

Faculty Showcase '07



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Goals

- Help students learn how to recognize market imperfections so that they can begin to identify where and how business can make a social impact.
- Help students to experience the power of digital media and “storytelling” as a medium for organizational change.
- Strengthen integration of technology in the SOM curriculum.
- Provide an alternative assignment option to accommodate differences in student learning styles.
- Design a learning infrastructure through which students have sufficient guidelines, resources, and support to create high quality digital case studies.

Sponsored by Academic Technology at Simmons College

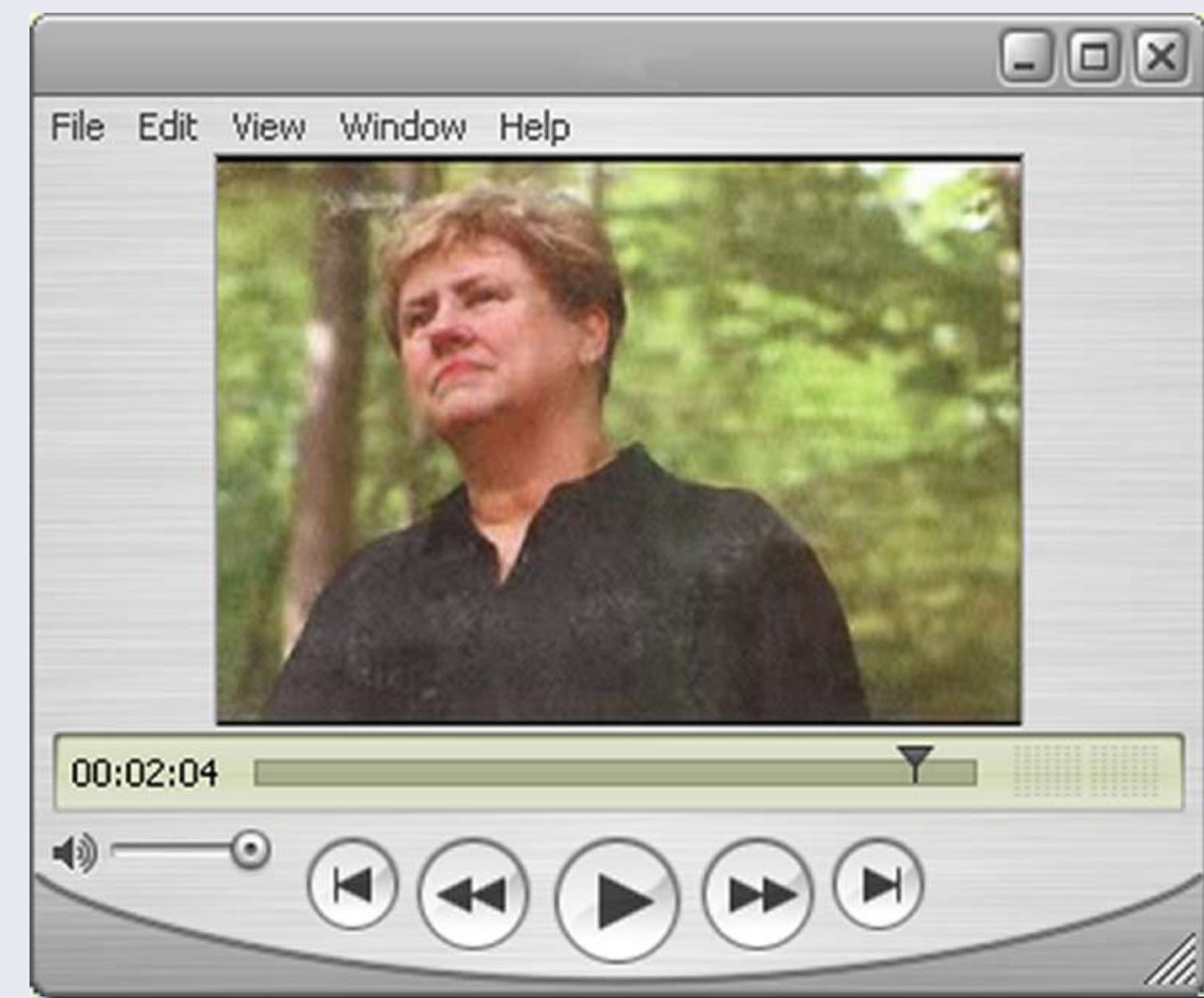


Student-Produced Digital Case Studies on Corporate Social Responsibility

Project Overview

In June 2007, SOM students enrolled in GSM 512, “Corporate Social Responsibility,” will have two options for their final assignment: develop a written case study as usual or produce a digital case study video. Digital case studies are digital stories, produced with user-friendly iMovie software, designed to support and reflect management learning just as written case would.

The Evolution of an Idea: Sylvia Maxfield got the idea for a digital case study assignment while attending the summer 2006 Faculty Institute on digital storytelling. During that three-day intensive, Maxfield produced her own digital case about Helen Drinan, the Senior Vice President of Human Resources at Caritas Christie Health Care who challenged Boston’s Archdiocese over its handling of sexual harassment charges against Caritas Christie’s CEO, Dr. Robert Haddad. This video has been used subsequently by a range of constituents, including the Simmons Advancement Office.



Continuing her exploration of the possibilities, in fall 2006 Maxfield allowed one of her students, Jimena Betancourt, to produce a digital case study as an assignment deliverable. The case, entitled “Competitive Advantage in the Cut Flower Industry,” explored the ways to constructively address the harmful overuse of pesticides and other unhealthy labor practices in the cut flower industries of emerging countries, particularly Colombia and Kenya. The result was such a success that Maxfield decided to submit a mini-grant proposal to Academic Technology to support extending this assignment option to more students.

In preparation for the June pilot, Maxfield met with Jason Gorman and Gail Matthews-DeNatale of Academic Technology to “plan backwards.” Looking at the desired outcomes, they created a timeline that includes development of rubrics for assessment, an assignment/resource module within Simmons Vista, peer- and faculty-feedback activities, software orientation workshops, and blocks of times for supervised project work in a Simmons computer lab.

Because exemplary digital case studies can be valuable resources for teaching and outreach, Maxfield is also considering strategies for archiving and sharing the best student work. These goals for the future include:

- Designing an ethical system for retaining copies of the best digital cases and honoring excellence in student work.
- Developing a library of compelling student-produced digital case studies.



Applications Beyond

As with all digital storytelling, digital cases are a particularly effective means for creating connections between theory and practice, school and community, thought and experience. Many disciplines, including those in health studies and the social sciences, use case studies to ground student discourse in “real life” scenarios. The experience is all the more meaningful when students take the process one step further by authoring and producing their own multimedia cases.