



Guiding Ohio Online

Level Up: Create or update a Screencast or Online How-to Guide

Step 1. Some valuable resources need a little bit of explanation or help. First, pick a resource that needs a further explaining. Write it here: _____

Step 2. Decide what you want the patron to be able to do. Write it in the box below:

Step 3. Create an outline with the steps involved for the patron to accomplish the task:

Step 1.

Step 2.

Step 3.

Step 4. Now, consider the best way to show demonstrate the above to the patron. You may consider creating one or more of the following:

- An online how-to-guide with screenshots.
- A screencast, meaning a video that shows how the screen will look using the resource.

Decide which of the above is appropriate for this resource. When considering whether to use an online how-to guide versus a screencast, take the connectivity in your area into consideration. A screencast will take longer to load than a webpage with an online how-to.

Online How-to Guide Tips

Writing for the web is different than writing for a handout. When writing an online how-to guide, here are some things to keep in mind:

- Write clear, simple and effective content. The content of your site should be easy to read for everyone, preferably in a conversational style.
- Front-load your text. Put the most important content on your page in the first paragraph, so that readers scanning your pages will not miss your main idea.
- Chunk your content. Cover only one topic per paragraph.
- Be concise. Write short paragraphs and minimize unnecessary words.
- Write in active voice instead of passive voice. (Ex: 'Sam taught the class', instead of 'the class was taught by Sam'.)
- Choose lists over paragraphs. When possible use lists rather than paragraphs to make your content easier to scan.

Screencast Tips

Here are some things to keep in mind for producing a screencast:

- Choose which platform best fits your needs. There are free and low-cost tools available. Some of these include:
 - Jing. <http://jing.en.softonic.com/> (Requires download)

- Screencast-O-Matic <http://www.screencast-o-matic.com/>
 - Screenr <http://www.screenr.com/>
 - CamStudio <http://camstudio.org/> (Requires download)
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- If you use a free web-based tool, be sure you can download the video in a commonly used format so you'll still have your screencasts if the software site is taken down.
 - Caption your videos. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that instructional content be accessible, which means either offering closed captioning or creating a separate accessible tutorial.
 - Keep it short. Try to keep each video to 2–3 minutes. If your content requires more time, break it up into multiple videos.
 - Keep it simple. There's only so much a patron can take in in 2-3 minutes.

Step 5. Once you've written your first draft, run it past 3 co-workers or fellow AmeriCorps members. Did they find it easy to follow? Were there any typos or transitions that needed work?