

Screen Capture Video Deliverables Requirements and Best Practices

Thank you for being a part of an online event hosted by Bits On The Wire and vConferenceOnline. The following information should serve as a guide in assisting you when recording your own presentation. If you follow these basic rules outlined below, you should end up with a quality screen capture video file.

General Settings

Most screen capture utilities offer a myriad of set up options. The most important thing to remember when setting up your recorder is that you want the end result to be 1280x720 in size (for 16:9 widescreen ratio) at 15 frames a second.

Because you are recording for 1280x720, you should capture at that same size. This will provide the most clarity possible in the end result. Set your desktop resolution to 1280x720 (or as close to that as possible, some may need to do 1280x768). Anything larger will have to be scaled down when you create the final video and that is where "Blurry" screen captures are born.

Setting up your Capture Software

If you don't already have a trusted screen cap utility (and even if you do), we recommend using Screencast-O-Matic to capture your computer's video. Of all the utilities we've tested, this one is the easiest to use, offers the most capability, and is the most affordable. You can sign up for a PRO account on the [SOM website](#) for around \$15 a year for unlimited use. You also launch the utility from the website, which makes using it on multiple machines very easy.

Recording with SOM

You should have already set your desktop resolution to 1280x720. Right now you're probably thinking "Whoa, where's all my screen real estate?". Due to some very technical details that we won't bore you with, this is the size you MUST record at to ensure the clearest possible picture for the viewer.

Let's look at setting up Screencast-O-Matic (SOM) to start recording:

Go to the [SOM website](#). Once you've signed up for a PRO account you can start using the utility. First you'll need to click the "Start Recording" button. (This opens the utility, it doesn't actually start recording.)



SOM may need to get Java involved so watch for permission requests and enable them if you see them.

Next you'll see the actual recording interface open up on your screen. Because your resolution is already set to 1280x720 you just need to click the screen button to tell the app to record full screen.



Then, set your frames per second to 15fps by clicking the Fps button. If your computer can't handle that, try 10, but most recent machines can do 15fps no problem.

Optional Video

You have the option of recording your webcam as an overlay to the screen capture if you would like to put a face to your voice for the viewer. SOM allows you to edit the webcam size and placement after you have finished recording before you export to final video file. Here is a basic primer for setting up your webcam, lighting and backdrop.

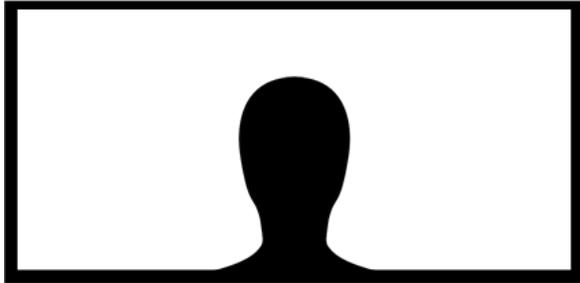
Camera

Camera should be at eye level height and should be "level" itself.

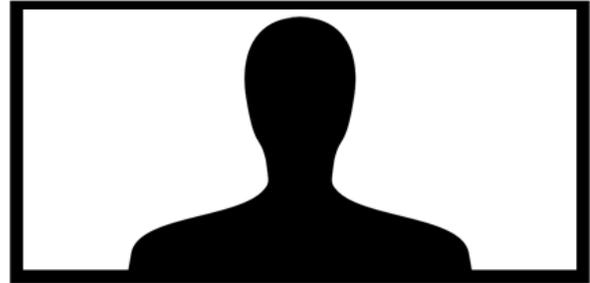
Please do not set the camera pointing up at your chin. Those of you who use devices with built in webcams should place something under the device to get the camera up at eye level. Also, it can be equally strange for a viewer to see someone's camera pointing down at them. Please be sure your camera is steady. No "machine in the lap" shots or shaky desks. Test it if you're not sure.

So what should it look like? You are going for what's called a bust shot. We should see some of your shoulders up to the top of your head. Don't place your face in the center of the frame with too much headroom above you in the shot. The top of your head should be right at the top edge of the frame with your shoulders showing at the bottom.

bad



good



Lighting/Exposure

Please check to be sure there are no windows or bright lights BEHIND you. This is known as "backlight" and most cameras cannot produce decent images if this happens. The more light you can get IN FRONT of you, the better your camera will look (until it can't take anymore light, then you just turn white). A window or open bulb desk lamp can really help here. Try to avoid up-lighting or light that comes from under your face (kinda creepy). The 45 degree rule is popular. Position a light 45 degrees to the side of you and 45 degrees up. This will create good contrast on your face and a flattering light.

Most webcams are set on auto. This is good to start, but it would be better to take off the auto and make manual adjustments to brightness and such. This will keep the camera's image constant to avoid automatic dimming/brightening while you are recording.

Background

Your background doesn't have to be anything special. In fact, the less special... the better. A plain wall or simple colored sheet is your best bet. The less detail your camera and the recorder have to resolve, the better you will look. This isn't always possible so at least watch out for stuff behind you that sits behind your head or too close to it. This is distracting to the viewer and can make you look like something is growing from you. Not good!

Audio Setup and Configuration

Please make sure your microphone is plugged in. You don't want to use your computer's built in microphone as the quality is not what we are after. Some external webcams have pretty decent mics built into them, so test yours to see if the results are good. Basically you want a direct sound. If you sound like you're sitting 10 feet away in a huge room, that is bad.

If you don't have a mic yet, we'd like to recommend this one:

http://www.amazon.com/GE-98950-Detachable-Desktop-Microphone/dp/B000BYCNKU/ref=sr_1_16?ie=UTF8&qid=1297201473&sr=8-16

This mic is available online and also at many dept. stores including Target and Wal-Mart for around \$10. We have many and they work just fine.

If you do have your own microphone and have used it to good result in the past, by all means use it. If you are not sure if the quality is on par with our requirements, please email us a short sample recording to production@bitsonthewire.com.

You'll need to select the microphone line in option on SOM. If there are multiple options and you aren't sure which is which, just tap the microphone with your finger, and change the input selection while doing so, until you see the tapping on the meter. Then you'll know you have selected the right input.



A note about mic placement. The closer you can get the mic to your mouth and away from other surfaces, the better it will sound. Think less roomy sound, more direct sound. Placing the mic model we recommended earlier on the surface top in front of you (or just to the side) should produce good results. If the mic is more than 12 to 16 inches away from you, it starts to get more "roomy" and less "direct".

You'll want to adjust the input settings on your capture utility so that the audio meter is bouncing around the "half-way" mark when you are talking into it at a normal volume just as you would when presenting.



If you're not sure about the meter, try a quick test recording and play it back. If it's distorted turn the mic volume down, if it's too quiet, turn it up. Again, your safe bet is in the 50% area. You want a good strong signal but not so much that it distorts at the loud parts.

Your surroundings should be quiet and free of interruptions. Make sure there are no noise making devices running (fans, mobile devices, pets, etc.).

Congratulations! You're set up. Now the fun part... testing.

Confirming Your Settings

This is a very important point. It is crucial that you test your settings to ensure you are getting quality results before you start the actual presentation capture. The last thing you want to do is to have to re-record the whole thing because of one small setting you forgot to change.

Try recording (hit the big red button) for a minute or so and then watch the playback. If it looks and sounds good, you are ready to begin capturing. If it looks bad, you may want to go back and confirm your settings. Screencast-O-Matic takes care of most of the technical settings under the hood so as long as you are set for 1280x720 screen size, 15 frames per second, and Microphone audio input...you're good to go!

After Recording, What's Next? Export!

Once you hit done on the utility interface (to stop recording) it will open an export window. This is where you save your capture, do any edits, and export to a video file. Be sure to save every capture with a name you will recognize in a directory that you can find easily. This SOM file will act as your "project file" and let you pull up captures into SOM for editing or splicing later. Most presentations will at least need the beginning and end cleaned up. We call this trimming.



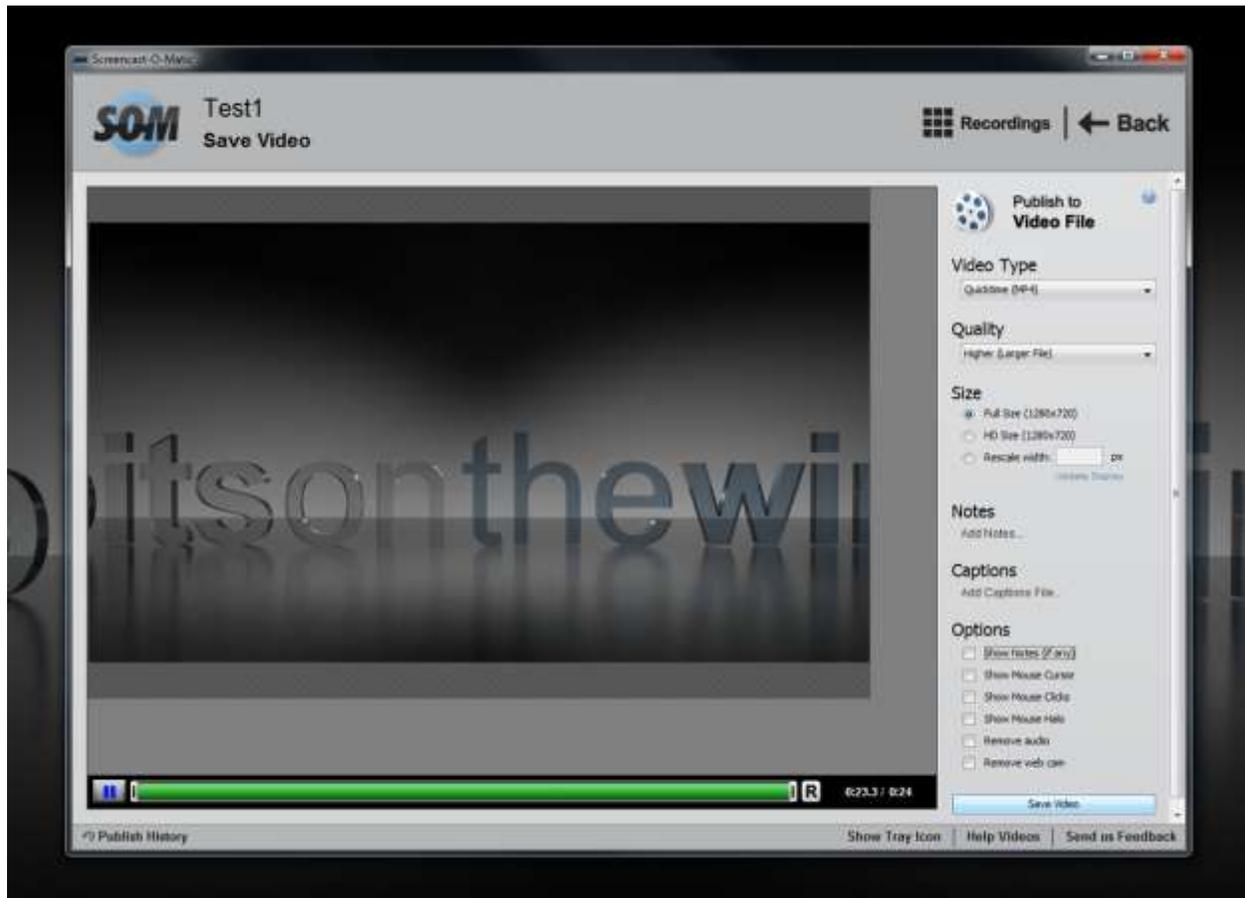
SOM can do basic trimming very easily. Just drag the markers on the preview timeline (noted with red arrows) to the desired in and out points of your video. You can push play to see the results. Once you are satisfied, click the "R" button (noted with green arrow) to set your changes. If you're not able to do your presentation in one segment, that's ok. SOM can also add other videos and captures you've done. So if you need to do things in short segments you can build those segments into one full video afterwards. Be sure to save each separate segment for recall later when you are editing them together. If you need to do more in-depth editing, we recommend that you watch the [help videos on SOM website](#) for instructions on using the edit functions.

Once you have completed any trimming and editing, you're going to generate a final master video file to upload to us. Remember we are going for a video that is 1280x720 in size with 15 frames per second.

Click the "Video File" option (noted with red arrow).



You will see a "Publish to Video File" screen. Here you select the video settings:



Video Type: Quicktime (MP4)

Quality: Higher (Larger File)

Size: Full Size (1280x720)

Notes and Captions are optional, but not necessary.

Leave Options blank.

Click "Save Video". Here you will name your final master file. It's important to name your output file something that resembles who you are and what your presentation's title is. We recommend something abbreviated along the lines of "YourName-SessionName.MP4".

For example: "JSmith-DBARulesProc.MP4"

It will take some time to encode the video file, so let it run its course. Once the file is complete, watch the video and confirm it is as you expect it to be. If all is acceptable, you will use our upload tool to send the file to us unless other arrangements have been made. Your project manager will provide the information needed to access the upload tool.

Happy Recording!

We realize that this information might not answer every question, so please feel free to contact a BOTW production staff member with any additional questions or issues. Thank you for working with us and happy capturing!

The BOTW Production Team

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