

Tunes, Tubes and Clouds: Getting Your In-House Talent Out of the House and Online. Part 2: Distribution

Abstract: In this second of a series of two articles, Daniel Bates considers some of the most popular online platforms which are available to host and promote audio and video content for purposes including knowledge-sharing, teaching, research dissemination, and profile-building.

Keywords: multimedia; video; audio; recording; streaming; knowledge capture; online learning; iTunes; YouTube; podcasts

INTRODUCTION

In the first article¹ I described the steps required to capture audio and video recordings for various purposes such as teaching, know-how capture and profile-building. With this material now in hand, I want to undertake a more detailed analysis of some of the platforms available to distribute this content. We need to consider the strengths and weaknesses of some of the leading services, to determine how they might best serve your needs. There are some extraordinarily powerful and useful features on some of the most widespread services that you might never have realised existed.

THE IN-HOUSE OPTION

Your organisation may already have an in-house platform, especially if your intention is to use your content for internal knowledge sharing or training. You may be leveraging your own custom intranet, or VLE for such purposes. At the University of Cambridge, we have our own system provided by the University Information Service called the Streaming Media Service (SMS)². Almost all of our content is placed on the SMS, even if it is also hosted on multiple other platforms. The SMS acts as a form of backup or archive of our material.

The drawback of a self-built platform such as the SMS is that it takes significant resources to build, and then also to maintain and develop as standards and expectations change. Audio and video content is a constantly shifting field, with regular changes to the expected resolutions, content formats, and web compatibility standards. Hosting large amounts of multimedia content can also result in unsustainable storage and bandwidth demands. While the idea of maintaining complete control over the storage location, presentation, and delivery of your content can seem attractive, your organisation almost

certainly doesn't have the resources of companies such as Apple and Google to provide ongoing platform development, and storage and bandwidth at scale!

In-house platforms also tend to perform poorly in situations where you are trying to get your material into the public domain. This is not a case of "If you build it they will come"³. If you are looking to get research or profile-building content into a wider public arena, then you will be more successful if you ensure that the content is available on platforms where the viewers already are, and where content is also commonly shared.

LEVERAGING CLASS-LEADING PLATFORMS

The in-house option can sometimes overcome some of these limitations, as some provide functionality to allow the content contained within them to be listed in other, more popular and widely used platforms. For example, the SMS provides an RSS feed (a simple text-based html-style feed) which allows the content to be consumed via Apple's iTunes U⁴ service. iTunes U is the educational arm of the Apple iTunes platform and part of the iTunes store if you use the desktop client, or is now a separate app on iOS devices such as iPhones or iPads.

Even if you are using an intranet or VLE, it is not absolutely necessary to host your audio-visual content locally. Indeed, doing so might cause some tense discussions with your IT support team if your requirements for storage or bandwidth become too high. Most of the platforms I describe later allow for very simple embedding code which can be placed into your intranet or VLE, meaning the content is accessible there, but stored elsewhere, and delivered using the technology of a larger provider.

Let us look at a couple of examples of media collections I have built using different platforms.

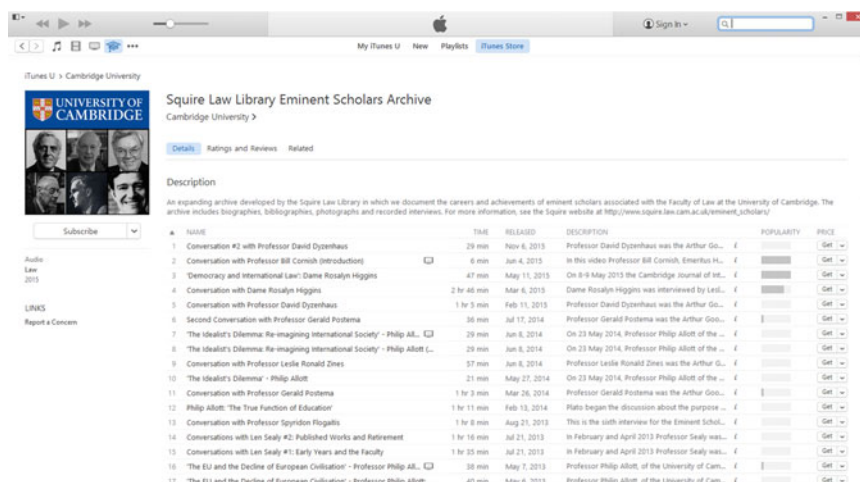


Figure 1: The Eminent Scholars Archive on iTunes U.

THE EMINENT SCHOLARS ARCHIVE (ITUNES U)

The Eminent Scholars Archive (ESA)⁵ is an oral and written biographical collection featuring scholars at the Faculty who have had long and illustrious careers. The ESA was started by Lesley Dingle in April 2005 with her audio interviews of the late Professor Kurt Lipstein. I became involved in editing these recordings later that year for insertion on the early ESA website being developed by Matt Martin. It went live in December 2006 and Lesley, Matt and I developed it into its present form in 2007⁶. One of the key pieces of the archive is recordings of these interviews, which allow the scholars to be heard discussing their recollections.

We have now interviewed 23 of our leading scholars, and the recordings of these interviews have been accessed over 77,000 times. I'm pleased to say that we've managed to capture some very significant recollections and opinions of some very influential people, some of whom are still in academic practice or retirement, and some who have now sadly passed away.

The body of the ESA interviews are conducted, and offered, solely in audio. We have recently started to record a short video introduction, to allow users of the archive to get a feel for the speaker. We chose audio recordings originally because they had lower technical requirements, were less intrusive for the interviewee, and because it allowed easier and quicker editing afterwards. Sometimes the interviews are interrupted, either for a break, when the speaker wishes to reference notes, or by external influences. Editing the audio into a complete stream was a much less intensive task.

The ESA recordings are hosted on the SMS, and are made available directly through embedded media on the ESA web pages on the Squire Law Library website⁷. As explained previously, this also provides a feed to iTunes U, where the ESA is available as a collection for download or subscription.

Obviously, the beauty of iTunes U is twofold: Exposure (although only to Apple customers using Apple hardware or the iTunes software, which might restrict your market in certain jurisdictions); and ease of use - iTunes allows for very easy subscription to collections. So if someone uses their iPad or iPhone to subscribe to the ESA then when we release a recording, it will be automatically delivered to their device, and they will receive a notification (a number in a red circle on their screen).

To give you an idea of the split between traffic sources, the ESA receives approximately 65% of its traffic through embedded access, and 35% of the traffic through the iTunes U platform. This will be heavily influenced by the high Google ranking for the Squire pages, which results in the ESA being the first search result for many of the academics featured in the archive.

iTunes U is targeted at the academic market, as you must be an educational establishment to get an account. As with most educational establishments, the University of Cambridge has an institutional account on iTunes U for the whole of the University, and the Faculty of Law publishes our content as a subset of that account. If you wished to distribute via iTunes U, you would need to check if your institution already had an account you could use, but if not you could still create your own if you wished. It is not necessary to have a system like the SMS hosting the content. You can upload content directly to Apple if required. Further information about enrolling for an iTunes U account is available at the Apple site⁸.

There are several drawbacks to using iTunes U as your sole platform. It is limited to Apple devices and the iTunes software client. With Google's Android operating system establishing around an 80% global market share⁹ compared to Apple's 15–20% (in telephones, while tablets are still dominated by the iPad), this means you may also wish to consider a platform which is more widely accessible. You might also be looking for a platform which is not academic, making iTunes U unsuitable. I have so far covered audio resources. Video is supported by iTunes U, but it does not

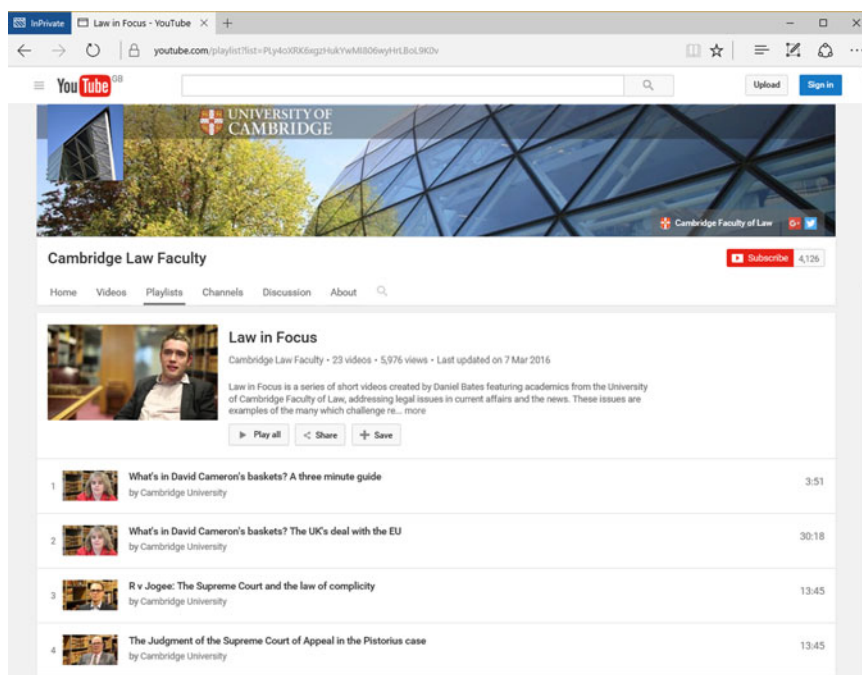


Figure 2: *Law in Focus* on YouTube.

have the same kinds of embedding, sharing, and access control which is provided by other platforms. iTunes U also does not support closed captions, or translations. Most importantly, iTunes U is limited to access via its applications, rather than through a browser.

So let me consider a different collection, for which I have used by far the world's leading content platform: YouTube.

LAW IN FOCUS (YOUTUBE)

Law in Focus arose from my frustration that at the Faculty we struggled to address current issues in a suitably contemporaneous manner. I saw stories in the news about issues on which our academics had authoritative opinions: The constitutional aspects of the vote to bomb Syria; the legal implications of 'Brexit'; Google being sued in Spain over the 'right to be forgotten'; etc. It frustrated me that our institutional knowledge wasn't being exposed in relation to these current affairs to help inform public opinion. We have some academics who publish blogs, or write items for newspapers. However, the primary method of communication for most is still to write journal articles or books – hardly a method for reacting speedily to the 24 hour news cycle!

I created *Law in Focus* to address this issue, by encouraging academics to draft 8–15 minute opinion editorial pieces, which could be recorded to camera, processed quickly, and published while the issue was still live. This way our academics could be contributing to the discussion of major issues as they unfolded.

In terms of length of piece, *Law in Focus* often strays a little over what is ideal. There has been much research on length of items in relation to attention spans and user

information retention. An example is by Philip Guo, who is Assistant Professor of Computer Science at the University of Rochester, who conducted research using the data provided by one of the largest players in the MOOC space – EdX. He found that the optimal time for instructional videos was between 6–9 minutes¹⁰.

Notwithstanding the length, *Law in Focus* has been extremely popular, with one academic remarking to me that his video had a circulation approximating that of one of his published books!

Law in Focus is distributed through the SMS and therefore iTunes U. However the primary focus for the distribution of *Law in Focus* is Google's YouTube.

YouTube provides an extremely robust hosting environment. It is ubiquitous, with an extensive web presence, and applications for all major mobile operating systems. YouTube videos rank extremely highly in Google search results. This ubiquity not only offers familiarity for users, but also provides a huge audience for content. YouTube is solely for video content, as it does not satisfactorily host audio-only items.

Anyone with a Google account can use YouTube without charge. There are no restrictions on the quantity of content you can upload. If you are going to be using an account to manage content for your organisation, you will want an account with a suitable name, and to set up the channel page to reflect the branding and values you wish to reflect. However, YouTube also offers a more featured account to users who are 'verified'. Verification is extremely simple¹¹, and offers the vital ability to upload longer video content, and also to use custom thumbnails rather than simply a option from three randomly-chosen clips.

When you are uploading content to YouTube, you need to bear in mind one important factor up front. You

cannot replace a content item once it has been uploaded. If you edit or amend your video, you must upload it again, and it will have a different web address. This is designed to prevent abuse of YouTube views and comments, where someone might nefariously replace a popular (and therefore highly search-ranked) video with completely different content.

Access Levels

YouTube's access levels provide important opportunities to review content before it is made live, and can also allow YouTube to be used for internal content.

The three access settings available are:

- Public
- Unlisted
- Private

A 'public' item is effectively broadcast immediately, offering it to the public and anyone subscribed to your channel. A 'private' item is not available to anyone apart from the uploading account. However, an 'unlisted' item acts like a public item, and allows you to distribute a link where the content will be available, but it is only available to users who have that specific link. An unlisted item cannot be found by searching or browsing YouTube, and is not distributed to subscribers. Having a video unlisted means you can prepare the item and associated metadata, and provide the link to the speaker for example for their review, without it being fully live.

Additionally, you could also have a library of unlisted videos on YouTube which are only intended for consumption within your organisation, which are linked from, or embedded into, your intranet or VLE. If you wish to use YouTube in this way, you need to be aware that the security of your content is effective only by obscurity. Your content could still be accessed by anyone to whom the location was shared, or if the content is added to a playlist or embedded elsewhere. Using YouTube for internal purposes might also raise data protection and compliance or security issues. If you are handling confidential, client or commercially valuable data then this route would not be suitable. Also, YouTube does not provide information on where the data is physically stored (indeed it is most likely duplicated across jurisdictions), so it is difficult to be confident of the safe harbour position on data security.

TRANSCRIPTS / CAPTIONS

In the previous article I discussed some of the benefits of providing captions with video content. A transcript provides a great deal of accessibility value, for disabled users and for those accessing your content in environments where listening is not suitable.

On the toolbar along the bottom of every YouTube video is a white rectangular icon which turns on captions. The 'cogwheel' options button provides more

functionality about the video, including many features relating to the captions.

YouTube provides captions for all videos. By default, it does this by using voice recognition. This can produce results of varying, and sometimes laughable accuracy¹². For a professional offering, and to ensure the accuracy of legal detail, it may be necessary to provide your own transcription instead. This can be uploaded in a simple text file of the words spoken, which YouTube will then use voice recognition to automatically apply to the video with the correct timing. This is typically very accurate.

If you don't have the in-house capacity to produce captions, then there are a number of companies now who take electronic submissions of recordings, and produce transcriptions on a price-per-minute basis. Some of these firms even employ experienced legal support staff, who will be familiar with the technical language that might be used.

Another very significant benefit of the captions is that YouTube also provides for them to be translated into a wide range of foreign languages, opening up your videos to foreign-speaking consumers. This translation is an automated output via the Google Translate service. Of course, if you use the automated captions, and then rely on the automated translation, then there is high likelihood of errors, along the rule of 'rubbish in, rubbish out'. Providing an accurate original transcript will increase the chances of a reasonably translated result. Of course, if accuracy in a foreign language is particularly important to you, then again you could have a manual translation created, and upload it as an additional captions file to the item.

SHARING

Apart from the inherent massive audience of the YouTube site and the accompanying apps, the other benefit of using YouTube to host your content is how easily it can be promoted or shared on other platforms.

Just below the information about your video, there are the 'Share', 'Embed' and 'Email' options. These allow you, or anyone viewing your content, to instantly share to (currently thirteen) other social or publishing platforms, or via a basic link or email. The 'embed' option allows you to take a code snippet which can be embedded on any other website, intranet or VLE, in a way which actually places the video into that location (although the content streams from YouTube), rather than requiring the user to click away to view it.

Because of the development capacity of YouTube, shared content elsewhere is always delivered in a comprehensive manner, leveraging modern technologies. So for example, if you share a video to Twitter, it automatically provides a short summary and a thumbnail.

YouTube provides a significant number of other features which go beyond the scope of this article. Once you have an account you will discover an extremely powerful analytics suite which allows you to track

location, demographics, duration, and source of your viewers, amongst other invaluable usage data. You can also experiment with the comments sections to allow viewer interaction, either on an open or moderated basis. There is much to explore.

So far, I have referred to YouTube for video content, and iTunes U mainly in relation to audio, although video was possible. The limitation of the Apple platform was the accessibility, with the limitation to iOS devices and the iTunes application. For this reason, I would briefly refer to one other popular service, and one upcoming option as well.

SOUNDCLOUD

SoundCloud¹³ offers a web and app-based service hosting audio content. It is therefore platform-agnostic. While it is mainly known for providing a platform for independent musicians, it has also flourished in the field of providing spoken-word content.

Like YouTube and iTunes U, it is possible to subscribe to certain producers or playlists for content. SoundCloud provides a very YouTube-like experience for sharing from the website or the app, and provides for the embedding of content into your own site.

The one drawback with SoundCloud is that there are upload limits on free accounts, so will it require a small investment¹⁴ if you plan to host more than a few hours of content. Paid accounts also offer advanced analytics information.

GOOGLE MUSIC PODCASTS

Finally, Google has recently announced¹⁵ the intention to add podcasting functionality to the Google Music service.

Like SoundCloud, Google Music¹⁶ is both a website and a mobile/tablet application available across both Apple and Google hardware, but Google Music has the advantage of being pre-installed on many Android devices, meaning there is a lower barrier to entry for many users. Google Music podcasts will work with RSS feeds formatted for iTunes U, so adoption of this new platform will almost certainly be trivial for anyone with a service that already feeds content to Apple. Given Google's track record, it seems certain that the podcast implementation will be large-scale, robust, and offer a great deal of exposure to the audio content contained therein, and will therefore act as a persuasive partner to video on YouTube.

CONCLUSION

Over the two articles I hope I have given an insight into how easy it is to get started in creating high quality audio-visual content for teaching, learning and promotional uses, and provided some guidelines on the availability of platforms available to host that content and their strengths and weaknesses. I have not attempted to provide step-by-step (or click-by-click) instructions on how to undertake this, as such a guide would be extremely lengthy, and out of date before it was even published. Detailed guidance can be obtained via the extensive support documentation available online, or indeed from any of the millions of how-to videos or guides on the very platforms discussed.

I hope I have encouraged readers to consider where there might be useful or interesting knowledge in your organisation which might be mined for education, training, or communications and profile building, and to be confident in taking the first steps towards capturing that, and then using it in the most effective ways.

Footnotes

¹ *Legal Information Management*, 16 (2016), pp. 44–48.

² <http://sms.cam.ac.uk>.

³ An oft-used misquote from *Field of Dreams*, 1989.

⁴ <http://www.apple.com/uk/education/ipad/itunes-u/>.

⁵ <http://www.squire.law.cam.ac.uk/eminant-scholars-archive>.

⁶ See full account in Lesley Dingle 2014, "Legal biography, oral history and the Cambridge Scholars Archive", *Legal Information Management*, 14 (1) (2014), pp. 58–68. Matt Martin left the team in 2009.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ https://eduapp.apple.com/qforms/start/itu?dst=enroll_marcom&pdname=itunesu#main:enroll_marcom:NEW_RECORD@itunesu@null@null@true.

⁹ <http://www.idc.com/prodserv/smartphone-os-market-share.jsp>.

¹⁰ <http://blog.edx.org/optimal-video-length-student-engagement>.

¹¹ <https://www.youtube.com/verify>.

¹² Compare the captions on the videos at <https://youtu.be/b9addVcgrcl> (automatic) and <https://youtu.be/k6CsY-UpuFA> (transcribed).

¹³ <https://soundcloud.com>.

¹⁴ Currently £75 p/a for unlimited usage: <https://soundcloud.com/pro>.

¹⁵ <http://officialandroid.blogspot.co.uk/2015/10/podcasters-welcome-to-google-play-music.html>.

¹⁶ <https://play.google.com/music/listen>.

Biography

Daniel Bates trained and practiced as a solicitor at Hogan Lovells, before taking his position as Legal IT Teaching and Development Officer at the Faculty of Law at the University of Cambridge. He is responsible for delivering legal research teaching for students and staff at the Faculty, as well as from other departments where students need legal research skills. He is also the Communications Officer responsible for the Faculty's institutional publications, VLE, websites and multimedia output. He has been involved with the production and posting of over 1,000 media items, and those items have had over 1.5million unique views across all platforms on the Internet.

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The BIALL-IALS Foreign and International Law Courses

Abstract: Hester Swift writes about the successful one-day courses on foreign and international legal research that have been run since 2009 at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) in conjunction with BIALL. These courses have been a collaborative venture between the Foreign and International Law Librarians at the Bodleian Law Library at Oxford, the Squire Law Library at Cambridge, and the IALS Library, together with law librarians from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies and the University of Cardiff. The courses have attracted delegates from many different sectors of the legal information profession. The post of Foreign and International Law Librarian, or Foreign, Comparative and International Law Librarian, is relatively new to the UK, but has a long history in the United States. The BIALL-IALS foreign and international law training initiative complements the cooperation of the Foreign Law Research (FLARE) Group.

Keywords: international law; foreign law; research methods; training; courses

INTRODUCTION

For the last seven years, foreign and international law training courses for law librarians have been held at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) under the auspices of BIALL. They have been collaborations between the Foreign and International Law Librarians at IALS, the Squire Law Library at the University of Cambridge and the Bodleian Law Library at the University of Oxford, with the additional participation of librarians from the University of Cardiff and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London.

THE ORIGINAL IDEA

The original idea for a foreign and international law training event came from David Gee, Deputy Librarian at IALS. A new role of Foreign and International Law (FIL) Librarian had recently been created at the Institute and in 2007 I had been appointed to the post, the first incumbent; Oxford had introduced the role of Foreign, Comparative and International Law Librarian (FCIL) a few years earlier, while Cambridge had had a FIL Librarian since 1997. Of course all three libraries, because they have large foreign law and public international law holdings, had always had staff with experience and specialist