How to make a screencast in less than 10 minutes?

Screencasts are short, digital recordings of computer screens, often containing audio and/or video narration. Screencasts are used to flip the classroom to include a digital dimension to further enhance the student's learning processes. There are many ways to use screencasts:

- Talk your students through a powerpoint , difficult statistics, or important concepts;
- Explain pronunciation rules, with the option for students to replay the recordings to practice;
- Answer Frequently Asked Questions;
- Record and reuse lessons;
- Support your students with extra information (e.g. on historical sources);
- Make instruction videos (e.g. on how to use Blackboard in your course);
- Let your students make screencasts to explain concepts to each other.

Screencasts engage your students more, while allowing them to view screencasts any given moment. Making screencasts may sound like a time-consuming business, but it has many advantages for both instructors and students and can be done rather quick. This manual therefore aims to provide the reader with a quick and easy way to make screencasts, while discussing the advantages. We believe it can be done in just 10 minutes using Screencast-O-Matic (SOM).

> **Note:** there are many software programs available to make screencasts. For this manual, we will use Screencast-O-Matic as it is a quick, free and easy-to-use program that does not require to install any software onto your computer. It can therefore be used on both PCs and MACs, as long as you have installed Java (this is a free, default software programme preinstalled on 99% of the computers).

There is a short demo video available on their website explaining how to use Screencast-O-Matic in less than two minutes: http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/u/h/start-recording.

Step 1: start Internet Explorer
- Go to http://www.screencast-o-matic.com.
- Although it is not necessary to register, we do recommend creating an account as it allows the user some extra options.

Step 2: launch the screencast recorder
- Push the button **Start recording** in the upper right corner of the website. A window will be launched to your screen. This is the screencast box.
- Adjust the box to the screen or window you wish to show by moving the little white squares you find around the edges of the screen. It is advisable to also keep the aspect ratio in mind and if necessary to adjust the edges of the screen a little to the box as well.

> **Note:** If Screencast-O-Matic does not launch when clicking Start Recording, it usually means your computer's Java is not updated. This can be repaired by following the instructions that are displayed on the screen or the problem can be avoided altogether by pushing the "download + install" button. This can only be done on computers that are not managed by the university. University PCs are equipped with the latest version of Java in Internet Explorer (IE). It is therefore advisable to make screencasts in IE when using a University PC.

Step 3: check the recording settings

At the bottom of the screencast box a set of buttons is displayed. Before pushing the red record button, it may be practical to check whether the microphone and webcam are working correctly. The functions of all buttons are explained below:

1. Start recording
2. Select a microphone
3. Adjust microphone volume allows you to test and adjust the microphone volume.
4. Select a frame size and recording quality (e.g. 800x600 pixels or HD)
5. Select the webcam and switch it on or off.
6. Quit recording process

> **Note:** Before starting to make a screencast, make a short video (e.g. 10 seconds) to test the clarity of the text on the screen, the sound, and the aspect ratio of the screencast.

Step 4: start recording
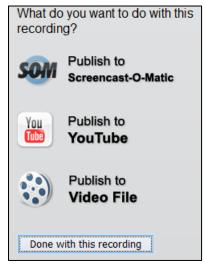
While recording, the following options will be available:

1. Pause recording
2. Microphone
3. Timer (maximum time per screencast: 15 minutes)
4. Delete the recording and start over
5. Finish recording and move to next step

Step 5: download the screencast or publish it to Youtube

After you have finished recording click Done in the screencast box (option 5 in the image under step 4). You will now be redirected to a new screen. Here, you can watch the screencast and can publish or save the screencast. You are given 3 possibilities:

- Publish to SOM: If you publish to SOM your video becomes a link on their website. This is public and may therefore not be desirable.
- Publishing to Youtube seems to allow making the video available for the world. However, if you start your own YouTube channel you can select privacy settings when uploading videos, so they can be labelled as 'private' or 'unlisted'. A video that is labelled as 'private' can only be viewed by the owner of the channel (you) and will not be visible for anyone else (including students!). The solution is to label your video as 'unlisted', so that only students with this link can view the video. This means that if you embed your screencast on Blackboard only the students who are enrolled in your Blackboard course can view this video.
- Publish to Video File allows you to download and save the screencast on your computer as a video (mp4 or avi) a flash file (.flv) or animated picture (.gif). This option is also useful when you want to edit the screencast on your computer. We recommend **downloading as an mp4 file**.
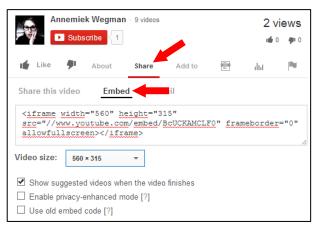
How to embed a screencast in Blackboard?

Screencasts can be made available to students through Blackboard. This can be done by downloading the file from SOM and then uploading it to Blackboard. However, there are some drawbacks to this method:

- Many large video files may make your Blackboard course slow or cause problems for students.
- Students may have difficulties viewing or downloading large files due to older computers or a slow internet connection. Students may also use different operating platforms that do not support your uploaded file format, or students may not have installed the right software.

We therefore advise to upload the screencast to YouTube and to embed it in Blackboard. Once your screencast is published to YouTube scroll down to the section immediately underneath the video.
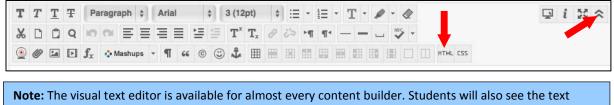
1. Select **Share** (Delen) > **Embed** (Insluiten)
2. Optionally, set the embedding options:
   - Video Size: sets the size of the embedded element on your website (students will always be able to enlarge the screencast when watching it)
   - Enable privacy-enhanced mode: YouTube won't store information about visitors on your web page unless they play the video.
   - Use old embed code: not necessary to embed in Blackboard
3. Copy the embed code (the text starting with `<iframe` and ending with `</iframe>`) and press **Ctrl + C** on your keyboard.

Within Blackboard, go to the course and menu section where you would like to publish your screencast.

1. Select Build content > Create item from the action bar.
2. In the menu that appears next, enter a name for your screencast.
3. Expand the visual text editor by clicking the **arrow** in the upper right corner (see below).
4. Select the html editor from the text editor by clicking **HTML**.
5. A pop-up window will appear. Paste the embed code using **Ctrl + V** on your keyboard.
6. Press **Submit** to place your screencast on Blackboard.

Note: The visual text editor is available for almost every content builder. Students will also see the text editor when posting to a Blackboard Discussion Board, Wiki, Journal or Blog. This embed function can therefore be used by instructors as well as students.