

What about... using Echo360's PCAP?

Topic Summary

Echo360's PCAP is the name of their desktop personal capture software. This can be downloaded and installed on a PC or Mac.

This means that lecturers or other staff can make recordings on an ad-hoc basis, from their office or other locations, and are not restricted to using full room installations.

Resource Summary

Topic: Personal capture

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Target audience: Practitioners, technical staff

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Comment:

How It Works

- PCAP is a form of screen capture which taps into Echo360's format and delivery system. This means that a PCAP recording will include microphone audio, webcam video and any screen activity.
- Before recording, you can choose not to use the audio, screen, or webcam feeds.
- Once a recording is made, the creator has a chance to do simple editing before publishing it.
- Lecturers can easily redo unsatisfactory recordings.
- Unpublished recordings are stored on the computer used to make them. Published recordings are stored on the institution's Echo360 server.
- As the published recording is delivered by the Echo360 server, the viewing formats and interfaces for a PCAP recording are the same as those for a traditional (room-installed) recording.

Useful Advice

- Generally, a headset or external microphone sounds better than using a computer's built-in mic.
- Try to do captures in a protected environment: quiet and non-distracting (especially with no telephone noises). Shared offices can make recording difficult.
- Consider framing the camera shot. Make sure you are well-lit. A plain background may be more suitable than something 'busy,' try not to capture people walking past a window or door, etc. The software will give you a preview of the video frame.
- As the original recordings are stored on the user's computer, they may want to move those files to a backup drive (or delete them if unwanted) rather than let the files take up space.
- Lecturers should have a very fast internet connection when publishing recordings to the server, as the file sizes can get very large.
- Editing within PCAP (before publishing) is limited to cutting pieces out. When any changes are saved, the original file is revised. However, editing via the Echo360 server (after publishing) offers a few more options, especially the ability to create "Save As..." spinoff versions while retaining the original recording.
- Desktop captures with video may be particularly nice for online modules when students rarely or never meet their lecturer face to face, simply to give the students a sense of the lecturer as a person and to help create a more connected, community feeling.

Resources

ELTAC document: What About... making a personal capture?

ELTAC document: What About... personal capture advice?

ELTAC multimedia: Creating, Editing and Publishing with PCAP (video)

Mimi Weiss Johnson and Justin Gagen: [Echo360 Personal Capture](#) (overview, instructions, tested cameras)

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