DIGITAL ACADEMIC REVOLUTION
MENTORSHIP COMPETENCY

#4 THE TECHNOLOGY:
Vision-Driven Instead of Vendor-Pushed Solutions
When the <u>right</u> people make the <u>right</u> tool to support the <u>right</u> mission

BY MARTIN **MEHL** & LUANNE **FOSE** | DECEMBER 2016

ONLINE LEARNING™ CONSORTIUM

KEYWORDS

AJ Gregory | Customer-Driven | Digital Academic Revolution | Digital Workflow Optimization | Digital Mentorship | Lifestyle Innovation | Luanne Fose | Martin Mehl | Matt Champagne | Screencast-O-Matic®

PREAMBLE

The in-depth segments of the Mehl/Fose research from motivation to conceptualization to adaptation through adoption and diffusion are featured in a multi-part series by the Online Learning Consortium Research Center for Digital Learning and Leadership. The Digital Academic Revolution: Mentorship Competency Series shares with OLC members the "inside scoop" and transparency of digital mentorship competency in teaching and learning.

In the 3rd article, we will discuss more in-depth the leadership & learning support of *Big Nerd Software LLC's Screencast-O-Matic©* - the screencasting **TECHNOLOGY** we chose to implement for the Digital Commentary Grading Project (DCGP) and its conceptualization. As we researched which tool would be the most appropriate for the task, our final software selection was based on **7** imperative criteria:

7 CRITERIA

1. The selected tool must be **intuitive** to learn for even the most technologically-challenged instructors.

2. The tool needs to be cross platform **compatible.**

3. Software editing capabilities are desirable (but not mandatory) since the goal of video assessment is **simplicity** and instructor transparency, efficiency, and expedience.

4. For full adoption it must be ADA **compliant** (i.e., include captioning capabilities) to accommodate student requests.

5. It must incorporate exceptional video **compression** codecs in order to minimize upload and download times for student-instructor and instructor-student transference in the Learning Management System.

6. Since video assessments must maintain student **privacy** and not be publicly posted, the selected tool must possess the ability to save screencasts directly to the instructor's computer rather than solely to popular digital repositories such as YouTube or Vimeo.

7. Finally (but certainly not least), the selected tool needs to be **affordable**, ideally free or of minimal cost to the university, faculty and students.

The tool that met all seven of these requirements was *Screencast-O-Matic©.* Several months into our DCGP pilot, we decided to contact the developers of Screencast-O-Matic© to find out more about the company's origin, mission, and current R & D. Matt Champagne, COO of the company, responded to our inquiries. We were so impressed by the shared ideology that we thought you should know more about the company and their educational vision as well. In other words, we think you should know why we feel that they are the "right" people supporting the "right" mission. This article is an interview we conducted with Matt Champagne and AJ Gregory in fall of 2016.

HISTORY / BACKGROUND

Martin Mehl / Luanne Fose: ORIGIN - How did your company get started and how long have you been in business?
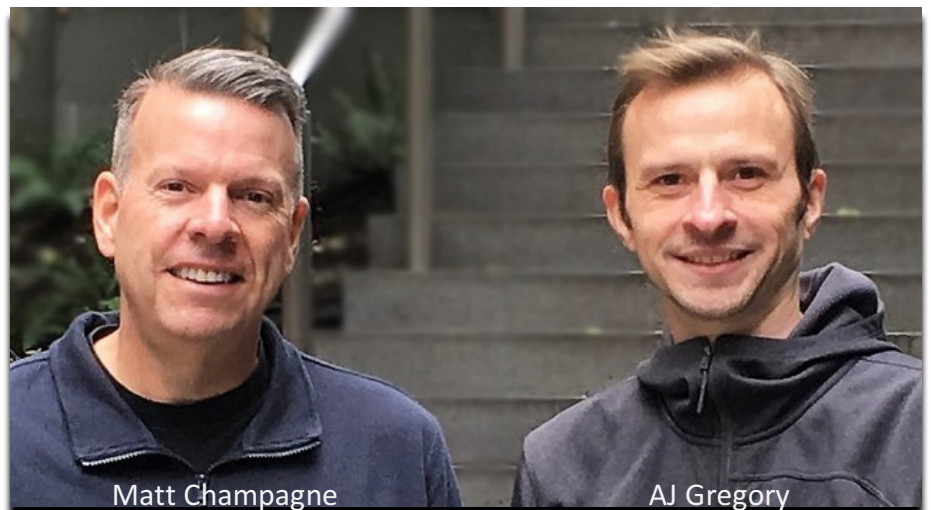
SOM - Matt Champagne (COO) & AJ Gregory (Founder):

Screencast-O-Matic© was founded in 2006. The company was created out of a need identified by AJ Gregory (Founder) for a very simple and easy-to-use screen recording tool that could aid in the learning process. Specifically, a tool was needed to capture the computer screen through video recording to be shared as a screencast to better facilitate learning. When AJ researched existing solutions (conducting his own product review via community comments), he found that the existing solutions were very complex, expensive, and directed to a narrow user base of technology and video professionals.

The goal was for anybody, not just video or technology professionals, to be able to quickly create and publish screen recordings without having to invest a significant amount of time learning the tools.

Matt Champagne   AJ Gregory

This tool could be used by any teacher in a classroom setting but also in other learning scenarios such as supporting novice computer users in learning or support scenarios.

The management of our company includes the Founder, AJ Gregory, who leads all technical operations and Matt Champagne (COO), who leads all business operations.

Together, the management has over 40 years of technology experience spanning both Fortune 500 companies such as Amazon, Microsoft and AT&T in addition to startup ventures including fields such as grid networking, web performance monitoring, and ecommerce. Our company is small and nimble and we intend to stay nimble and connected to the user community as we transverse the next phase of our development, driving new innovation and new scenarios and enabling everyone, everywhere to easily capture, share and experience video content

Today, Screencast-O-Matic[©] is used by millions of users globally across diverse industries such as education, user experience testing, design validation, marketing, support services, games, and enterprise video. In education scenarios, this can include creating a blended/flipped learning class, using the tool for teacher-student evaluations, lecture capture, school communications, professional workforce development, adhoc training scenarios for co-workers, etc. across traditional K-12 and higher education, dedicated professional development, and enterprise training. Screencast-O-Matic[©] has continued to deliver an easy-to-use set of tools that can be used widely while adding an extensive set of screen recording and editing capabilities. Every day our users are discovering new ways to use Screencast-O-Matic[©].

MM/LF: MISSION - What would you say is the overall mission of your company?

SOM: *The mission of Screencast-O-Matic[©] is to **enable everyone, everywhere to easily capture, share and experience video content.***

MM/LF: PRODUCT – Please explain briefly for our readers what the tool actually is.

SOM: *Screencast-O-Matic[©] is a simple, powerful computer screen and webcam recorder. The Recorder comes in both a free and paid version with the paid version including additional recording tools and a full suite of Editing Tools. We also provide a set of Hosting Services for organizations that prefer a dedicated hosting space for serving their screencasts as opposed to using a public hosting service.*

MM/LF: BRAND - Why the name? What alternatives did you consider a decade ago?

SOM: *The name was chosen as a fun, retro way to communicate what the product accomplished and how easy it was to use. Today, we look at the brand as a way of communicating our unique value of being fun, easy to use and accessible while not taking ourselves too seriously.*

MM/LF: GOALS - Since this year marks the **10-year** anniversary - what are the short-term and long-term goals for Screencast-O-Matic[©]?

SOM: *Our **near term** goals are focused around making improvements to the Screen Recorder and Hosting Services that our customers have requested, adding key points of innovation, and being more directly engaged with our community, that is, not only*

existing users who know about Screencast-O-Matic© but also reaching out to users and communities who have never heard of our product and company to evangelize the benefits and user scenarios.

Longer term *we are looking to drive innovation into our solutions that enable new scenarios and broader reach of existing scenarios, address a much more global audience, integrate with synergistic technologies and services, and realize a vision of our tools as being ubiquitous.*

We intend to accomplish all of the above while maintaining our core mission to enable everyone, everywhere to easily capture, share and experience video content.

MM/LF: LOCATION - Why are you headquartered in Seattle, WA?

SOM: *This is where the founder and partners reside and we feel very lucky to be in a community where such a diverse set of technology skills and passion for software innovation exists.*

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

MM/LF: TEAM - Can you give us an example of the R&D process and the team involved?

SOM: *This process starts with our customers who we communicate with in a variety of ways. This includes our support site where customers can submit new product ideas or existing issues, customer surveys, our social networking sites, product reviews, and 1:1 calls. We gather the customer voice and combine that data with our own knowledge of the industry and ideas about innovation. This data set is then organized into themes that are prioritized into short- and long-term initiatives.*

Using the process above, we execute an agile approach to schedule work into specific sprints and have a goal of releasing relevant features or improvements at least once per quarter. You may also experience interim releases to address bugs or our own operational needs. The process entails a team that spans product management, business development, software development, QA/test, and operations.

MM/LF: EDUCATION - It seems that your company has a very strong focus on education. Could you explain a bit more about your company's desires to impact education and what areas you hope will see an increase in usage?

SOM: *We believe the creation of personalized screen capture and video communications should be fundamental to how teachers and students collaborate. This goes beyond blended learning to include other communications scenarios such as work presentations, assessments, general announcements, etc. and across the education spectrum from traditional education environments through continuing and professional development. Our mission of everyone, everywhere means that we strive for teachers and students to become both creator and consumers of personalized screen recordings that lead to*

richer conversations, more differentiated and reflective learning experiences, and more productive use of teacher and student time.

MM/LF: HOSTING- We are also excited that you offer a repository for Screencast-O Matic© Pro users to keep content on a streaming server that is a bit more private than YouTube or Vimeo. Is this in an attempt to give teachers a more private venue to serve up screencasts to students?

SOM: *Pro Hosting was created directly from our users' feedback of the need for a dedicated, professional space to host their screencasts that included additional security and collaboration opportunities not available on public hosting services. This includes protecting videos, video channels, or the entire site, sharing management of uploads with other users in the group, customer branding of the site including using the customers' domain, and supporting very large repositories of content in a cost effective approach. Our hosting services are built on top of Amazon Web Services (AWS) to provide the right level of scalability, reliability and security while still being affordable for our customer base.*

MM/LF: APPLICATIONS - In pedagogy the best lecturers and learning, in our experience, are sometimes accidental discoveries. What application of your software surprised you the most?

SOM: *Screencast-O-Matic© is currently utilized across a diverse set of industries that span education, technology, legal services, accounting, financial services, insurance, marketing, customer support services, gaming, and many more. Of course, education is a core focus and Screencast-O-Matic© has a very strong community in education that shares new experiences on using the Screen Recorder and tools -- blended learning across just about any subject, school communications, assessments, teacher peer learning, etc.*

Our users are continually finding new ways to apply the use of Screencast-O-Matic©. It is commonplace today, but the concept of flipped or blended learning was not yet popular when Screencast-O-Matic© launched and the growth of that paradigm is probably what has been most surprising and exciting for us.

MM/LF: MOBILE - We love Screencast-O-Matic©. It's truly intuitive and easy for people to learn without a lot of time spent on instruction – even the Pro version. On your web site you have provided a lot of excellent video tutorials that cover instruction on all the available editing features. This is especially great for those of us who are responsible for training teachers. The only thing lacking in my opinion is a version that works on tablets. Is there a tablet (iPad, Android) version in the works?

SOM: *Mobile platforms including tablets running on Android and iOS are one of the biggest customer requests we get and we are actively researching how best to support. We don't have anything to formally announce at this time.*

COST, CLIENTS & COMMENDATIONS

MM/LF: MARKETPLACE- Who do you consider your main competition? Why? What is better about Screencast-O-Matic$^©$?

SOM: *Our main focus is on our customers and we don't spend material time worrying about our competition. We have found having a laser focus on the customer and serving their needs has allowed us continued growth and great customer satisfaction. The following are examples of how our customer talk about Screencast-O-Matic$^©$:*

"I have experimented for years with free tools that make it easy to create short videos. They can serve as introductions to lessons, tutorials, concept reviews, or instructions for absent students. For technology newbies, my favorite video creation tool continues to be… Screencast-O-Matic." ~ **Dr. Curtis Chandler**, Professor of Education, Brigham Young University-Idaho in Rexburg ID & 2011 Kansas Teacher of the Year.

"What's great about Screencast-O-Matic is that it does everything I want it to actually with Screencast-O-Matic the editing is even better, more user friendly."
~ **Dr. Nellie Deutsch** [http://moodle4teachers.org]

"The question that I seem to receive in my email more than any other is, "what software do you use to create your tutorial videos." I use Screencast-O-Matic Pro most of the time. Screencast-o-matic Pro is perfect for my needs."
~ **Richard Byrne**, Teacher [http://practicaledtech.com]

"Screencast-O-Matic is my go to for both recording and editing."
~ **Joel Speranza** [https://twitter.com/joelbsperanza/status/766874343401938945]

"Best Lecture Capture/Screen Recording"
- **Platinum:** Screencast-O-Matic
- **Gold:** TechSmith Snagit
- **Silver:** TechSmith Camtasia"
~ **THE Journal** Readers' 2016 Choice Award [http://www.prweb.com/releases/2016/10/prweb13806406.htm]

MM/LF: PRICING - What is the rationale of your pricing structure? Isn't everybody just going for the free version?

SOM: *To enable everyone, everywhere to enjoy the benefits of Screencast-O-Matic$^©$, we need our tools to provide high value at the right cost, especially when considering the education market. At the same time, we want to continue to add value to the product and that is enabled by our Pro Users who pay a small fee to use the Pro Features. We strive to provide the right set of features to free and Pro users that allow us to grow the community robustly while continuing to add innovation into our products and services.*

MM/LF: UPGRADE- It's wonderful that you have a free tool available to anyone with a computer and a browser. What are the major additional features one gains if they upgrade to the Pro version of Screencast-O-Matic$^©$?

SOM: *With the Pro Recorder, there are no time limits on you video, you can record computer system audio, you have a Draw and Zoom toolset available while recording,*

you can create a script to read while recording and you get additional automated upload options such as Google Drive. You also get a full suite of editing tools including cut/copy/insert video, insert images/overlay, animations including transitions, blur text, editing audio, and much more.

With Pro Hosting, users get their own dedicated site for screencasts, which includes creating channels, their branding/logo, videos up to 2 hours in length, and great security and collaboration features.

MM/LF: INSTITUTE LEVEL - The typical Pro license is only $15 a year, correct? However, we know that your company offers Screencast-O-Matic© Pro site licenses for universities or K-12 schools that are interested in purchasing Screencast-O-matic© Pro licenses in bulk. Could you explain a bit more about how that works?

SOM: *We have a couple different options for educational institutions and businesses that are looking to service a group or entire organization. For a group solution, we offer our Group Site License which can be acquired directly from our website and allows the organization to service a number of computers per month that need to access the Pro Recorder and Editing Tools, up to a maximum of 2500 computers. This solution requires minimal administration as the recorder, tools and services are hosted by Screencast-O -Matic©.*

For customers that need to support the entire organization and/or need to control the software in-house, we also have the Enterprise Site License. This allows unlimited use of the Pro Recorder and Editing Tools and allows the administrator to host the software on-premise, including specifying a defined endpoint for uploading screencasts. This solution also includes dedicated support services including an account manager and phone support.

MM/LF: FINAL PERSPECTIVE - Is there anything else you'd like to add, clarify or share when reviewing the background, the development and the distribution of your product, your company and leadership?

SOM: *Screencast-O-Matic© started from the need for an easy-to-use, easily accessible tool to aid in the learning process. Today, through a community of passionate users, the service has growth to users across 170+ countries that create over 1M screencasts month. In the US, there are users in 98 of the top 100 universities and we service a diverse set of industries and scenarios. Our Solutions and Services are provided to both individuals needing a personalized screen recording solution and institutions that want to facilitate screen recording for a group or the entire organization.*

Our user community is very passionate about Screencast-O-Matic© and we get feedback daily that validates we are providing ease of use, value, and access to a wide variety of users.

CONCLUSION

When we reached out to Matt and AJ in Spring of 2016 in preparation for our *Less is More – Digital Commentary Grading* OLC conference presentation in New Orleans, our key goal was to share our research findings and our mission to revolutionize the academic and knowledge-transfer marketplace. We were hoping to potentially solicit a few free Pro licenses from *Screencast-O-Matic*$^{©}$ in order to motivate attendees to participate in our presentation and learn first-hand the advantages of the tool. The most significant difference in our interaction with Matt and AJ, compared to other technology companies we have encountered over the course of our career, was in their timely and refreshing response. They didn't uphold the typical vendor mindset of "What's in it for us?" Instead, they responded to our requests with inquiries of "What can we do for you?" "What do you need?" "How can we avoid this becoming a vendor-driven approach but instead focus on the needs of the instructors?"

Our key purpose for connecting with *Screencast-O-Matic*$^{©}$ on an R&D dimension was to discuss the possibility of streamlining the LMS integration and understanding more about the scope and scale of system-wide deployment at our university. We also wanted to genuinely share our appreciation for the creation of a tool that allowed us to accomplish our intended outcomes for a strong pedagogical focus that is intuitive, extremely well developed, and exceedingly budget friendly (i.e., free).

As we mentioned at the onset of this article, we set our *7 criteria*, conducted our research and established the selection of the best fit, for the least complex, most robust and cost-effective tool that would cater to the widest audience possible without any budget resources and we found it in Screencast-O-Matic$^{©}$. It seems almost serendipitous that back in 2006 when Martin & Luanne were exploring the possible impact of podcasting on the academic landscape, AJ simultaneously founded Screencast-O-Matic$^{©}$ that same year. Little did we know when we started this project that we would discover a resource in the leadership and mission statement of Big Nerd Software LLC's that is eager to support the long-term learning outcomes for the Digital Revolution without focusing upon their purse. The Screencast-O-Matic$^{©}$ team is more than willing to share a common goal of a simple solution-driven product with a purpose-driven process and we applaud them for it.

Article #5 PREVIEW:
DIGITAL ACADEMIC REVOLUTION MENTORSHIP COMPETENCY SERIES
THE ANALYSIS: Learning from our Metadata

Article #5 of this series will finally unveil the quantitative and qualitative data we accumulated and digested from our research and the "myth-busting" we can support with our data, testimonials, developed rubrics and, finally in Article #6, the real world applications. Fittingly the new year, 2017, will usher in the concurrent deployment of our long-term mission and the three tiers of *Common Core Curriculum Teacher Training, Digital Mentorship Competency Certification & Legacy Expert Accreditation.*

RESEARCH TEAM

Martin Mehl
Digital Academic Revolution
Co-Principal Investigator
mmehl@calpoly.edu

Prof. Martin Mehl, a native German, is a Sr. Lecturer in the Communication Studies Department at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and an Iowa State University and Emerson College alumnus. He draws from 20 years of broadcasting, consulting, management, pedagogy & research experience for academic, business and non-profit environments. Clients have included: *Adobe, Apple, Audi, Bose, Center for Ethics in Political & Health Communication, Eli Lily, Emerson College, Harvard Medical School, Iowa State University, Lionbridge, MIT, MGH, the University of Sydney and the Whitehead Institute for Biomedical Research.*

Luanne Fose
Digital Academic Revolution
Co-Principal Investigator
lfose@calpoly.edu

Dr. Luanne Fose is the Lead Instructional Designer for the Center for Teaching, Learning & Technology at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy in music theory, musicology, and music technology from the University of North Texas. In her current position at Cal Poly, she conducts faculty workshops and consultations for the development of flipped, hybrid, and online courses. As a former music professor, she has an innate passion and artistry for audio and video production as a means of integrating Universal Design for Learning with the craft of teaching.