

# Captivate Me

Reviewed by Heidi Larson

IN 2004 Macromedia bought eHelp Corporation and acquired RoboDemo, software to create interactive demonstration and tutorial videos by recording cursor movements. Macromedia renamed the product Captivate.

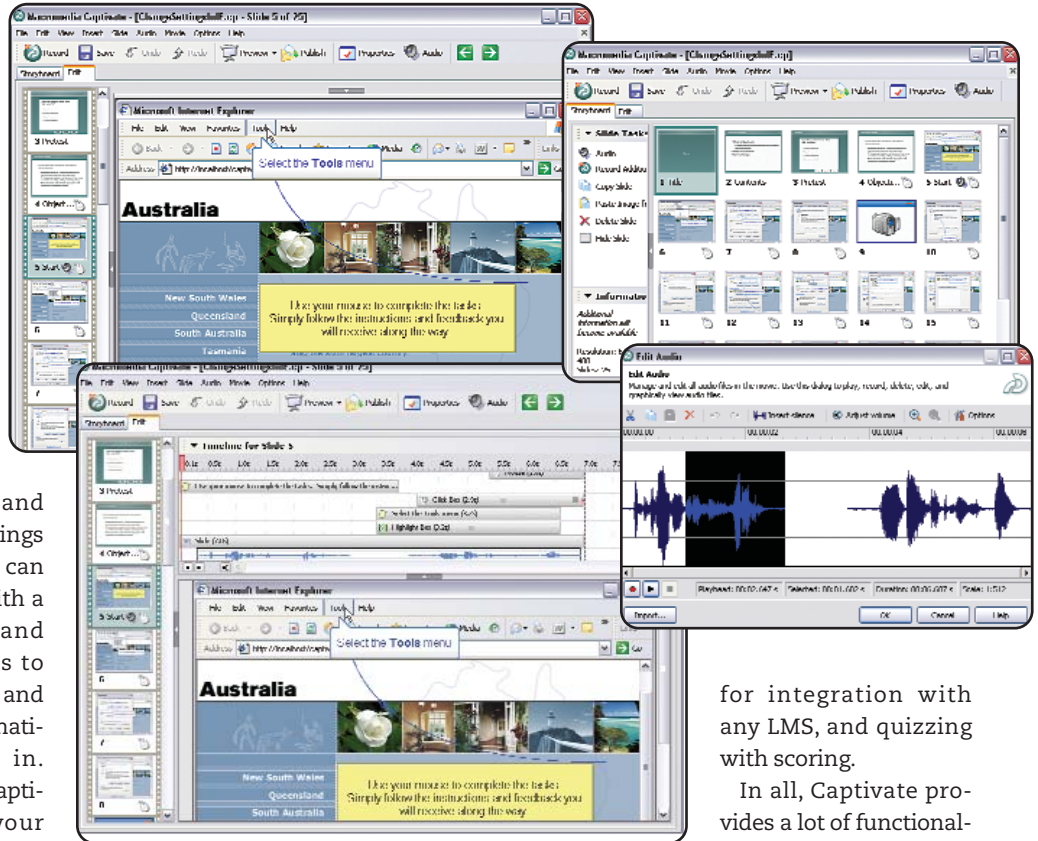
In a nutshell, the tool is a combination of the best parts of Camtasia (which records all of your cursor movements automatically) and ViewletBuilder (which breaks recordings down into individual slides that you can

manipulate), with a little OnDemand (which outputs to Word handouts and annotates automatically) thrown in. Not only does Captivate record your mouse and cursor movements, but also it allows you to

add captions, audio, images, Flash animations and video, branching and scoring, highlights, hyperlinks, rollovers, and more.

New features in Captivate include

- a timeline that enables you to edit layout, timing, and other slide characteristics
- the ability to make changes to your slides instantly and to record audio along with video



- easy export to a Flash file
- more control over the quiz look/feel
- improved Microsoft Word output.

## Functionality and ease of use

Captivate lets you record the use of an application, including such onscreen activity as mouse clicks and typing. For example, you can automatically capture the steps involved in attaching a file to an email as you perform them, and the program records all of the mouse movements, clicks, and screens along the way. You can also capture screens manually. Adding interactivity (click spots, text input, rollover text, feedback, and so forth) is easy.

In addition to saving Captivate movies as Flash files, you can export them to an executable file (.exe) or a Microsoft Word file to use as a job aid. The ability to create content for a demo and job aid at the same time is so exciting that it's almost enough to make an instructional developer dance.

The e-learning edition of Captivate adds features such as SCORM- and AICC-compliance, manifest generation

for integration with any LMS, and quizzing with scoring.

In all, Captivate provides a lot of functionality and doesn't require a huge learning curve for a moderate level of mastery.

## Value for the money

Captivate produces demos and interactive simulations with small file sizes, and it's affordably priced. It's a valuable adjunct to an instructional developer's tool arsenal, and the cost is reasonable for what it can accomplish.

[GOTO/www.learningcircuits.org/2005/feb2005/clothier.htm](http://GOTO/www.learningcircuits.org/2005/feb2005/clothier.htm) for a longer review of Captivate and how-to tips.

### Captivate (formerly RoboDemo)

Software, 2005

Macromedia

[www.macromedia.com](http://www.macromedia.com)

877.229.0269

\$499 full, \$299 upgrade for a single user

### Recommendation

If you need to build demos that show people how a software application works or simulations that allow them to realistically interact with the application, Captivate is a good choice.

### Captivate product rating

Installation and initial use	****
Documentation	**
Help/support	***
Interface	****
Ease of use	**5
Compatibility	****
Value for the money	****
Overall rating	***.5

**Heidi Larson** works for Education Development Center, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building bridges among research, policy, and practice; [hl Larson@edc.org](mailto:hl Larson@edc.org).

# Customer Caring

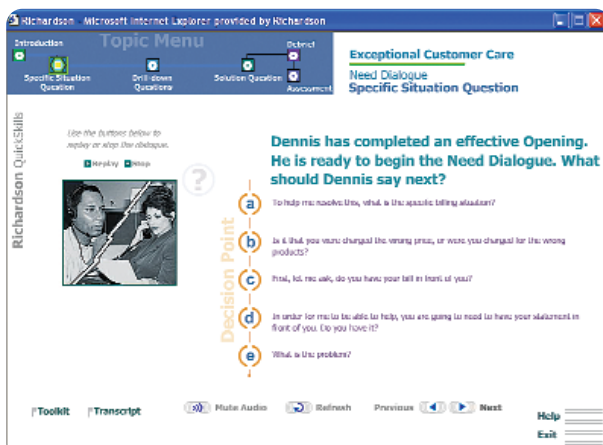
Reviewed by Diane Sidwell Jones

SOFT SKILLS TRAINING can be compared to physical exercise: It's essential to a company's health, but it's often hard for participants to stay committed.

To remain motivated, learners must be emotionally connected. That connection doesn't necessarily transfer in an isolated setting, such as a web-based

The modules reinforce empathy and questioning skills, so they are more dynamic than training on basic telephone etiquette. Segments can be completed in 15 to 20 minutes and are presented in text with optional audio.

Each module describes a customer scenario and presents the learner with multiple-choice quizzes, asking him or her to choose dialogue for an effective customer interaction. Feedback reveals whether the selected choice is the best answer.



### We liked...

- that the scenarios provide excellent modeling, which can reinforce coaching.

### Could be better...

- The modules aren't adequate for stand-alone use.

course. Stop and think about how many aerobics courses are offered online instead of on site.

Richardson recognizes that a web-based solution can enhance a soft skills fitness regime but doesn't substitute for a stand-alone course. The five new QuickSkills modules that make up Exceptional Customer Care are marketed to support instructor-led courses.

The reflective exercises help reinforce concepts; however, the learner doesn't have the opportunity to practice the skills with observation and feedback. Because that's essential to transfer learning to the job, the product loses value as a stand-alone solution. To remedy that shortcoming, Richardson provides supplemental resources such as worksheets and sample scenarios of effective and ineffective practices.

### QuickSkills

Online, 2005  
Richardson  
www.richardson.com  
800.686.8019  
\$1,500 to \$25,000

### Recommendation

The QuickSkills content is solid and provides good examples of quality customer service. Although the web course can enhance a customer service curriculum, it's not sufficient to transfer skills.

### QuickSkills product rating

Interface	**
Production quality	**
Ease of use	**
Value of content	***
Instructional value	**
Value for the money	**
Documentation	***
Overall rating	**

**Diane Sidwell Jones** is a training and development specialist for National City Corporation in Franklin, Pennsylvania; dianesidwelljones@nationalcity.com.

# About Time

Reviewed by Bill Ellet

THERE MUST BE some kind of genetic predisposition to wasting time. How else can you explain the fact that so many of us have the tendency to undermine ourselves by squandering our work time on things that aren't important? How else can you explain the longtime success of Franklin Covey and the many other suppliers of planning aids and time management guides? Some enterprising scientist may yet study this tendency (which the video reviewed below claims is embedded in human nature) to show us why wasting time is actually an evolutionary advantage. Meanwhile, we have many products that aim to correct this habit.

Time Trap II, available on VHS and DVD, is grounded in the work of Alec Mackenzie, a specialist in time management. (He has a following, as you can learn from a Google search.) Although I am skeptical about specialists in topics like time management, Mackenzie's recommendations in this video make sense.

The setting is an office building; the main characters appear to be middle managers. However, it would not be too big of stretch to apply the learning to line-level office workers or managers one or two levels above the middle.

### Time Trap II

Video/DVD, 2005, 23 minutes  
LearnCom  
www.learncom.com  
800.622.3610  
\$695

### Recommendation

Time Trap II offers excellent suggestions for making the work day more productive. But the dated visuals and the omission of tips for email—one of the greatest time wasters in work history—could limit the appeal of the video/DVD. We recommend, however, that you look beyond those limitations.

## We liked...

- the practical and useful tips for managing interruptions.

## Could be better...

- The video shows its age with dated visuals and an exclusion of tips for email.

A major issue in many offices is constant interruptions. The video uses a couple (whom I presume to be married) to illustrate this problem in a typical office. For example, the man

and woman are continuously falling into the trap of tolerating intrusions by well-meaning subordinates, peers, friends, and bosses. Then they get wise with a training course on time management. It is actually fun to watch the pair defend themselves against the time wasters that beset managers.

The couple learns the usefulness of a simple protocol for daily work:

- objectives
- to-do list
- current project.

They also find that delegation, the act of standing up when a visitor drops in, a daily quiet hour, and scheduled callback times in late morning or afternoon make them much more productive.

The leader and self-study guides that come with this product are thorough and useful. Unfortunately, the appeal of this video will be limited by a couple of issues:

- Videos are brutally transparent about when they were produced. This one reeks of the early 1990s in hairstyles, clothes, and sets. Will audiences resist the ideas just because the visuals are dated? I don't know of any research about that, but if you use the material, you'll want to issue a disclaimer.
- The program was made before email became universal. The time management principles for email are no different than those described for walk-ins and phones in this video. But the omission dates the

program and may cause viewers to dismiss its excellent recommendations.

## Time Trap II product rating

<b>Holds viewer interest</b>	<b>***</b>
<b>Acting/presenting</b>	<b>***</b>
<b>Diversity</b>	<b>** .5</b>
<b>Production quality</b>	<b>* .5</b>
<b>Value of content</b>	<b>*** .5</b>
<b>Instructional value</b>	<b>** .5</b>
<b>Value for the money</b>	<b>** .5</b>
<b>Overall rating</b>	<b>**</b>

**Bill Ellet** is editor of *Training Media Review*; wellet@tmreview.com.

Product evaluations are provided by *Training Media Review* and do not imply endorsement by *T+D* or *ASTD*. For more information, contact *TMR* at 877.532.1838; www.tmreview.com.