An Ivy League University

7 things one world-renowned institution looked for in a campus-wide video solution

When video first made its way into the classrooms at this well-known Ivy League university, it did so as it had at so many other institutions — informally, based on the needs of faculty.

A handful of enthusiastic instructors independently sought out recording tools to support specific elements of their classrooms. When things worked well, they then pushed their departments to formally support those tools.

Over the last two decades, video proved to be a useful resource at the university — capturing lectures and labs for study and review, streaming classes and campus events for off-site viewing, enabling instructors to flip classrooms and assign video assignments, and more.

Yet, while classroom video had become valuable to faculty and students alike, it had just as quickly become cumbersome for the school's learning technology team.

The challenge:
Inconsistent, inefficient video support

In 2014, the university's Technology Architecture Committee commissioned a report to better understand the full spectrum of video-related services that were currently in use at the school.

What the committee found were challenges related to the inconsistent and inefficient use of video.

Over time, the school had organically adopted a range of video services. Both Echo360 and Kaltura had been purchased as primary video systems, although Vimeo, YouTube, and iTunesU were commonly used as well. All together, the committee reported the university had:

- No central library for sharing media materials
- No cross-course sharing of instructional assets, and
- No access to video libraries on other web-based tools used for teaching

At a glance

Since its founding, this leading university has been dedicated to expanding and sharing knowledge, inspiring innovation, and preserving cultural and scientific information for future generations.

Today, the institution has become a truly global university – educating leaders and advancing the frontiers of knowledge not simply for the United States, but for the entire world.

For administrators, the decentralized approach to video required staff to maintain a complex web of solutions across campus.

For students, it meant that accessing recorded lessons required them to first learn each of these solutions.

The goal:
7 essential elements for video

Based on this feedback, the institution sought a unified video platform that could address the needs of faculty, staff, and students in all departments.

The university's Center for Teaching and Learning, Information Technology Services team, and representatives from six of the institution's professional schools together reviewed the capabilities of eight video platforms. Each platform was evaluated based on a range of criteria, including:

1. Ease of use
2. Tools for video creation and curation
3. Accessibility
4. Integration with Canvas and Sakai LMSs
5. Responsiveness of customer support
6. Live streaming
7. Video search

In the end, Panopto was found to best meet the university's requirements, having scored highest on all three of the school's highest priorities: ease of use, video creation and curation, and accessibility. After an extensive review, the working group members voted unanimously to adopt Panopto to replace the school's existing contracts with Kaltura and Echo360.

"Video has become a fundamental part of how our students learn on-campus and online," commented the manager of collaboration technologies in the university's Center for Teaching and Learning. "As we scale the use of video across campus, it's imperative that we have an integrated system for video management and lecture capture. Based on our evaluation criteria, Panopto emerged as the clear choice."

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The result:
Faculty-approved video

Along with the committee's comprehensive analysis, the university wanted to understand how faculty would experience Panopto in the classroom.

After Panopto had been selected, three instructors were invited to use the video platform in their spring semester courses. When the pilot concluded, each enthusiastically supported making the move to Panopto.

A senior lector in economics found Panopto exceptionally easy to use. "Panopto's video library is much more usable than the other platforms I've used (MediaCore, Echo360, and Kaltura). Likewise, Panopto's search is miles better. I especially like that it automatically indexes every word spoken and shown in my presentation, and that the search results point to the exact moment in the video where the search term is used — my students would *love* that."

A senior lector in Spanish and Portuguese, meanwhile, was pleased with her ability to use Panopto to make her classroom more interactive. "It was great to be able to use Panopto to comment directly on the videos, then open up a discussion for the students."

And a senior lector in East Asian languages and literatures also reported the video platform more than met her expectations. "Panopto was very easy and convenient for course members to use, both faculty and students. I'd absolutely recommend Panopto to other instructors."