The Irish Tax Institute

Over 1,300 new students take the Institute's internationally recognised Chartered Tax Adviser (CTA) qualification annually, and 5,000 associate members seek continued professional development. The membership organisation continually iterates upon and adds to its courses with careful consideration of how best to encourage engagement and interactivity, aspects that have only grown in importance as the Institute move more of their learning online due to COVID-19.

Pre-COVID, the Institute employed a blended, flipped classroom-based model when teaching students on the CTA course. Class sizes for this course were often large enough to warrant renting large theatres and the Institute recorded these classes for students to access after the event. It also employed hybrid pedagogical models in the Diploma in Tax and the Tax Technician qualifications. For these courses, the Institute streamed and recorded the live classroom-based lectures.
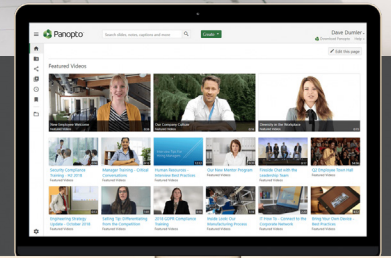
Whilst the content created had been helping the students to meet and exceed their learning goals, the Institute noticed the unsustainable amount of time and effort committed to editing and producing recordings.

The challenge:

Streamlined Production, Higher Quality Content, Improved Student Experience

The commitment to efficiency underpinning the Irish Tax Institute's ethos extends to its pedagogical model. The membership organisation identified that the division of tasks (streaming, recording, and editing) amongst separate software solutions resulted in inconsistencies in production quality and unsustainable production time. Accordingly, the Institute sought an all-in-one solution that could reduce editing time, unify content formats, and enhance overall quality.

Content searchability was a key concern voiced by students. With the ever-expanding library of content available to students, the ability to search for specific topics or terminology within videos and slides became increasingly important.

About The Irish Tax Institute

The Irish Tax Institute is the leading representative and educational body for Ireland's Chartered Tax Advisers. The Institute continually develops its education programme to ensure that members not only acquire the skills and knowledge required but are also able to creatively adapt to the needs of all work environments, from individuals in Ireland to multi-national organisations.

Shane O'Brien, Senior Tax Manager in charge of Education Delivery, studied for his CTA qualification with the Institute in 2016-2017. Drawing from his experiences at the Irish Tax Institute, O'Brien shared, "we were watching three-to-four-hour lectures with just the ability to press play or pause. We couldn't navigate to specific sections or previous exam questions via timestamps. We also couldn't speed up or slow down playback speed."

With a growing number of CTA students working full-time, only able to engage with course content on weekends, the Institute's need to optimise content creation and viewing was further cemented.

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> — **Karen Duffy,** *Digital Learning Designer,*
> *The Irish Tax Institute*

The solution:
Consolidation Without Compromise

Having researched the market's leading solutions, the Irish Tax Institute decided that practical testing would best demonstrate their feature sets. Elspeth Hennessy, Senior Manager for Digital Services noted that "by testing Panopto, we were really confident that it would work for us".

In 2019, the Institute decided that Panopto would best serve their needs as a VCMS that offered swift, intuitive, and uniform editing across all video formats whilst also providing a structured and searchable library for students to navigate efficiently.

Hennessy attests to the adaptability and mobility afforded to the Institute, "We were able to use Panopto from any one of our training rooms in the office, or we could have a lecturer sitting down in our recording studio, as well as being able to use it anywhere externally, such as hotels around the country."

Karen Duffy, Digital Learning Designer at the Institute, extended praise to Panopto's Support Team, "they are phenomenal. I just find them so easy to deal with. Even if they can't answer a question, the people they escalate to are very responsive."

Students immediately experienced the benefit of the Institute's adoption of Panopto. With Panopto serving as a centralised library, equally accessible via the Institute's Blackboard integration, students were granted the customisable viewing features they'd been requesting, along with fast and accurate search capabilities to expedite revision.

In addition to being able to search the entirety of the Institute's Panopto-based library and control playback speeds, "students provided a great amount of positive feedback regarding their ability to add notes and bookmarks for their own reference," Duffy shared.

The results:
Intuitive, Adaptable, and Scalable

With the advent of COVID-19-imposed restrictions rendering live classroom settings untenable, the Irish Tax Institute strived to ensure that students could maintain an equivalent level of interactivity and involvement in the community.

The Institute was able to quickly transition by hosting Zoom webinars and making the recordings available on Panopto. Hosting events in Panopto this way automatically records and indexes the video and accompanying slides. This ensures that members who were unable to attend or wish to revisit sections can engage with the content soon after the session ends.

O'Brien noted that Panopto's discussion box enhanced engagement and interactivity for students hesitant to pose questions on-camera during streamed lectures. Further enhancing the interactivity of pre-recorded content, the Institute found Panopto's quiz feature an intuitive and effective tool that additionally serves to provide the formative assessment integral to their pedagogical model.

The membership organisation was also able to take advantage of Panopto's intuitive and non-destructive editing. As Duffy observed, "when editing in Panopto, it doesn't destroy the file like other services. It's all still there if somebody makes a mistake."

The external subject matter experts that work with the Institute as part-time lecturers were also able to quickly adapt to using Panopto from their homes, rather than the large venues or recording studio they'd grown accustomed to.

O'Brien shared that the Institute's lecturers, "were very complimentary of the ease of use, the support, and the overall implementation of Panopto."

The lesson:

Flexibility and Efficiency for Creators and Members

Reflecting on Panopto's implementation as a platform to unify and consolidate the Irish Tax Institute's solutions, Hennessy shares, "Panopto is a very flexible solution, and I think we at the Institute have proven that it can span a variety of use cases. Even if our use cases aren't always aligned with what you might traditionally expect from an education solution, it's absolutely suitable for a membership body."

"With Panopto, we know that if something goes wrong, we can get an immediate response. That also affords us a lot of adaptability and removes a lot of the administrative overhead as we're confident in Panopto's support," Hennessy summarises.

Considering the flexibility of approach granted to the Institute's members, O'Brien comments that, "Panopto's platform and features cater to those who are busy and want to consume content in a piecemeal fashion, and those who want to spend a few hours to absorb every piece of content. It's clear where to find specific materials or terms, so students are never delayed or put off by strenuous searches through a four-hour lecture, as was previously the case."

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