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Completely Optional: Rethinking Synchronous Graduate Workshops as Asynchronous YouTube Videos

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Context

➢ Pre-pandemic, moderately successful “Lunch with Your Librarian” workshop series at the College of Engineering
  ➢ 50-minute session, including time for introductions, lunch, group discussion
➢ Low attendance at online workshops when campus was 100% online during height of COVID-19
➢ Continued low attendance as on-campus activities restarted, regardless of whether workshops were in-person or online
➢ University interest in developing more online degree programs [1]
➢ Pivot to asynchronous videos

Sources of Information

➢ Survey of engineering graduate students on which library topics would interest them
➢ Watching the “best” educational videos [2] to observe how they do it
  ➢ When am I bored?
➢ Reading articles about library videos
➢ Talking with colleagues
➢ Meeting with Cabell Library Student Advisory Council (CLSAC) for in-depth information from students

But...

➢ Small response rate from engineering graduate survey, so helpful information but not firm guidance
➢ CLSAC is almost all undergraduates across majors, heavy library users

Engineer Your Library Videos

![Video thumbnail]

- Tools & Apps Page: EZProxy Buttons
- LibKey Nomad
- Google Scholar settings
- VCU Libraries Search

There's a simple button to get through paywalls.

- VCU Libraries
- Share
- Download
- Clip
- 34 views 8 months ago

Suggestions Used

Video Production and Distribution

➢ Produce popular topics first
➢ Script before filming
➢ Include a human face and personality in the videos
➢ Use YouTube playlist for easy sharing [3]
➢ Have catchy, “clickbait” titles
➢ Insert call-out text and images to emphasize key points
➢ Keep it short and lively by editing a lot!

Marketing

➢ Email to engineering graduate students
➢ Announcements at orientation and guest lectures
➢ Handout business card with URL on the back
➢ Electronic library newsletter to faculty, including some faculty outside engineering for specific videos
➢ Instagram
  ➢ One-minute Reels on librarian’s Instagram
  ➢ Some Reels shared on Library Instagram

Results & Next Steps

Success

➢ Bigger audience than the workshop series
  ➢ In-person lunch workshops rarely had more than 9 attendees

But...

➢ It’s unclear if it’s reaching the target of graduate students in engineering
➢ Editing takes at least as much time as scripting and recording

For the Next Iteration

➢ Try different approaches to reach engineering graduate students – both to advertise and to discover their preferences
➢ Reduce editing time, to increase the production volume – balancing quantity and quality depending on content

References

[1] VCU Quest 2028 One VCU: Together We Transform [presentation for Board of Visitors], n.d., p. 15
https://uploads.provost.vcu.edu/quest2028/bovpresentation.pdf


https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLZUTmRRIsqCW8wErojGImZvVdLjebtWhC