Panopto

Oxford Brookes University

How Oxford Brookes Switched From Mediasite to an Intuitive, Easy-to-Use Video Solution



The Challenge

Located in Oxford, England, Oxford Brookes University is a renowned institution known for its commitment to academic excellence and innovative teaching practices. With a global student body of over 18,000, the university offers a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs across various disciplines.

From 2013 to 2020, Oxford Brookes had been using Mediasite for lecture capture. However, after seven years of using the platform it was time to consider other options while faculty and staff were engaged in an intensive weeding process to remove unneeded videos from the platform to make room for new.

"We were looking for a platform with a modern look and feel," says Dr Melanie Bashor, Technology Enhanced Learning Advisor at Oxford Brookes University. "A platform that people could use by themselves."

"We were looking to have something suited to the work we were doing at the time and the work we envisioned in our long-term planning for lecture capture."

In short, the university was searching for a cloud-based solution that had the ability to save recordings automatically. "One of the main use cases we encountered was that once a lecture finished, the instructor wanted to be able to switch off their computer without waiting for the recording processing to completely finish," says Bashor. "We wanted something more intuitive, something that saved recordings faster and more efficiently."

The Solution

After a long tender process and demos with different companies – including Kaltura, Mediasite and Techsmith – Oxford Brookes chose Panopto. "The deciding factors were ease of access, ease of use, and having non-destructive editing," says Bashor. "The bonuses were being able to add slides, being able to change things, and being able to have flexibility at each stage of the workflow."

So, why was Panopto chosen over the others? When it came down to it, Panopto's top-class customer service really helped to seal the deal. "We had a better customer service experience with Panopto," says Bashor. "The technical people understood what we wanted and had the answers to our questions. It was fun to work with them and it felt like we would be in good hands."

In addition, Panopto's interface was also a deciding factor. "I definitely prefer the [Panopto] interface. The other interfaces were just too different from the rest of our platforms, often the editing

Panopto customer support made a fast **3-month implementation** during COVID-19 possible

220,462 videos made using Panopto from 2020 to 2023

3,451 videos migrated from Mediasite to Panopto

About Panopto

Panopto helps businesses and universities create secure, searchable video libraries of their institutional knowledge. Serving more than 10 million end users, it's trusted by 21 of the world's top 25 universities.

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framework looked funny, and the end-user experience did not look up to date," says Bashor. "Their features just weren't as great as those offered by Panopto."

Panopto rolled out in the fall of 2020, with a fast-paced timeline due to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We started installing it in July, and then it was live for all classes by September," says Bashor. "That's not a normal timeframe, it was because of COVID-19 – we needed it right then and there to facilitate online-only teaching."

Initially, Panopto was the university's lecture capture solution, and housed the 3,451 migrated Mediasite recordings. Since implementation, the use case has expanded to include targeted session recording of delivered content, as opposed to hours-long content that students may not need. The goal is to offer more bite-size content for students.

"When I tell students about an assignment, I record 20 minutes of me talking about the assignment," says Bashor. "It makes it much more accessible. [You can] go get something and see it right then, instead of having to wade through too much information."

Other use cases include making use of Panopto's integration with Zoom, which has formed the foundation for one of the primary workflows at the university. "You start the recording from Zoom and it automatically is moved into the relevant Panopto folder, captions are added by AI, and after a bit of editing and clean up you move it over to the Moodle course folder, also in Panopto," says Bashor. The other workflow at Oxford Brookes involves faculty and students using the desktop recorder, where the recording is saved straight into Panopto.

The Impact

Based on usage numbers, Panopto has changed the learning landscape at Oxford Brookes, with 1,135,498 videos viewed since 2020. With every year that passes, Panopto is being streamlined and made more efficient to further benefit faculty and students.

Increasing Accessibility

Accessibility is at the forefront of numerous universities's visions, and Oxford Brookes is no exception. Since 2018, the school has had an accessibility working group in place to ensure that everything shared online is accessible, as is required by the UK Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) Accessibility Regulations 2018. Previously using YouTube for captioning, the group found Panopto to be the more ideal solution.

"Panopto's secure way of providing captioning has been a big selling feature. It was a huge seller for our faculty and staff to not have to put everything in Youtube which they felt was less secure," says Bashor. "It's [also] been very helpful to explore the potential of audio descriptions."

Panopto's find and replace feature has also been a game changer. "I like the caption editor, saving as you go," says Bashor. "The find and replace feature has been a godsend."



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Panopto

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Easy to Navigate and User Friendly

Students and faculty alike appreciate the intuitive user experience and the convenient features offered by Panopto’s platform. “People like the [Panopto] UX, they like the viewer,” says Bashor.

The ability to bookmark videos within the platform is also highly valued. It enables students, especially those with specific accessibility needs, to easily navigate and revisit specific sections of the content without having to go through the course on their learning management system, Moodle. “That really helps some of our students.”

The introduction of Panopto’s smart chapters made a big impression at Oxford Brookes. This feature enhanced the viewing experience by allowing users to efficiently navigate through video content by jumping to different sections.

“People loved the smart chapters when that came out,” says Bashor. “It made the session recording concept become more functionally possible as they could use chapters to make content into more bite sized bits without having to stop and start the recording so much.”

Another aspect that has contributed to the user-friendly nature of Panopto is the ease of replacing slides within videos. Users can effortlessly update or modify slides without losing the original content, thanks to the non-destructive editing feature. “The way Panopto works, with the non-destructive edits and sharing settings – it is a very powerful tool,” says Bashor.

This simplicity extends to adding new slides as well, providing a seamless way to incorporate additional information or adjust timing within the video content. “I love that you can add your own slides,” says Bashor. “The simplicity of changing where that content is – you just change the time on the slide, instead of having to drag and drop or move it.”

Furthermore, the inherent design of Panopto’s architecture has proven to be a powerful tool for the university community. “It’s brought some ease of access to people’s lives and they’ve made use of the initial workflow; uploading their own videos and using the desktop recorder,” says Bashor.

bookmark videos

smart chapters

replacing slides within videos

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Customer Support

Migrating Oxford Brookes' entire Mediasite archive over to Panopto was a massive feat. But thanks to Panopto, Oxford Brookes had support every step of the way and were able to successfully migrate all the content while retaining the folder structure.

"That was an extraordinary outreach as part of our installation," says Bashor. "Doing that for us was powerful and it remains powerful – [Panopto] really went out of their way."

The impressive thing about Panopto is that Oxford Brookes hardly ever needs customer support. "There's rarely an issue. When there is, the team is on it and they go, 'let's fix it.' You always have an answer," says Bashor.

The relationships don't end once customer support is off the phone. "Everybody always stays in touch," says Bashor. "The user conferences are always fun, and we've had a great time talking to everybody. They're always so friendly, always so welcoming."

"There's a relationship and there's an investment in us and not just because we're spending money on the company," says Bashor. "It's because they care about what we want."

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The Future

Looking to the future, Oxford Brookes is planning on working on its recording policies for content retention. "Currently, we don't have any policies that delete anything," says Bashor. "We're trying to streamline our archival and recording policies so that they are a bit more manageable."

The university also wants to see an increase in use of specific assignment folders as part of its assessment initiative. "Just to make sure that everything goes in the right places," says Bashor. "I'd like to see people go to session recording instead of lecture capture. I'd like to see more short videos instead of one long one that you sit and record."

With Panopto, Oxford Brookes has succeeded in meeting its strategic goals – both administratively and creatively — and the plan is to continue growing. "[Panopto] has made our life so much easier," says Bashor. "We love it."



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