

Idiom would like to welcome Christine Rosalia as a new recurring Tech Tools columnist. This is her first column.—Columns Editor

Rip off the Internet: For educational purposes

By Christine Rosalia, Ph.D

We have all been there—once. You are standing in front of your class about to show a video you found online when one of two things happens: (1) a blanket firewall at your school blocks the site (e.g., YouTube), or (2) the Internet speed at your school is so slow that you are forced to kill time as the video freezes/loads. I say we all have been there “once” because the experience can be so frustrating that you don’t try again. Fear not; this column is about downloading or “ripping” video from the Internet to your computer so that you can play videos you find online--offline. You prepare the download at home and bring it to school via your laptop or USB drive.

Choosing an online free ripper:

Search for rippers that do not require you to buy or download any specific plug-in or software. A free online ripper I am currently using is offliberty.com. Offliberty has a clean interface with the same three steps typical of most online rippers: First, you are given space to paste the URL of the video you want. Once you paste this URL and press the “off” button, you are shown that the site is “ripping” the video by percentages. Finally, you are given two options: Would you like audio only (an MP3 file) and/or would you like the full video (an MP4 file)? Follow the directions to “right-click” (for Mac-users, “control-click”) and “Save link as” to put the file(s) on your personal computer. Voilà! You have a downloaded version of an online video.

Another ripper, <http://en.savefrom.net>, even shows a list of supported video hosting websites, such as <http://www.gametrailers.com/>

From an online rip-off to better production:

Though free, online rippers can be volatile. As they become popular, makers tend to add advertisements aimed at entrapping you. If you are willing to investigate a pay-for-ripper that is also a robust video editor, screen-recorder, and which was made for educational video production, I recommend [Camtasia software](http://www.camtasia.com). Going beyond what online rippers can do, Camtasia lets you screen record just about anything played on your computer, including streamed-TV and full movies. It offers tools like a pen for writing on top of video and a blur tool for covering sensitive information. A free trial will give you an idea of the space needed on your machine to run the program and save files.

Replays in your classroom:

Here are some ideas for using ripped productions.

Present learners with:

1. audio of a video for cloze activities
2. a short clip without sound; ask them to write subtitles; then compare versions, including the original version
3. the start of a video scene; ask students to role-play an ending.

Disclaimer: Remember copyright restrictions and “fair use” laws still apply to how you use “ripped” media in your classroom. If you are not familiar with evaluating educational purposes, see this useful checklist <http://copyright.columbia.edu/copyright/fair-use/fair-use-checklist> or <http://tinyurl.com/fairusechecklist>. Make sure to model attribution of sources and discuss issues of authorship with your students.

Christine Rosalia, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of TESOL at Hunter College. She teaches graduate courses on integrating technology into everyday pedagogy from pre-K to adult language learning. Research interests include teaching multilingual literacies, and assessments for learning, particularly peer online feedback of academic writing.
<crosalia@hunter.cuny.edu>