Having Fun at Work Again

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Topic

Selection

The topic of workplace environment had been identified as a learning need by the Utah state conference program planners, so it was geared for a specific need at the time. It seemed like a topic that would translate broadly to a WebJunction audience.

Sourcing Content

I had presented this topic at a ULA (Utah Library Association) Conference. Since I had this one hour of content completely designed out for a live presentation, I thought it would be really easy for me to take what I've already spent a lot of time working on and put it into a different environment.

I wasn't starting from scratch; I used what I had. I actually didn't create any slides for the original in-person presentation. I had an outline and the exercises for the audience, which consisted of asking them to respond to questions.

I had already prepared stuff and knew it really well, so it was about narrowing down to the most pertinent topics. I had complete notes built out about each of 10 aspects of the topic, so I had it quite well blocked out in terms of content and talking points. I used those notes and built out the slides for this course.

Course Design Process

Working on something that I already knew really well, that was a highpoint for me, already knowing all of the content and knowing where I wanted to go with it. I chunked each piece of the original presentation into slide format for the self-paced version. I had started with 10 things that I talked about in person but I cut down the topics to 6, thinking that in the asynchronous environment it would be asking a lot of them to do all 10 things.

I was looking to build in something that the asynchronous learner could then do that was meaningful and to reinforce it. At some point, the interactions started to feel really repetitive for the learner and I didn't want that. In person I could gauge my time and topics for that one hour, but being just online it seemed like everything got much more confined; the self-paced format felt too restricted. I took out the most troublesome thing – there was one piece I was having too much trouble making it work, so I just took it out!

For the layout, I started with a certain layout and then changed it. I thought that bright colors would go with the theme of having fun; then I selected graphics that would have something to do with what was being discussed, visually. I looked for images that were available for free on the web or pictures that I had taken. I didn't realize how goofy the graphics I selected were until I had access to some professional graphics, and it made the course much nicer to have something so awesome. I chose images from Shutterstock and just being able to include those images really professionalized my presentation.

Technical Development in Storyline

To get started in Storyline, I went through lynda.com and did some of the training modules, to where I felt that I was comfortable with it. It took a lot more time to develop this course in Storyline than to plan and get in front of a group and speak. Thinking of all the course attributes, and the right pose or image for the situation and then there's the narration and making sure it sounds right, and needing to record it again if I thought it sounded really bad.

It took somewhere around 40-50 hours to develop the course, that's my best guess. It's hard to know since I was doing it in bits a pieces. This was a 1-hour course; I usually tell people for every one hour of content it takes 10 hours to prepare, so that's a lot more, that's like 4-5 times as much, and part of that was learning and using the technology and the design.

Storyline is such a nice tool. It's just going to be super for me to make other things as well. In some ways, to have developed this course on my own, it really forced me to learn and know that program. I wish I could have closed myself in a room and just done it for a concentrated period of time; or learned Storyline really well first and then try to build a course. I was really just flying by the seat of my pants and I didn't have the luxury of time.

Reflections & Recommendations

Training Institute Curriculum and Training
The Training Institute really prepared me for creating the course. The book, *Design for How People Learn* (Julie Dirksen), that was really, really helpful. I knew a lot already about the different elements, but to refresh and rethink was so helpful.

I wished the in-person session could have been a little bit longer, 1-2 more days, where you didn't have any specific content to present, but everyone could have had a whole other day as a working day –it would have really been a productive use of time.

I thought it was great to have Mike (Storyline consultant) as a resource; if I asked Mike a question, he would always help me with a solution. He was so helpful to just tell me stuff that I could have learned/sleuthed online myself, but he always just responded. Oh, and all of you guys were just awesome, all of the presenters at the in-person training had so much to talk about and it was refreshing to be able to go somewhere and learn so much content.

Resources
It would be really nice to hire someone to do all the voice work. The professionals have the nice voice that would carry that. For a canned presentation, I want it to be more professionally done than a live presentation; I have a different expectation with a canned presentation that it should sound less home-spun.

I think it would be really fun to take a whole course on gamification – I think that would be a next step for me – if I could get a whole game going on that would be a great thing to do. I know there are a lot of awesome things out there, I just don't know how to do them, but it's a definite next step, learning gamification.

Barriers

One of my huge barriers was my time back at work. I had this big project, but I had a full workload at work. A lot of this was done afterhours, because I just didn't have the time to do it at work. I just couldn't sit at my desk for 2 hour blocks of work, so I took it home a lot, and that worked out fine for me, but I just couldn't get it all done in one day. It was hard to step in and out of it, part of it is because of the tool. I was still learning it, so I would do something one day, and then I have 15 minutes to do it at work, and I can't remember, where was I again, how do I do that one thing again?