



# Vrije Universiteit

## Using Video as a More Intuitive Way to Teach Students



### KALTURA

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**Rob van Leeuwen**

Educational Technologist  
Vrije Universiteit

Vrije Universiteit (VU University), located in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, was founded in 1880 on the principle of separating education from government – a very forward thinking approach for its time. One hundred and thirty three years later, the university still embraces forward thinking by providing the latest technology and pedagogy to give its students the best advantages for their upcoming careers.

As part of this approach, VU started using video in the classroom as soon as it was first introduced commercially, but had to limit the amount of video students created due to storage limitations. When the university heard that their current video solution would no longer be offered, they knew it was time to make a major leap forward regarding what video could do.

VU formed a selection committee and set criteria that the next solution must meet. “One of the most important criteria was that it integrate well with Blackboard Learn™,” said Rob van Leeuwen, Educational Technologist at VU. “We have been using Blackboard since 2001 and it is now deeply ingrained within our university, as well as most universities throughout The Netherlands.”

It didn’t take the university long to select Kaltura. Kaltura is an open source online video platform that allows faculty and students to create, edit and upload videos with a click of a button. Once the videos are uploaded to the cloud-based platform, they can be viewed from any device in any location. “We looked at several solutions, but none were as mature as Kaltura,” said Van Leeuwen.

The committee first learned of Kaltura from a colleague at New York University. Soon after, they were able to get a demonstration during a vendor day event. “Kaltura does what we needed it to do and it was within our budget,” said Van Leeuwen. “The Software as a Service aspect of Kaltura was important to us as it meant the video service could be installed on a turn-key base.”

To get the faculty started, the university’s library, which controls the solution campus-wide, used an online video to show how to use Kaltura. They also added a Frequently Asked Questions page and allowed faculty to add their own questions. “The video was heavily viewed, but only three or four questions were added to the list, telling us that the faculty quickly understood Kaltura,” said Van Leeuwen.

The administrative tools within Kaltura also allow the library to gain visibility into what is happening down to a granular level. “We can easily see which departments are uploading the most video so that we can bill them accordingly, if need arises,” said Van Leeuwen. As for the faculty, they are finding Kaltura integrates deeply into the Blackboard instance so that they can combine video with assignments and curriculum throughout the platform.

One of the biggest users of Kaltura is the medical and dental department. They first converted all of their existing videos from the old system to Kaltura. Then, they started adding lectures, training videos, quizzes and patient/doctor interactions. The university gets patient permission to use the interactions for educational purposes, but the department was concerned about how to control privacy since Kaltura is cloud-based. “I was able to show them how they can select the level of privacy needed for each video uploaded,” said Van Leeuwen. “Once the department saw they would still have control over privacy, they began uploading all the patient interactions.”

From the start, VU allowed students to have unlimited access to Kaltura. Students could produce and upload videos right away, which was very natural for them. As a result, professors and teachers (assistant professors) have been learning new ways to use Kaltura based on how the students are using the solution. “The students are using Kaltura in ways we never dreamed of,” said Van Leeuwen. “It has been fun to watch.”

So what’s next for VU? Kaltura’s MediaSpace™. MediaSpace is a private YouTube™ for the campus environment that lets departments collaborate on projects and ideas – a social video portal, or CampusTube. Although VU won’t fully implement MediaSpace campus-wide until November 2013, the university has already started testing the solution. “We had a teacher in the psychology department immediately start uploading his lectures to MediaSpace,” said Van Leeuwen. “He said it was one of the reasons he was elected Teacher of the Year.”

“We are excited about the potential of MediaSpace, especially the fact that students can access it through their mobile devices,” said Van Leeuwen. “Kaltura has mentioned that they will be adding mobile uploads to the capabilities of MediaSpace, which I think will help students use it more since they use phones and tablets more naturally than PCs.”

So will Kaltura help VU keep its forward thinking approach to education? “We have a group of professors that are planning to use Kaltura to have students assist with the creation of curriculum and become producers of class materials,” said Van Leeuwen. “In essence, the students will be in control of determining how they learn best.”

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