INNOVATIVE TRANSCRIBING FOR BLENDED EDUCATION: EXPLORING VOICE INTELLECT FOR HIGHER EDUCATION DELIVERY

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Abstract

Emerging technology has enhanced how blended education can be managed more efficiently. However, ensuring student progress with continued support remains a challenge. The promise of blended education delivery is deeply buried in the promise that all students will be provided with equal access to content regardless geographical boundaries, platform and devices. This goal remains an elusive target.

This notion is further exacerbated by the type of materials used in blended education especially with the intention of delivering engaging content mainly via video and podcast, more so using free online content (via YouTube or other resources). The rise in rich-media content being used as part of blended education delivery is undeniable. These digital content items are placed alongside other materials on various learning management platforms to consequently be consumed by on campus or online. Literature notes that not all content are curated to an ideal state of delivery. Some are large, having poor audio and incompatible format that aren’t native to the learning management systems. Encountering this requires a lot of beforehand preparation which is a huge challenge for most institutions given the nature of academia and content fluidity.

Ideally content needs to be in bite size, in the right format and prepared to be ‘inclusive’ in nature for all learner types in line with Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Further, in order for a video/audio content to be UDL friendly it needs to appear as text and accessible through various devices. Achieving UDL is aspirational and owing to its benefits, higher institutions are keen to invest resources strategically. However, most are held back either due to legacy content, process or platform limitations.

In the interest of addressing some of the issues above the authors are sharing their experience with an Australian based software called Voice Intellect. This AI based application is currently been used at several Australian tertiary institutions. Vice Intellect has the capability to not only transcribe digital video or audio but is also WCAG 2.0 compliant which promotes the UDL framework.

Videos that are uploaded into Voice Intellect are automatically transcribed with captions and can be played back at different speeds. The transcribed content is also indexed based on AI-driven voice analysis and all resulting texts are searchable and downloadable. Our trials showed that using Voice Intellect improved student engagement with video/audio content and has improved student satisfaction. We also found students reporting a benefit from transcription services which should perhaps be made available for all students as proposed by several research findings especially when there are international students. Some student mooted the idea of digitising and retrieving their old lectures from semester 1.

Apart from being quicker due to software as a service, VI has proved to be cost effective in comparison to incumbent services by a third and has now been primed for more content transcription across the university. Other benefits of this application include consumption analytics that allows faculty to gauge how students have accessed and searched the content over time across the entire semester’s lecture series. We also noticed behavioural changes amongst the lecturers who trialled VI. The spoke at a slower pace, were ‘microphone’ ready and had more content ‘aware’ and the end of the trial.

Keywords: Transcription, Blended Learning, Universal Design Learning, Analytics.