

Title of Session: ScreenSteps
Moderator: Greg DeVore
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Room: After School Online

BJB2: welcome, everyone, to this special ASO on ScreenSteps

BJB2: our guest speaker is Greg DeVore. Let's start with introductions so Greg has a feel for who is participating

BJB2: a reminder if you are new to Tapped In to go to the Actions menu in the top right of your screen and select DETACH

BJB2: I'm a communications teacher in Pennsylvania

MaureenB: hi Maureen I teach 4th grade in Putnam County NY

YuanB: Yuan, I teach high school math in CA

GregD: I am Greg DeVore

BJB2: cool...lots of variety for you, Greg

GregD: yes

GregD: I own a company called Blue Mango Learning Systems

GregD: we are in McLean, VA

GregD: just outside of Washington DC

GregD: So I am not a teacher

GregD: But we make tools that make it easier to teach people how to use technology

GregD: Quick question - in your teaching situations do you ever have to teach others

GregD: how to use computers?

MaureenB: yes all the time

GregD: Or an application on a computer?

BJB2: yes

YuanB: no

GregD: If that is not the case Yuan then this may or may not be interesting for you.

GregD: Our application ScreenSteps really focuses on teaching software applications.

GregD: Let me give you a scenario from a university student who uses ScreenSteps.

GregD: He was in an accounting course.

GregD: They received an assignment to do Regression Analysis in Excel.

GregD: He said that they spent hours trying to figure out how to make Excel work.

GregD: And that wasn't even the assignment.

GregD: They had to analyze the data.

GregD: But the technology was getting in the way.

BJB2 listens

GregD: ScreenSteps is meant to make it easy for the technology to get out of the way.

GregD: So, given this scenario the professor has a couple of options of how to teach his students to use Excel.

GregD: He can write instructions in a Word Document or PDF document.

GregD: That is what they did in this case.

GregD: The student said it was impossible to follow.

GregD: And a lot of the instructions were wrong.

GregD: The other option is to create a screen recording.

GregD: These can be great because the student gets to see what is happening on the computer.

GregD: The only problem is that they take a really long time to do.

GregD: And if you want to ever change them then you pretty much have to start from scratch.

GregD: This is where ScreenSteps enters in.

MaureenB really listening now

CaroleMc joined the room.

GregD: With ScreenSteps you don't do screen recordings. You do screen captures of every step of task.

CaroleMc: Hello, sorry I'm late

GregD: You can then export those screen captures out as PDFs or HTML files

GregD: to give people clear instructions on how to accomplish a task

GregD: no problem

GregD: Where are you from Carol?

CaroleMc: Hi Greg, I'm from Australia - eastern bottom corner - Victoria

BJB2 . o O (Carole had a long drive, Greg!)

CaroleMc smiles

GregD: That is a long day!

GregD: Here is a quick example of what a ScreenSteps lesson looks like

GregD: <http://tappedin.screenstepslive.com/lessons/565-Getting-to-the-After-School-Online-Passageway>

GregD: This was created in about two minutes right before we started this meeting.

CaroleMc: taking a look now

BJB2: a reminder to hold down the ctrl key on a pc to override the pop up blockers

GregD: BJ - when you saw me drop off for a second it was so I could create this lesson.

MaureenB: so you are editing right on the screen save?

GregD: Yes

CaroleMc: okay that's cool

GregD: ScreenSteps has a capture tool that I can click to capture each step of the process I am trying to teach.

GregD: As I do that ScreenSteps sucks those images up into a document for me.

GregD: I can then go back, add text and image annotations - all from within ScreenSteps.

CaroleMc: so it's a document not a video - better for some users

GregD: Once I am done I can export out to a PDF file, HTML or post it to ScreenSteps Live

MaureenB: My SmartBoard does something similar to that

GregD: which is what I just showed you.

GregD: Yes - a lot of people like this format

GregD: because they can scan the information

GregD: it is searchable

GregD: they don't have to "watch" something to get to what they need.

GregD: And - most importantly -

GregD: It is 100 times easier to create.

CaroleMc: so this tool would be useful for showing a series of steps online - I get it hence the name 'screensteps' - I'm now thinking what else I could use this for

GregD: We create videos to show off our product.

GregD: You can see some here

GregD: <http://www.screensteps.com/screencasts/>

GregD: But each of these 5-7 minute videos takes me about 1.5 - 3 hours to produce

GregD: And I'm not even that much of a perfectionist

GregD: compare that to our online manual

CaroleMc: hmmm, that's a bit too long when we want everything 'yesterday'

GregD: <http://bmls.screenstepslive.com/topics/45>

MaureenB: or you have a friend on the phone in a panic

GregD: This was all created in a little over a day

CaroleMc: Yes, Maureen, that happens

GregD: and then gradually added to as customers have had questions

GregD: You talk about the phone thing

GregD: When we receive a support question that isn't covered in our manual

GregD: we literally create a new lesson to show the customer how to resolve the issue, post it to ScreenSteps Live and then email the url back to the customer.

GregD: The whole process takes between 5 an 10 minutes

GregD: and our online manual grows

MaureenB: nice

GregD: So future customers will be able to find the answers to their questions

CaroleMc: now that's smart, I wish I had that earlier today when I was unable to join a live conference in Elluminate - nothing was resolved even after a live phone conversation

GregD: You bring up another good point

GregD: Bug reports

CaroleMc: part of the problem was that I did not understand the instructions in dot points sent via email

GregD: That is very common

GregD: But it can also be frustrating to try to explain what is going wrong on your system to a support agent

MaureenB: hehe

CaroleMc agrees

GregD: We just send a ScreenSteps lesson and they can see right away what is going wrong

MaureenB: I remember the last time I made a fool of myself

GregD: The real issue is that when you speak, or I speak we come from different backgrounds

CaroleMc: and it might work well the other way too - customer provides a screensteps for help desk

GregD: So I am saying something but you are understanding something completely different

GregD: ScreenSteps takes all of the imagination out of the process

GregD: you get to see exactly what is happening

CaroleMc: whereas the visual language of screensteps avoids the problems

MaureenB: or the visual necessary for understanding

GregD: This has always been true

GregD: and the tools have been there to do this sort of thing

YuanB: This sounds very cool. Maybe something I can actually use.

GregD: but you needed about 5 applications

GregD: and quite a bit of technical expertise to do it

GregD: All ScreenSteps does is integrate the process and smooth the workflow so that anybody

GregD: can create a lesson

GregD: Here is another cool example

GregD: <http://screenstepslive.com/lessons/431>

CaroleMc: I've just thought of a really good lesson to provide in screensteps...

GregD: This is a lesson that someone posted to ScreenSteps Live

GregD: on how to create a header in Photoshop

MaureenB: I would feel safer leaving computer things for a sub if I could give explicit

directions for them

GregD: Even if you have never used Photoshop before you could follow these instructions

GregD: Exactly Maureen

GregD: What were you thinking of Carole?

CaroleMc: one I'm asked about often in regard to audio settings on a PC - could simply show the screens as they appear when in control panel.

GregD: Yes

GregD: The one I have to use a lot is "how to show hidden files and folder on Windows XP"

CaroleMc: Q. when this is uploaded to Screensteps server, does it provide a URL for that exact lesson?

GregD: I was trying to help one of our clients at a major Medical Manufacturer with something

GregD: She had to get something on her file system and I told her that her IT guys should be able to helper her

GregD: They couldn't

GregD: but a ScreenSteps lesson had the problem solved in 5 min.

GregD: Yes Carole you get a URL

CaroleMc smiles and thinks of many applications for coaching online

GregD: http://bmls.screenstepslive.com/topics/show_lesson/15?lesson_id=165

GregD: This lesson shows the exact process of posting to ScreenSteps Live

GregD: But keep in mind that you don't have to use ScreenSteps Live to use ScreenSteps

GregD: You can just export the file as PDF and email it

GregD: ScreenSteps Live just makes everything more convenient

CaroleMc: aha I see it, Q. Blue Mango... is that the contributor?

GregD: Yes

GregD: On ScreenSteps Live you can also allow people to comment on your lessons

GregD: Which can be very handy

CaroleMc: I like the PDF bit too, these would be good for storing on my wiki as well as my slides and other resources

GregD: So, I have done a lot of talking

GregD: any questions?

YuanB: no, not yet

CaroleMc: Q. would screensteps work whilst using ANY online program? e.g. Elluminate

GregD: What do you mean by work?

GregD: Do you mean capturing the images?

CaroleMc: ... for example, to show moderators the steps in using a tool which pops up windows

GregD: Do the pop ups stay up?

GregD: Or do they disappear right away?

CaroleMc: yes, but are only visible to the moderator and not the learner, so I could screensteps that and make it easier to show

GregD: yes

GregD: really, anything you see on your screen you can capture

GregD: A really cool way to use it is to:

GregD: 1. Create a lesson

CaroleMc: only way I've done it before is to use Elluminate's screen snaps, but that is laborious when in a hurry

GregD: 2. Turn on the clipboard recorder

GregD: 3. Go to the application you are using

GregD: 4. As you go through the steps press Print Screen for each step

GregD: ScreenSteps will automatically import the images

GregD: if the Clipboard Recorder is on

GregD: Then, when you are done - you go back to ScreenSteps and crop/edit the images and prepare your lesson

GregD: The clipboard recorder basically watches the system clipboard for any image data

GregD: If image data appears there in the ScreenSteps sucks it up

GregD: It makes is really fast to get images into ScreenSteps

CaroleMc: Another Q. can you record voice whilst doing the screensteps lesson? or maybe that could be done after

GregD: ScreenSteps doesn't do any audio

GregD: Since the primary output format is HTML and PDF

CaroleMc: okay that's fine

GregD: Once you get into audio you are looking at more of a screen recorder

GregD: like Camtasia

CaroleMc: yes point taken, screensteps is simple, quick to use and fast

GregD: I have created a sample account for Tapped In on ScreenSteps Live

GregD: if you would like to take a look at it

CaroleMc: sure

GregD: <http://tappedin.screenstepslive.com/lessons>

GregD: The second lesson on this page shows how to configure ScreenSteps to post lesson to this account

GregD: You can download a free demo of ScreenSteps here

GregD: <http://www.screensteps.com/downloads>

GregD: This lets you use the Pro version for 15 days

CaroleMc: Q. so Screensteps full license - what does that cost?

GregD: After that ScreenSteps reverts to the Free version

GregD: you can always use the Free version to post lessons to ScreenSteps Live

GregD: you just can't export PDF or HTML

GregD: But if you want to try it out

CaroleMc: downloading as we speak ...

GregD: Download ScreenSteps

MaureenB: did that already

GregD: Configure the account settings like I showed in the lesson

GregD: and then try posting

GregD: Once you have lessons on ScreenSteps Live

GregD: they will appear much like a blog

GregD: organized by date

GregD: but you can do a few interesting things

GregD: 1. You can tag lessons

GregD: <http://screenstepslive.com/tags>

GregD: This is a list of all publicly tagged lesson on ScreenSteps Live

GregD: When people post lessons to their account they can choose to make them public

GregD: Then they become available from our main site

GregD: If you click on a tag you will see lessons for that tag

GregD: So if you click on OmniFocus

GregD: you will see a bunch of lessons for that application

GregD: The other thing you can do is create topics

GregD: Topics are for when you want to organize things a bit more

GregD: Here is an example of a topic we created for another software application we developed

GregD: <http://bmls.screenstepslive.com/topics/16>

GregD: The lessons are organized into sections

GregD: And have a sequence to them

GregD: So this is great for creating a user manual

GregD: Or lessons for a specific class

GregD: or group of people

GregD: In addition you can protect lessons in a topic

GregD: so that only people you give permission to can see those lessons

MaureenB: make own "for dummies" book

GregD: Exactly

CaroleMc: installed, now launching, eager to play now...

GregD: In fact I have been creating my own "Dummies" book for myself

GregD: There are tons of tasks that I have to do once a month or once every couple of months

GregD: each time I do them I have to re-learn how to do it

GregD: I have started documenting them in ScreenSteps and it is saving me tons of time

GregD: Carole

GregD: see if you can post a lesson to the Tapped In account

GregD: just something simple

CaroleMc: I have just realised how good this would be for working with Moodle

functions - a series of 'Moodle for Dummies' tutorials - they could be uploaded to a resource folder - wow I'm eager to get started on these

GregD: We have had a couple of school districts that have told us that they have moved all of their documentation over to ScreenSteps

CaroleMc: okay Greg, can do that when we've finished here - need to learn the steps first

GregD: this was in their IT support groups

GregD: Once guy said he was doing more lessons in a day than he previously could in a week

GregD: Another area where ScreenSteps shines is in updating your lessons

GregD: Technology changes

GregD: apps get updated

GregD: and you don't want all of your lessons to have to get redone

GregD: Here is a good example

GregD: http://bmls.screenstepslive.com/topics/show_lesson/45?lesson_id=158

GregD: This is a lesson on how to create a lesson in ScreenSteps

GregD: But the first image

GregD: is actually incorrect

GregD: It points to the new lesson button

GregD: that we moved in a subsequent update

CaroleMc: I am so glad I popped in here today, thanks Greg - screensteps will solve a few tasks for me too.

GregD: no problem

CaroleMc: Would you like to present at our Australian 2008 Networks Community some time in March?

GregD: Sure

CaroleMc: great, where can I email you?

GregD: What time in the morning would I have to get up?

GregD smiles

GregD: greg.devore@bluemangolearning.com

CaroleMc: thanks, this sort of time slot would be good - middle of the day for us what time is it for you?

GregD: almost 9pm so that would be fine

BJB2 . o O (on Wednesday, Carole)

CaroleMc claps hands and jumps over the moon

GregD: That is quite the reaction

GregD smiles

GregD: We are just about out of time

GregD: any other questions?

BJB2 . o O (Greg should take a screenstep of that jump over the moon!)

MaureenB: no now I need to play

CaroleMc ROFL

CaroleMc: Me too, Maureen.

BJB2 agrees with Maureen. ...and the time to play

GregD: I will leave the tappedin account open there for a couple of weeks

GregD: You can also sign up for a free personal account as well

BJB2: I'd love to do all the tips for Tapped In as screensteps

GregD: Just go to www.screenstepslive.com

YuanB: that would be a good idea

GregD: and choose signup

GregD: There are various account levels

GregD: but they all include a 30 day trial

GregD: and there is a free one as well

GregD: But like I said

CaroleMc: ooh a free personal account sounds excellent, will do that

GregD: you can also use ScreenSteps without ScreenSteps Live

GregD: Well, unless there are any other questions and think that about wraps things up.

YuanB: thank you

GregD: I hope this was useful.

BJB2: thanks, Greg...wonderful information!

GregD: Thanks for letting me do this.

MaureenB: thanks lots to think about and play with

GregD: Feel free to email me if you have any questions.

BJB2: this discussion will be archived at www.tappedin.org/transcripts

GregD: You'll have to send me a lesson on how to get there.

GregD smiles

BJB2 winks...will do!

BJB2 waves goodnight

GregD: Ok

GregD: Talk to you all later.

YuanB: good night everyone