

Doing two things at once

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Video technology has now matured to the point that business owners can cheaply and easily get out a consistent message to a targeted audience anywhere in the world. Businesses can effectively pitch a new service, demonstrate a product's use or train staff in branch offices via video, whether on DVD or streamed on a company's Web site.

"A lot of the [videos] that we do are specifically for clients' Web sites," said Jennifer Adams, executive producer at Digital Video Arts, a video production and postproduction company in Jacksonville. "Sometimes we'll do [a video for DVD] and when it's over they realize it would be good to put on their Web site as well. But, it's growing in popularity, the end use of a project being for their Web site."

Two years ago, Joey Atlas, president of Joey Atlas Fitness Resources in Ponte Vedra Beach faced a somewhat enviable problem.

"I had the dream trainer's job — more clients than I could handle. But the downside was, I was working from 5 a.m. to 10 p.m. and some days nonstop," Atlas said. "As a single guy, that worked for a while. However, with marriage and kids, that kind of life doesn't work."

In order to have more time with his wife and three young children and generate more revenue, Atlas decided to first develop a Web site with training information and then make and market a series of fitness DVDs. "I started thinking of ways to still put my training out there and help people achieve their goals and free up time to spend with my family, while at the same time opening other avenues of business development."

Though Atlas still trains up to 10 people one-on-one each week, thousands of people in the U.S. and abroad have purchased his DVDs. "We're closing in on 5,000 customer/clients who have purchased the

DVDs and are in contact by e-mail, Weblog or via the membership Web site, so there is open communication."

Atlas said the next step will be to stream audio messages and videos — potentially including live workouts — to his growing client base. "There might be exercises that they have questions about, so I might do a three-minute video on how to do it and what not to do and how to incorporate it in their current program."

Streaming video is growing in popularity because it reaches a wider audience with a consistent message that can be viewed on demand.

"It allows you to provide more information in a small period of time," said Mike Sowa, Web and multimedia project manager at Bryant Design Inc., a full-service production house on the Southside. And more businesses are looking to take advantage of the technology. Among Bryant's clients, "the topics that come up quite a bit are video streaming and podcasting."

Sowa said podcasting has become a popular way to get a message out to a wide audience. "IPods and personal media devices are becoming ubiquitous and because of that [people] see the ability to deliver the message through that channel. Professors are putting lectures on podcasting sites so that their students can pull down the course for the day. I have heard of ministries delivering their message through the same technology."

As bandwidth and access increase and video devices proliferate, videos are also becoming a common means to distribute targeted information. Streamed or pre-recorded videos and podcasts share a key benefit; they give greater flexibility to both the person providing the information, for example a business owner who needs workers in the field to learn a new safety technique, and those receiving the information, who



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Fitness instructor Joey Atlas has found that by using DVDs as part of his business plan, he can market his services to an international audience.

can watch or listen at their own convenience.

Bryant Design created an online TV network of sorts for The Love of Jesus Ministries, based in New Jersey. "The client can create as many channels of audio and audio/visual messages as they care to have," Sowa said. At the ministry's Web site, alltheworldevery-creature.com, "a user can choose from a half-dozen channels set up, targeted for children, or teens, or Hispanic speakers. They stay very busy. They typically get an average of 700 visits a day. But it's not just hits or page views. Daily visit lengths are eight to 10 minutes each."

Abyssinia Missionary Baptist Church on Jacksonville's Northside launched its Web site, abys-

sinia.org, in April 2005. The site includes a new sermon each month for congregants who either miss services or who want to hear a particular sermon again.

An unexpected benefit has been that people from outside the area are finding the church online. "It is on the World Wide Web, so it's available to anyone who has access," said Patrick

Bryant, (no relation to the production company) minister of media with Abyssinia. "We have been able to reach people out of the area. In fact, we had someone just before the holidays in Tennessee inquiring about the site. They saw the video online and wanted to get more information about the church."

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