

FROM FILM TO VIDEO BLOGGING: WHAT ARE THE STEPS?

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Abstract

This presentation demonstrated how to embed videos into blogs. Using online video storage websites, it is becoming easier for educators and learners to insert video segments into their blogs. There are three vital steps for embedding a video, these are described below.

1. Introduction

For teachers interested in creating and delivering video online, the internet is providing better and more reliable services for subscribers to access. Since such services are generally free, subscribers are not confined to one product, instead they can use the service which provides the most useful feature for their task, this presentation attempted to target strategies to utilize a combination of these services.

At the start of the presentation, I briefly outlined the filming equipment required, and then I commented on suitable video editing software. In the next part of the presentation I focused more on video storage websites (see Gromik, 2007). In this demonstration, I used dailymotion and youtube.com to store my videos and to generate the HTML codes required to embed a videos into a blog. After briefly commenting on these sites, I explained the process of embedding videos into a blog. To provide real examples, I displayed some of the blogs that I

managed to reveal where the codes can be used most effectively as well as how to catalog videos on a blog. The issue of copyright law and Creative Commons were also addressed during the presentation. At the end of the presentation there was a comment about cutting and pasting HTML codes and it is included in this paper.

2. Filming Equipment

To create original student work, teachers need access to at least one of the following pieces of equipment:

- digital video recording camera
- digital video tapes
- tripod
- batteries and battery charger
- firewire cable (to connect from digital camera to computer)
- computer

To edit a film educators have access to a wide range of software ranging from Adobe Premiere Pro 2 to Pinnacle and Final Cut Pro. However these are generally expensive professional software. Since students will mostly likely own either an XP or Mac computer, it is important to remember that these computers have video editing software included as part of their free programs. XP provides Movie Maker and Mac has iMovie. Both are efficient user-friendly tools for beginners (see Gromik, 2006).

3. Subscribing to Website Services

First educators need to subscribe to all the services that they need in order to complete their video blogging project; in this case blogger.com and either youtube or dailymotion. Since

teachers and students will be using a site account for each online service, writing the user name and password somewhere safe is one of the best ways to avoid losing track of your sites.

Once the subscription process is completed, educators need to have video resources ready for upload. To avoid copyright infringement, such resources must be authentic material produced either by the teacher or the students themselves. Some video storing sites do not condone racist, sexist, violent or illegal videos. These can form part of a classroom discussion.

The screenshot shows the YouTube video upload form. At the top, there are three placeholder boxes for YouTube logos, each with the text "Image coming soon.". Below these, the "File" field shows "Uploaded on March 19, 2007, 02:51:42 AM as *ftk.mp4*". The "Title" field contains "shopping and eating in Japan". The "Description" field contains a text area with the text: "Friends back in Australia always think that living in Japan is expensive. In this 10minute documentary I explain how I shop for food, and where I like to eat. The video gives some great". The "Tags" field contains "japan tokyo sendai tohoku food drinks beverage". Below the tags, there is a note: "Enter a list of three or more keywords, separated by spaces, describing your video. It helps to use relevant keywords so that others can find your video!". The "Video Category" section has several radio button options: "Autos & Vehicles", "Comedy", "Entertainment", "Film & Animation", "Gadgets & Games", "Howto & DIY", "Music", "News & Politics", "People & Blogs", "Pets & Animals", "Sports", and "Travel & Places". The "Travel & Places" option is selected. Below the categories, there is a note: "Select a category that best describes your video.". The "Language" field is set to "English". The "Date & Location Details" section has "Date Recorded:" with three dropdown menus for day, month, and year, and "Location Recorded:" with an empty text field.

Figure 1. Uploading Video to YouTube.com, Stage 1

However, the real challenge for students is to respect music copyright, therefore educators may want to direct their students to sites such as ccMixer.com, and Jamendo.com which support the Creative Commons copyright definitions (Phillips, 2006). Creative Commons are

guidelines which encourage artists to share their music and creative arts with other artists for free as long as the work and artist are mentioned at the end of the video; also referred to as attribution. During the editing stage students need to attribute or recognize the work of the artist and the song retrieved as well as the location where the music was retrieved from. This process is very similar to academic referencing. Once the film is edited it is ready for upload. In the presentation I used the following process for uploading a video. First log in to youtube and upload the video. Next, subscribers need to provide a title and a description for the video (Fig. 1). This information will be displayed on the youtube video page for viewers to read.

Next click upload the video and wait for this process to be completed (Fig.2). Whether subscribers have a video formatted in Quicktime (.mov) or Window Media Player (.wmv), is not a real concern at this stage since youtube or dailymotion will automatically convert the subscriber's video into a flash file. Viewers of the videos will need to have Adobe Flash player installed on their computer to view the videos.

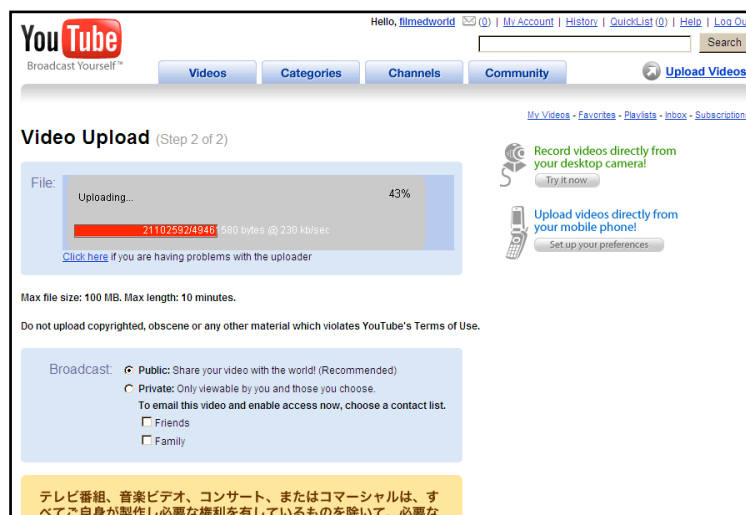


Figure 2. Uploading Video to YouTube.com, Stage 2

There are two points worth noting on Figure 2. First is the issue of video file size. Youtube.com prefers that the videos are no larger than 100 Megabites, dailymotion will accept video files no larger than 150 Megabites. The second point is that subscribers have the option of broadcasting their video either to the general public or to friends via the private mode. I recommend keeping the videos public. Based on experience I have had problems with the private feature, sometimes even selected friends can not view the videos. Therefore it is important to realize that the public feature means that the video is accessible by everyone. Only upload videos that you are comfortable delivering online to the international viewing public.

4. Embedding your Videos

Once the video is uploaded, youtube and dailymotion will provide the subscriber with a set of HTML codes specifically organized to embed the video into a blog or a website. Simply copy and paste these codes either on a word document or as was mentioned during the presentation on notepad. (Fig.3)

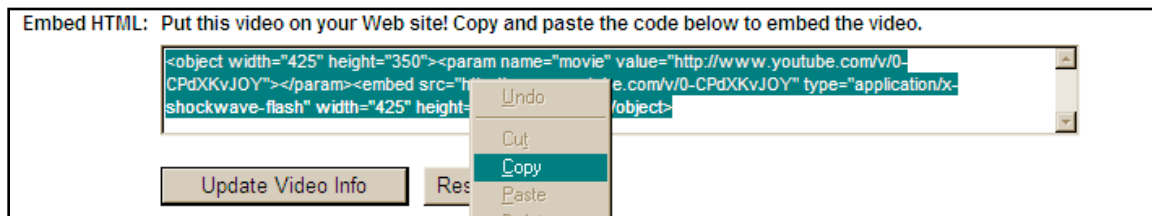


Figure 3. Uploading Video to YouTube.com, Stage 3

Once the embedding HTML codes are copied, the subscriber can open his/her blog account, select the preferred blog page, click on Template and then HTML codes to access the necessary working area. Scroll down the set of HTML codes to find a suitable area for embedding the video. Preview the blog page to check that the video is embedded in the

desired area in the blog. Since various blog page templates have different formats subscribers might need to experiment with finding a suitable video embedding area on their blog (Fig. 4).

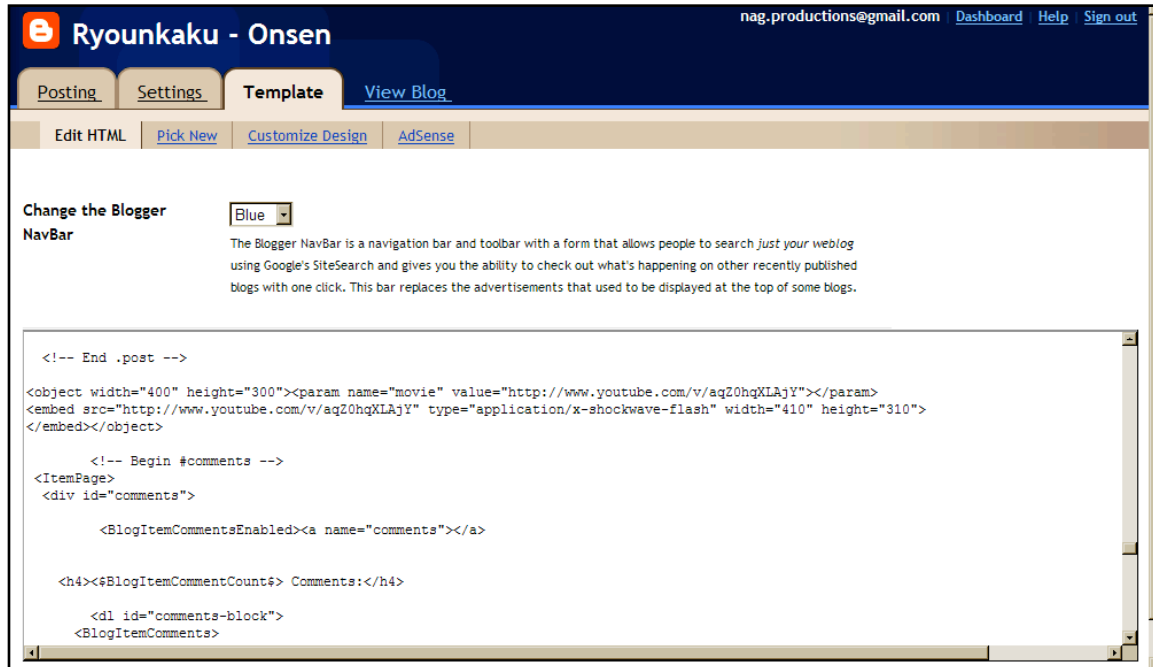


Figure 4. Uploading Video to YouTube.com, Stage 4

One important point to note, however is that, video storage websites have a pre-set size for embedding videos. In Figure 4 the pre-set size values are 400 for width and 300 for the height. Subscribers can simply reduce or increase those values to fit their video in the specified area. Once the video is embedded in the preferred area subscribers need to save the changes by clicking on 'save the template changes'.

Once teachers and students become familiar with this process, it takes very little time to embed a video. Nonetheless, a teacher might want to catalogue all the students' sites on one main class blog. This is the last part of the presentation.

To catalogue students' video blog productions, the teacher needs to create a class blog. This is a simple process very similar to embedding video HTML codes, however this time, the whole process takes place within the blog working area.

First the blog subscriber needs to copy the URL link of the blog page where the video is stored. Then in the main blogging page, go to Template, then click on Edit HTML codes. Scroll down the HTML codes until a line beginning with `` becomes visible. This is the area where subscribers can add the links of all their videos, and thus create an archive of their productions (Fig. 5)



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<#BlogMemberProfiles>

  <!-- End #profile-container -->

  <MainOrArchivePage>
  <h2 class="sidebar-title">View some of filmworld.com's Productions</h2>
  <ul>
    <li><a href="http://filmedworld.com">filmedworld.com</a> This site offers a yearly competition.</li>
    <li><a href="http://shoppinginjapan.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">Shopping and eating in Japan</a> - Where & how to shop for food in Japa
    <li><a href="http://toronagashi.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">Toronagashi</a> - a traditional Japanese lantern festival.</li>
    <li><a href="http://yosokoi.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">Yosokoi</a> - a traditional Japanese dance.</li>
    <li><a href="http://filmedworld1.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">Dinner in a Salt Mine</a> - The Krakow Salt Mine Museum, a nice place to
    <li><a href="http://filmedworldhutong.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">From Hutong to High Rise</a> - Hutongs in Beijing, short film on Chin
    <li><a href="http://filmedworldtaiwan.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">Inside a Temple</a> - Reflection on religion</li>
    <li><a href="http://tthfilmedworld.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">THI</a> - Teachers Helping Teachers visit Dhaka, Bangladesh.</li>
    <li><a href="http://olddhaka.blogspot.com/" target="_blank">Old Dhaka</a> - A journey through Old Dhaka on Rickshaw.</li></p>
  </ul>
  <h2 class="sidebar-title">Links</h2>

```

Figure 5. Uploading Video to YouTube.com, Stage 5

Simply copy one of the `` HTML code line already available, and paste it in the preferred location. Then between the `` parentheses insert the URL code of the video blog. Save the template changes and preview the main blog page. Check the link to ensure that it directs the viewer to the appropriate video embedded blog page and the process of embedding a video into a blog is complete (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Uploading Video to YouTube.com, Stage 6

5. Video Storage Sites are Blogs

In the last part of my presentation I commented that video storing websites such as youtube and dailymotion offer a wide range of features that could classify them as a blog. For example subscribers of video storing sites will have:

- an email account (for easy networking between subscribers)
- the videos include a description
- the videos can be rated
- the videos can be commented upon
- the subscriber's video area can be edited to suit preferred colors (Fig.7)

Therefore video storing areas can be a lead into blogging. Video storing areas encourage students to write simple descriptions as well as tags (or keywords) about their videos to ease the process of selecting and viewing videos.

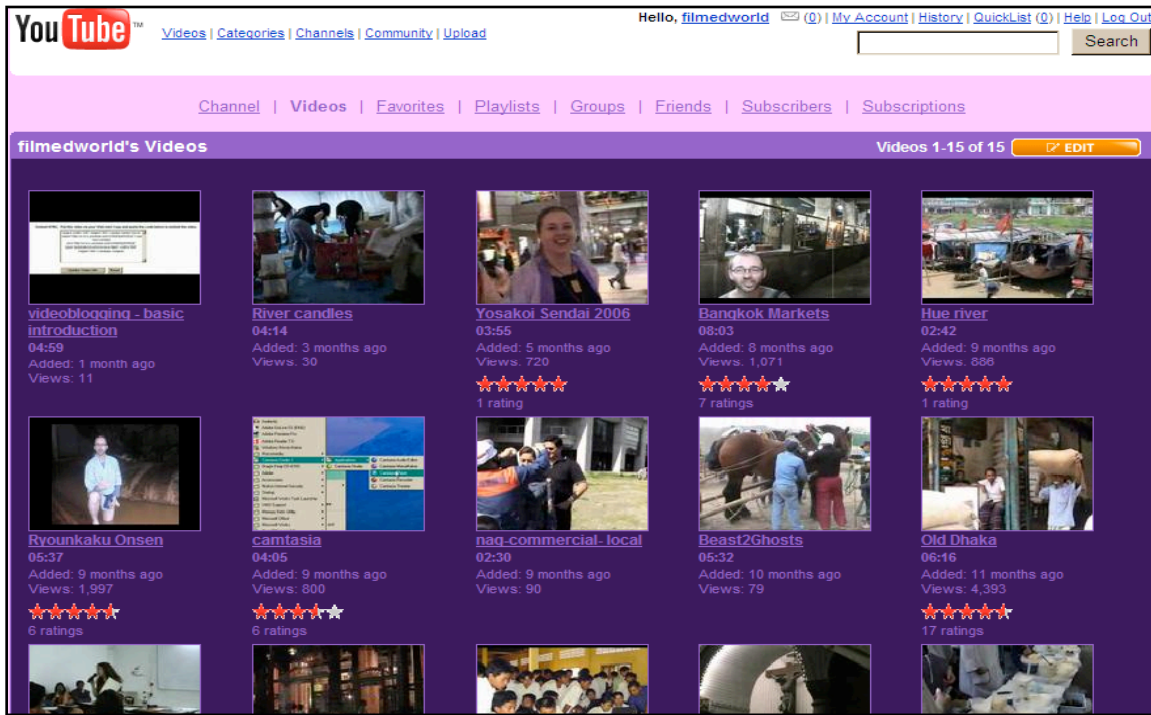


Figure 7. Uploading Video to YouTube.com, Stage 7

6. Conclusion

The internet is providing an increasing number of services which makes the process of storing and cataloguing videos feasible. As this presentation revealed embedding a video into a blog is not such a complicated process. Educators becoming familiar with this procedure can then share it with their students, providing them not only with greater opportunities to develop computer skills, but also to become autonomous learners.

References

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