The Future of the Dissertation: Three Minute Video for a Non-Specialist Audience

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Presentation for the 2016 CGS Annual Meeting
Psst ... so are you getting any of this?
Benefits of a Video

• Students build skill in effectively communicating complex ideas
• Showcase the clear value of doctoral education
• Help us live our land-grant mission
What IS the Dissertation Video

- Approximately 3 minutes
- 1 static slide
- General audience
- Conversational style
- Explain who they are, what they did, what they found, & why it matters
Beginnings

• Policy passed in May 2013 -- electronic vote of the Graduate Faculty as part of a package of changes for doctoral programs
• Pilot Phase—Aug 2013 to June 2014
  • Six programs from a range of disciplines volunteered for pilot
  • Fall 2013—pilot videos were filmed and allowed us to more closely define what wanted (and didn’t want)
  • Spring 2014—piloting the workshop & finalizing details for campus-wide implementation
Success!

• Summer 2014--Campus-wide roll-out requiring all students graduating Dec 2014 or later to complete
• Initial unhappiness from some segments of campus has mostly subsided
• 287 videos filmed to date
• Some programs & colleges are actively using the videos (e.g., student electronic portfolios, campus hallway televisions, etc.)
Elements of Success—Why is This Working

- Legal advice from General Counsel
- Information Technology Service (ITS) films the videos on campus
- Library houses videos in the Institutional Repository
- Required Workshop
- Options for Distance Students
Required Workshop

Demystify Your Dissertation: Communicating to a General Audience

• 2 workshops per semester plus 2 in the summer
• Students bring 3-5 sentences summarizing their dissertation in nontechnical language
• Describe benefits, techniques for communication of complex ideas, show examples, embedded interactive practice session, how to dress, required forms, video storage.
• Interactive component--Groups of 3-4 from different disciplines practice on each other and receive feedback.
Sample Video

- https://library.ndsu.edu/repository/handle/10365/25865
Hope for the Future

- Programs will take over student preparation for the videos by training students to communicate with a general audience
- All programs will evaluate their students’ videos
- University leaders will use the videos as a tool to communicate the value of graduate education
- Programs will use the videos for recruiting