VoiceThread Basics

http://voicethread.com

What's a VoiceThread?

A VoiceThread is an online media album that can hold essentially any type of media (images, documents and videos) and allows people to make comments in 5 different ways - using voice (with a microphone or telephone), text, audio file, or video (with a webcam) - and share them with anyone they wish. A VoiceThread allows group conversations to be collected and shared in one place, from anywhere in the world.

What types of files can I use?

Currently, we accept image types: JPEG, GIF, BMP, PNG, doc types: PPT, PPS, PDF, DOC, XLS and varying video formats. Since VoiceThreads can zoom in and out on images and documents for detail, we recommend your images be at least 1280x960 (which a 2mp or higher camera can produce).

Do I need a microphone?

Yes, and no. There is no substitute for the compassion, emotion, and expressiveness of the human voice. We understand that many first time users might not yet have a microphone. We do allow you to easily leave text comments in place of speaking. To leave a voice comment, while viewing a VoiceThread, select the "record" button. Likewise, to leave a text comment, select the "type" button.

There are several inexpensive microphones that you can buy and plug into your computer. Microphones are easy to use and require very little setup. For a good microphone, take a look at any of these. If you are using a laptop, it just might have a microphone already installed. Try leaving a voice comment on a VoiceThread and see if it works! If you run into any trouble setting up your microphone, try one of our tutorials: Windows, Mac.

How do I share a VoiceThread?

We've made the process of sharing very easy. There are several ways to share a VoiceThread, the most common is wherever you see the word 'Share' you can click it to open up your list of friends and decide who to send invitations to (Free accounts can send 50 per day, while VoiceThread Pro accounts can send 500). If someone is not on

your friends list yet, it's easy to add them, all you need is their email. Also, if a VoiceThread has been made public by its owner, like all those in our browse section, you can simply copy and paste the URL website address into an email message. Here's a quick tutorial on Sharing.

How do I delete a VoiceThread?

When editing a VoiceThread, on the top of the page next to the 'Add a title and description' / 'Edit Title' button, use the 'Delete Thread' button to remove the VoiceThread and all it's contents.

Are VoiceThreads secure?

Every VoiceThread begins its life as private as a piece of paper inside a safe, completely secure. You must choose whom you wish to share it with - either 1 person or 10 people or the whole world. You can choose to show a VoiceThread to the whole world in a couple of different ways. It can be public, but not allow any new comments, or you can make it public, and allow new comments. You can also choose to turn on comment moderation, which means that all new comments are only visible to you and the person who made them, until you specifically choose to 'show' them. You can also choose whether you want a public VoiceThread listed in our browse section (the default is 'Yes'), but if you choose 'No' then only people with the exact URL will see it.

What are identities?

Think of an identity as your VoiceThread personality. Each time you leave a voice or text comment, your VoiceThread will attach your identity to the comment. By creating more identities you can share a single account with an entire family, so the whole group can comment on a VoiceThread without ever having to sign into another account. This feature is really great for parents or teachers who wish to monitor a child or student as they leave comments in a VoiceThread, or for those of you who enjoy wearing costumes and role-playing. One thing to remember is that all identities share the same account, and so there is no privacy between identities. If you would like a totally private account, we would recommend that you simply register a new account. Here's a 1 minute tutorial on making and managing Identities.

How many voices can there be?

Each page of a VoiceThread can hold the comments of hundreds of people. The avatar images simply shrink as more and more people comment on a page.

How many pages can there be?

Free accounts can have 50 pages per VoiceThread, while VoiceThread Pro accounts can have 500.

What does this all cost?

Our Free account has no limits on participation and no one will ever need to pay anything to view and comment on a VoiceThread. A Free account does have some limitations on VoiceThread creation, but you can easily upgrade to a VoiceThread Pro account with unlimited creation and advanced features for less than $2.50 a month. For more information, visit the Pro page. K-12 educators can apply for a free educator account by signing in and clicking the Go Pro! button and then by clicking the "K-12 educators click here." link on the bottom of the menu.

Your Microphone

We've created 2 tutorials for setting up a microphone, one for Windows and one for Mac.

Your Webcam

If your webcam comment is showing a black screen you might need to change some settings in Flash to get it working properly. By default most new Macs (MacBook, MacBook Pro, etc) expect to record using a DV Video camera. You may need to change your default setting to your internal Mac camera. This is really simple and easy to do:

   1. Right-click (CTRL-click) inside of any VoiceThread and select the 'Settings...' option
   2. Click the picture of a camera (it is the 4th icon from left)
   3. From the drop down menu select the 'USB Video Class Video' option (your internal camera)
   4. Click 'Close'

Now you will be able to successfully record from your camera. One more thing, just make sure you are not running other programs that use your camera such as iMovie or PhotoBooth. Have fun recording!

Your Mute Button

The dreaded Mute button, found on keyboards and microphone cords at the same time, has brought even IT experts to tears as they wade through all the possibilities for a lack of sound. If you're having trouble hearing or recording sound, your first instinct should always be to check the sound levels to make sure it's not been muted.

Your Firewall

If you're having trouble recording you can take the following test, and forward the results to your system administrator. VoiceThread Test.

Clearing Browser Cache

Internet Explorer

1. Click 'Tools' main menu button
2. Click 'Internet Options' button
3. Navigate to 'General' tab
4. Click 'Delete Files...' button
5. Select 'Delete all offline content' checkbox
6. Click 'OK' button
7. Refresh the current page

Mozilla Firefox

1. Click 'Tools' main menu button
2. Click 'Clear Private Data' button
3. Uncheck all boxes except 'Cache'
4. Click 'Clear Private Data Now' button
5. Refresh the current page

Safari

1. Click 'Safari' main menu button
2. Click 'Empty Cache' button
3. Click 'Empty' button
4. Refresh the current page