What Can I Do with the YuJa Media Library?

By Russell Davidson, Associate Director for Digital Education

Over the summer, the University added a new online tool to our teaching toolkit. YuJa, which gets its name from the Sanskrit word for *join* or *connect*, provides the Detroit Mercy community with a feature-rich, easy-to-use media companion to Blackboard.

At its most basic, YuJa's Media Library lets us share media – video in particular but also audio, images, and even PDFs – with students more easily than we could with Microsoft Stream. Video (and audio) uploaded to YuJa is automatically captioned, as it is in Stream, and captions can be edited if necessary.

However, to make a video in YuJa available only to the students in a course, we need only add it to the course site. No need to create and manage lists – our video will be accessible to any student who has access to the part of Blackboard where we added our video. And it works as well for audio.

The Office of Digital Education has put together a walkthrough of the upload and embed process, which can be found here. In fact, we have put together quite a few pages to help our community use YuJa effectively, and we've linked to these throughout this article.

Not Just for Faculty

Because YuJa is available to everyone at the University and the media library embed tool is part of the toolbar present on almost every text-entry box in Blackboard, students can use the instructions linked above to submit a homework video to their professor through Blackboard's assignment tool or share a recording with their classmates via a discussion board post. Students can use YuJa's recording tools (more on those later), or they can record with any other appropriate device (their phone camera, PowerPoint, etc.) and upload the video to YuJa before posting.

Sharing media is only the beginning

While the ease of YuJa's secure media sharing is a big part of its appeal, there is more to YuJa than media sharing.

Analytics

YuJa's Blackboard integration means we can see which students have actually watched the videos we have posted and how many of the videos our students have watched.

Video Quizzes

If students are not watching pre-recorded videos, an effective approach to encouraging them to watch (and pay attention) is to attach points to viewing. While putting Blackboard quizzes between short videos is a strategy that faculty have had success with, YuJa's Video Quizzing lets you incorporate assessments directly into your videos. A student watching a YuJa video quiz will be prompted to respond to questions at instructor-set intervals. Video progress can be locked – preventing students from skimming past the quizzes – or left open. For close-ended questions (multiple choice, true/false, etc.), video quiz scores are pushed directly to Blackboard. For quizzes with open-ended questions or playback quizzes, which give students points based on what percent of the video they watched, we need to push the grades from YuJa to Blackboard manually.

Recording

You can still use your preferred recording tool, or if you have been looking for a more powerful capture tool that lets you annotate anything you can put on your desktop, YuJa has some excellent alternatives.

YuJa offers a basic browser-based recording tool for faculty and students who either cannot or would rather not install software on their computers. Browser capture lets us record our webcam and/or our desktop activity, with the recording going straight into YuJa's media library.

For those that can, YuJa's desktop software capture (available on both PC and Mac) provides a full-featured recording studio. With the desktop software capture, we can capture up to 2 video sources, and 2 audio sources and those of us with multiple monitors can capture up to 2 screen sources. As an extreme example, this means, we could capture a tabletop-focused camera, our computer's webcam, a headset microphone, a remote microphone, *and* software running across two screens of desktop all in a single video. Possibly the most useful part of YuJa's desktop software is its set of live annotation tools, which let us draw onscreen to highlight points of interest and draw focus as we record.

YuJa's desktop software also includes a streaming option, letting students watch our recording sessions live. This is not a replacement for a Collaborate session – it is a one-way broadcast (think television: no text or voice chat from the audience) – but it presents an interesting option for faculty who would like to record with an audience.