

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

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Presentation for the 2016 CGS Annual Meeting

Wah wa-wah wa-wah wah wah wah wah wa-wah wa-wa wah wah
wah wah wa-wah wa-wah wah wah wa-wah wa-wah wah wa-wah wa-
wah wah wa-wah wa-wah wah wah wa-wah wa-wah wah wa-wah ...

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