

Best Practices Using Adobe Captivate

These best practices were developed by the Libraries' *Guides Group*. They may be applied to tutorials or other products developed using TechSmith Camtasia.

KNOW YOUR USER:

Identify your users before getting started. Is the audience students, faculty or staff? Design with users in mind.

ARTICULATE the LEARNING GOALS:

Establish the goal. What is/are the most important information to be conveyed? Articulate what you want users to learn. Be realistic about your learning goals; avoid squeeze in too many learning objectives. Tutorials designed using Captivate need be short and to the point. They should not be designed to completely replace comprehensive subject guides or in-class presentations. Use Captivate to help design a tutorial that would emphasize certain points or features (i.e., of a database, a web site) that are difficult to grasp without visualization.

DEVELOP A SCRIPT or STORYBOARD:

Writing a clear and concise script is key to the success of your project. Using Captivate, you are creating a tutorial that puts together a number of short segments that join to make up a scene. This scene is intended to convey a specific message or set of learning outcomes to users. To be effective, the message, script or storyboard needs to be well planned. The script articulates the goals and acts as a guide for the entire production. Without a well defined script, the job to create a meaningful tutorial will become unmanageable.

PRODUCTION LENGTH:

The Guides Group recommends that Captivate tutorials be produced for no more than 3.5 minutes in length.

NAVIGATION:

Create a clear visual navigation. Logically navigate the user through the desired features on a screen, web pages or steps. Avoid jumping around a page and going too quickly or slowly.

Should you want users to move from one web page to another, alert users when linking away to another page, or be clear about their need to click on a link to move forward.

NARRATION:

The narrator needs to speak clearly. Avoid speaking too slowly or quickly. Solicit feedback from colleagues on the pace of your narration. The Captivate tutorial author does not necessarily need to be the narrator. Include layperson's definitions for

technical or librarian terminology. Avoid using acronyms. Tighten the language to be as clear and concise as possible, using clear and simple language.

STANDARD ELEMENTS:

To maintain a consistent look and feel with all Captivate tutorials, guide authors need to include:

AUDIO INTRODUCTION:

Captivate tutorials need to begin with the following audio introduction:

Welcome to the University of Maryland Libraries' Guide to [insert name of guide]

DESIGN ELEMENTS:

Captivate tutorials need to conform to these design standards:

Fonts: Arial
Font Sizes: 11 pt.
Text/Callout box colors: Glass Blue

Important considerations about text:

- Include as few words as possible so text can be easily scanned by users.
- Left-justify all text.
- Avoid overusing italics; they are difficult to read on a computer screen.
- Avoid overuse of all-caps.

LINKS:

Captivate tutorials need to include standard forms of information when linked:

[Learning to navigate the Libraries' Home Page](#) [2.5 minutes]

If you cannot view this tutorial, learn how to [enable Javascript and download Adobe Flash \(free\)](#).

HTML Code:

```
<p><a href="insert your link">Learning to navigate the Libraries' Home Page</a>  
[2.5 minutes] <br><font size="-2"> If you cannot view this tutorial, learn how to <a  
href="pagetobe developed">enable Javascript and download Adobe Flash  
(free)</a>.</font></p>
```

NAMING FILES

Give meaningful names to your files. Follow Web Services' guidelines on file naming, see: <http://libi.lib.umd.edu/naming-directories-files-and-links>.

Use this: www.lib.umd.edu/guides/annotated_bibliographies.swf

Instead of: www.lib.umd.edu/guides/annotbibcaptivate.swf

PROOFREAD and SPELL CHECK

Proofread and spell check your text boxes. Have someone else review your production and text for flow, transition, grammar and content.

QUALITY CONTROL:

Captivate tutorials need to be built in WebSpinner's JUNK directory. Guides cannot go live and be linked to the Libraries' Web site until they have been reviewed by the appropriate *Guides Group* representative, see:

www.lib.umd.edu/guides/group/ggmembers.html Guide authors will need to use the Guide Notification Form (or yellowsheet) to submit guides for review:
www.lib.umd.edu/UES/yellowform.html

ONGOING MAINTENANCE:

As is the case with all other guides, authors will be required to review their Captivate tutorials every year by the beginning of each Fall semester

(<http://www.lib.umd.edu/guides/group/ggcreating.html>).

- The guide's author will receive a reminder to revise the tutorial.
- If no revision has been made by the date supplied by the Guides Group, the tutorial will be de-linked from Research Port and the Guides home page. It will be put in the JUNK directory making it unavailable to the public.
- The tutorial will be "relinked" again by User Education Services once notification of revision has been received.