



Downloading YouTube Videos for Safekeeping

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Introduction

Have you ever found a YouTube video that was absolutely perfect to illustrate a pertinent point for your class and then later went to find that it was no longer posted there? What's an instructor to do? Some schools and universities (right now Cal Poly is not one of them) even go as far as to ban YouTube from the available possible sites that students are allowed to visit on lab computers; thus, it isn't always feasible to send your students to a YouTube video to confirm a learning concept. This tutorial was designed to assist you in various methods for downloading YouTube videos for safekeeping so that you can store the actual video on your computer hard drive or save to CD-ROM. YouTube videos are created with Flash but the web masters of the site have chosen to lock them down so you can't simply right-click the videos and save them to your desktop. Follow the steps below to download the .flv video file itself. You also won't have to rely on an internet connection to show them later on in your class since you have the actual video to play from your computer.

Download YouTube Videos with Safari (Macintosh & Windows... Yes, Windows!)

1. You must have an application that can play .flv (Flash Video) files You'll need an application like VLC Player or FLV Player to view the Flash video that you are going to download from YouTube. Download VLC Player from:

<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>

and install it on your Macintosh or Windows computer.

2. WINDOWS USERS: If you prefer the FLV Player (for Windows only), you can download it for free at the following URL:

http://www.download.com/FLV-Player/3000-2139_4-1_0467081.html

3. Install the **Safari** browser if it isn't already on your computer. The technique we are going to use here to grab YouTube videos requires the Safari browser instead of Firefox or Internet Explorer. Safari has been one of the favorite browsers of Macintosh users for quite some time. Now it is for Windows users as well. Download and install Safari at:

<http://www.apple.com/safari/download/>

4. After you have installed Safari, open **Safari** and go the <http://www.youtube.com> website. Find the video you wish to download. Play it.

5. While it is playing, open the **Window > Activity** menu. and expand the **toggle arrow** on the **Activity** menu.
6. Scroll down and hunt for the largest file. This is the video file on the YouTube web page. It usually has the words **VIDEOPLAYBACK** in it or is changing in size as you look at it because you are playing the video and it is sending to your computer.
7. Double-click on the file. Safari will open a new window with no address. Simply close the window.
8. The video should begin to download which you should be able to see in the **Download Manager** (If you can't see the Download Manager, go to **Window > Downloads**).
9. In most cases, the video will be called **videoplayback.flv** and will be playable with the VLC Player or any video player on your computer that will play Flash .flv files. However, in some cases, the file it downloads doesn't have a file type extension on it and you need to have the proper extension on it for it to play properly. To add the file extension, follow the instructions below in Step 10 or 11, depending upon whether you're a Mac user or a Windows user.
10. **ON A MAC: Right-click** on the **VIDEOPLAYBACK** file that was downloaded to your Desktop and select **Get Info**. In the **Name & Extension** box, add the extension **.flv** This is the extension for Flash video (i.e., the format that YouTube uses for all its videos) A dialog box will appear asking if you are sure you want to add this extension. Click on the **Add** button. Also, in the **Get Info** box, you can select **Open with** and select for this file type of .flv to **always open with VLC Player**. If you want your

computer to handle all .flv files with the VLC application, then click the **Change All...** button.

11. **ON A WINDOWS COMPUTER:** Right-click on the video file that was downloaded to your Desktop and select **Properties**. In the **Properties** dialog box, click on the **General** tab. In the textbox that is there, add the extension **.flv** to the end of the file name so that it says **VIDEOPLAYBACK.flv** Make sure that you have installed the VLC Player before the next step. Next to **Opens with:**, make sure it says **VLC Media Player**. If it doesn't, click on the **Change** button and select **VLC Media Player** from the list and click **OK**. This causes .flv files to always open with the VLC Media Player. When you are finished making the changes to the Properties dialog box, click **Accept** and then **OK**.
12. Now you have the YouTube video file on your computer for playing without an internet connection or for safe-keeping. Burn it to a CD to make sure you don't lose it if your computer crashes completely and needs reformatting in the future.

Download YouTube Videos with TubeTV (Mac Only)

There are also a lot of freeware and shareware tools on the market to help you download YouTube videos. One of the better ones for the Mac is **TubeTV** (Sorry, Windows users - they don't have a PC version). Check it out and download it from: <http://www.chimoosoft.com/products/tubetv/>

TubeTV allows you to search for the YouTube video in your browser and grabs whatever URL is in your address bar. It will then download the .flv file (if you have it set to do so in its Preferences) and converts the video to either Apple TV (m4v) or iPod format for playing in iTunes. However, if you also download the Perian QuickTime Component and install it (Note: A dialog box will ask you if you want it when you install TubeTV), you can then play .flv files on QuickTime Player. If you have QuickTime Pro (an additional \$29.95 download from Apple), you can then convert the .flv file to whatever format you desire.

Other YouTube Grab and Conversion Tools

There are tons of other tools you can get for free that allow you to grab YouTube videos and some will even convert them into other formats. One web-based conversion tool you might want to consider is **Zamzar**:

<http://www.zamzar.com/>

With Zamzar, you can provide the URL for a video (up to 100 MB in size) on its web page; choose the type of format you want for conversion (there are a variety of choices listed on its pull-down menu); and provide your email address. Zamzar

will convert the video and send you an email when it's ready with a pointer to where you can download the completed converted video from. The videos only remain on their server for 1 day so you have to fast about retrieving it if you decide to use this method but it is handy!

For more info about some other grabbing and converting utilities, please visit:

<http://mashable.com/2007/05/05/download-youtube-video/>

Another tool that Windows users might want to consider is **Kick YouTube** (Visit: <http://kickyt.com>). Kick YouTube is a free AVS video converter tool that you can use to download and convert YouTube videos to various formats. (Sorry Mac users, it is a Windows only tool.)

Embed YouTube Videos within Blackboard

Obviously, you can link to YouTube videos from Blackboard by simply using Blackboard's External Link option to take students directly from Blackboard to a video on the YouTube web site. However, there is another more pedagogically-effective method for placing YouTube videos in Blackboard: Embed them so that it actually appears as if the YouTube videos are playing within your Blackboard course. This approach will keep your students from getting lost in the "black hole" that is YouTube and hopefully, will encourage them to continue concentrating on your Blackboard course content. Below are the steps to embedding a YouTube video within Blackboard:

1. Open up **Firefox** and go to <http://www.youtube.com>. (Please note that this method of embedding YouTube videos in Blackboard must be done with the Firefox browser because Firefox displays ALL the formatting options available for use in the Blackboard **Text** area.)
2. Search YouTube for the video you wish to embed.
3. Below the YouTube video, you will see a button labeled **<Embed>**. Click on this **<Embed>** button.

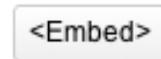


Figure 1: YouTube Embed Button

4. A dialog box will appear underneath with some checkboxes. **Uncheck** the box that says **Include related videos**. (Note: We don't want students distracted by other YouTube videos; after all, avoidance of the "related videos black hole" that students often stumble into was the reason we selected to employ this method of downloading YouTube videos in the first place.)

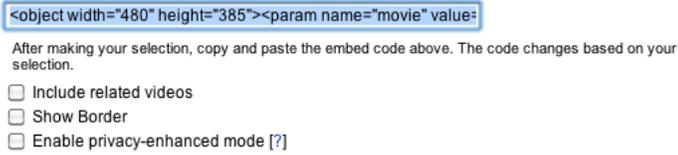


Figure 2: Embed Dialog Box

5. In the embed text box above this, select all of the embed code that resides there (i.e., use **Command-A** on Macintosh or **Control-A** on Windows to select all of the text of the embedded code, which will begin with the code **<object width=** and end with the code **</embed></object>**).
6. Now copy the embed text to your computer's clipboard by pressing **Command-C** (Macintosh) or **Control-C** (Windows).
7. Leave the YouTube web site and open your Blackboard course by logging in through the Cal Poly portal and navigating to your Blackboard course.
8. Once you have entered the Blackboard course, click on the **Control Panel** link and select the proper link to the location in your Blackboard course where you wish to place the video (e.g., **Course Documents, Assignments, Videos**, etc.)
9. Click on the **Item** button and provide a **Name** for the video in the Blackboard text box.
10. Below the **Name** area, you will see a text box labeled **Text** with all sorts of formatting buttons provided for text editing. Click on the **<>** button. (Note: You'll know you're on the correct button if you hover your mouse over this **<>** button and it displays the words **"Toggle HTML Source Mode"**. Be advised that If you're not using Firefox, you may not have the ability to see the **<>** button.)
11. Now In the text box under the Blackboard **Text** formatting buttons, paste the embed code you copied from YouTube's text box in Step 6 above. (Note: To paste the code, simply use **Command-V** on the Macintosh or **Control-V** on Windows.)
12. Select the **Yes** button next to **Make the content available**, select whether or not to **Track number of views** and if desired, **Choose date and time restrictions** (Note: Doing nothing in the **Choose date and time restrictions** area will make the content appear immediately as long as you requested **Yes** for **Make the content available**.)



Figure 3: Blackboard Options

13. Scroll down to the bottom right of the Blackboard web page and click the **Submit** button; then click **OK**.
14. Now, if you wish, change the numbering order of the item in Blackboard by pulling down on the drop-down menu next to its number sequence and selecting the position order you desire.



Figure 4: Change Number Order in Blackboard

15. To test the embedded video in Blackboard, simply click on the play arrow in the middle of the YouTube embedded file in Blackboard and the YouTube video should play directly in the Blackboard window without going off to the YouTube web site.
16. **Note:** Because Blackboard is simply pointing to the file, please be aware that this is not a method for ensuring you have the video as an archive for all-time usage during the rest of your teaching career at Cal Poly. By using the embed method explained above, you are simply pointing to the YouTube video at the YouTube web site (i.e., the video is actually residing on YouTube's server and could be taken down at any time by YouTube); however, if you use this method of embedding the video in Blackboard, it will appear to the student as if they have never left the Blackboard web page.