

## **Video tutorial service upgrade benefits teaching, learning, career development**

By Tara Caimi

Some say we are living in the information age, while others claim a digital revolution. Regardless of nomenclature, few would argue the driving force of technology in this era of seemingly constant change in which technology skills are no longer preferred—they are required.

To help students, faculty, and staff remain at the forefront of the digital age, Penn State recently upgraded a license agreement with online training provider lynda.com, enhancing a service that already provided free access to thousands of video tutorials on hundreds of technology topics. The enhanced service, called lyndaCampus, allows individuals to track progress using personal profiles; to bookmark courses, movies, and locations within courses and movies for future reference; and to earn certificates as evidence of course completion.

According to Chris Lucas, director of Information Technology Services (ITS) Training Services, the enhancements make an already beneficial service even stronger. “With personal profiles,” Lucas says, “people will be able to keep track of all their lynda.com training activity which, in and of itself, adds a huge convenience factor.”

Cole Campese, senior director of Teaching and Learning with Technology in ITS says, “The move to lyndaCampus allows Penn State faculty, staff, and students to take advantage of the lynda materials in so many new and interesting ways. The support for personal profiles and ability to bookmark specific courses and individual videos is a huge step forward and will better support the way most of us are now used to working online. Having direct access to specific learning objects will make lynda an even greater value for the teaching, learning, and training communities.”

Using the profile feature, not only do individuals now have records of the courses they have completed, but they also have the ability to track their progress and activity within a course. This will reduce the amount of time people spend maintaining their own records of lynda.com activity, according to Lucas, who says that the new features offer specific benefits to faculty, students, and staff, respectively.

Faculty who want to ensure that students have completed certain courses can now have students e-mail or print their certificates of completion. “This helps faculty level the playing field by giving students with less experience a convenient way to learn technologies that can help them with course and project work,” Lucas says.

Students can also take advantage of certificates of completion in a variety of ways which can help with their future careers. Lucas says, “These days, employers are

looking for tangible representation of technology skills, and lynda.com tutorials are widely known in the corporate world as being among the highest-quality (tutorials) out there.”

Samantha Pearson, a senior English major at University Park, who is preparing to graduate in December, says she can relate to this assertion. “Working with Career Services these past couple of months, I’m learning it’s all about certificates,” she says. Companies want to see proof that you have technology skills, and the lynda.com tutorials are great for that.”

Since implementation of the Penn State lynda.com license agreement in fall 2009, students have had free access to the video tutorials to help with project and academic course work. Now, in addition to documenting lynda.com courses on resumes and in e-portfolios, students can use certificates as proof of course completion when applying and interviewing for internships and positions at Penn State and beyond.

Similar benefits are true for staff, who can incorporate lynda.com tutorials and certificates of completion into their professional development plans. According to Lucas, new transcript features available through lyndaCampus will allow staff members to maintain centralized records of their lynda.com training activity as they progress through their careers at Penn State.

“We are always looking for new and cost-effective ways for our staff to broaden their skills or learn new ones,” says Susan Morse, human resources manager for ITS. “This is especially relevant in the current economic times. Lynda.com will be an excellent source of training that is easily accessible, can fit a variety of schedules and time frames, and can provide the right training at the right time in an employee's career,” she adds.

In the increasingly ubiquitous and always changing world of technology, “lynda.com tutorials have become a very important resource for the University community to learn new technology skills,” says Lucas. ITS Training Services has a mission to provide and ensure access to learning opportunities that keep the technology skills of Penn State’s workforce current for optimum productivity, he points out. “The lynda.com service gives students, faculty, and staff a convenient way to get up to speed with new features of the applications that are critical to their roles here at no cost to their units, departments, colleges, or to them personally.”

In this way, Lucas says, the new features of lyndaCampus significantly “enhance the value of the service as a tool to support teaching, learning, and professional development activities here at Penn State.”

A list of new features along with links to videos on using the new features are available at <http://lynda.psu.edu/>.