Chapter 47
Navigating Multimedia:
How to Find Internet Video Resources for Teaching, Learning, and Research

Julie A. DeCesare
Providence College, USA

ABSTRACT

The Web has quickly become a resource for multimedia and video content. Search engines have tools to mine for visual content, but finding video content creates different challenges than searching for text. This chapter presents a detailed guide on searching for visual multimedia content and provides a showcase of innovative collections and resources. The reader will learn research strategies, gain specific skills in navigating multimedia, and receive a list of resources for finding subject-specific and interdisciplinary video content. Resources are reviewed based on content quality, partnerships, technical specifications, and overall usability.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Pew Internet & American Life Project, an initiative of the Pew Research Center, published "The State of Online Video." The study reported that educational videos have experienced considerable growth, from 22% of online adults watching educational video content in 2007 to 38% in 2009 (Purcell, 2010). Even before this study, it was very clear that video content on the Web was expanding at rapid paces. In addition to many born-digital resources, there are multiple initiatives to digitize analog video and audio content. How can these resources be discovered? How can a needle be found in the haystack? Search engines have tools to help narrow and expand our searches. Programmers and developers are also improving search technologies at rapid paces – facial recognition, shape and color recognition, and audio search are available in some cases, but these advancements are in their infancy. Finding video content creates a new set of challenges compared to the more classic research methods involving text. How videos are labeled, categorized, and tagged will determine the end results. Think about searching for an image of a women putting on a red shoe. How many different ways can this be imagined? How many different ways can this be found in a search engine? Each word has a variety of representations and personal interpretations that will lead to a

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-7230-7.ch047

new set of results - women, female, mother, lady, woman, gender - red, crimson, scarlet, burgundy, rose, rouge, maroon, merlot - shoe, sandal, heels, flats, sneaker.

Using the research strategies and specific skills outlined in this chapter, instructors, students, teachers, faculty, instructional technologists, and librarians will be able to navigate the wealth of multimedia available online for teaching, learning, and research. This chapter also provides an opportunity to learn about some innovative collections, reliable resources, and a variety of subject-specific and interdisciplinary multimedia content that is available online.

BACKGROUND

From transparencies and filmstrips to streaming video, visual content has always been an important learning tool used in a variety of class environments. Currently, an immense amount of multimedia is available on the Web for educators, but how can professors get to what they need? A brief inquiry on a search engine just scratches the surface. Many websites strive to showcase historical, cultural, or educational video content and yet never top the results list in an initial search engine keyword entry. Copyright, accessibility, proprietary software and hardware, and metadata all add to the complexity of multimedia searching.

Additional complexities lie in understanding licensing, accommodating mobile devices, and using consumer streaming products such as Netflix, Amazon Instant, iTunes, Hulu Plus and cable company websites. These products are designed for individual consumers and do not offer institutional subscriptions or licensing.

Educators need to look deeper than YouTube, Vimeo, and iTunes U. The larger video-sharing sites have hours of worthwhile and interesting content, but there is a growing collection of mostly free, educational content from libraries, museums, content producers, and distributors on the Web. Web 2.0 tools and social networks help collections expand to more users and continue discussion. In some cases there are video annotation tools that allow users to perform close viewing and technical analysis of the presented media.

Multimedia content can be found through subscription databases for libraries and institutions, but the market is uneven and inconsistent in regards to price, licensing, and format. Companies like Alexander Street Press, Annenberg Learner, and Films Media Group are creating innovative products for educators and are providing high quality content for a fair price.

Some websites and online collections are proprietary, corporate, or commercial, while others are library, archival, museum, and educational initiatives. Video researchers and educators need to recognize the differences. Many sites are free but include advertisements, fees for premier subscription services, or paywalls for accessing additional content.

MAIN FOCUS

Multimedia and in particular video streaming allow for flexibility and adaptability in curriculum and learning environments. Media as a term in education and pedagogy is a massive topic, as is the critical viewing, analysis, and manipulation of media forms. Analysis of a multimodal form-video, audio, text (digital or analog) - should be approached as a critical literacy. Ultimately, the educator decides why and what content will be used to convey lessons, lectures, interactions, and assignments.

In regards to how educators should use multimedia and video, we should first acknowledge the how-not. In the 2006 article “Non-optimal Uses of Video in the Classroom,” Renee Hobbs addresses key findings in a survey of 130 secondary level teachers and their use of various media in the physical classroom. In brief summary, non-optimal uses of video are: