programs were viable in one way or another for the production of podcasts, or presentations that were similar to podcasts in nature, but they were not all suited to the task of moving from one platform to another with few intermediate steps.

Testing such a broad array of programs, the group was better able to narrow down what programs they wanted. In view of so many interfaces and structures, the group developed a better sense of what would be accessible to a new user, and what was beyond the scope of the project. PowerPoint best suited our needs as teachers are already familiar with the program and it is an easy and sensible starting point for podcast creation. Had there been more research ahead of time it might have been possible to cut out the intermediary step of using MovieMaker after Photostory in order to export a viable wmv for conversion. The user interface was far more intuitive in PhotoStory, but the files it exported were not useful in the conversion process to make an MP4 file. MovieMaker was used as an intermediary step. It would have been possible to use MovieMaker exclusively after the PowerPoint step created the necessary slides/images, but the interface of MovieMaker was far less intuitive and for ease of teaching and creation that extra step was allowed.

Resources

Creative Commons (2010). *iPod Headphones.* Image search. www.creativecommons.org.

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Microsoft (2003). PowerPoint [software]. New 2010 version available from http://www.microsoft.com

TechSmith Corporation (2009). Jing (Free version) [software]. Available from http://www.jingproject.com/

Zamzar. (2006-2010). Zamzar free online file conversion (Beta version) [software]. Available from http://www.zamzar.com/