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Outside the Box: A Multi-Lingual Forum

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The Techno-Tip

A Faster Start-Up Before Class

Hyperlinks, Bookmarks, and the *Freeze Image* Button

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This issue's tech tip is about hyperlinks, bookmarks, and the *freeze image* button on most projector remote controls. The tip is mainly directed toward teachers, although it can be equally helpful for anyone who uses an electronic whiteboard and wants to display multiple files, all the while focusing on other tasks at the same time.

Part 1: The freeze image button

This is perhaps the most useful function I have discovered since I started using a basic electronic whiteboard (in the form of a computer hooked up to a projector). It lets me freeze an image on the projector screen while I continue to work on my computer. This way, I can leave lecture notes on the screen for students to copy while I prepare the next segment of our class, such as a short video clip. I can do things that I might not want to show students, for example inputting grades during in-class assessment, or cueing a video. It spares the trouble of disconnecting from the projector. My only criticism would be that most remote controls communicate with their projectors via infrared instead of Bluetooth. This means they are not always as responsive as one might hope, and distance from the projector can be problematic.

Part 2: Hyperlinks and bookmarks

The turnover time between classes at most Japanese universities is ten minutes. For those of us who work in classrooms that only have a projector, it requires a bit of fancy footwork to connect our computer and make sure everything is set up for the coming lecture. It has been my experience that students usually choose precisely this time to try and talk with me rather than visiting me during my office hours. Indeed, when I worked as an adjunct this was often our only chance for face-to-face communication. While I always welcome a chance to talk with my students, the few minutes before class was just about the worst time to approach me until I started using hyperlinks and bookmarks. I was always distracted getting ready for the class, which (still) entails hooking up the computer and opening the Word document that I use for my lecture notes, finding the place where I left off in the last class, opening the Excel spreadsheet that I use for attendance and grades, as well as opening whatever multimedia I might be using, such as YouTube links, video files, and so on. It used to be somewhat stressful to try to carry on a conversation with a student at the same time. Still, a student who is approaching me at such an obviously inopportune time usually has something fairly important to say, so I give them my best attention, of course. With this in mind, I often wished for an easier way to accomplish my setup routine, and it was right under my nose.

Hyperlinks allow users to insert links that will open other documents. Bookmarks will take a user to a given place in a document. In my case, I've found that it is possible to go from complete shutdown to having a Word Lecture Notes file, an Excel Attendance/ Grades file, as well as three multimedia files/links open and ready to go in under three minutes – all accomplished with a mere six clicks after locating and opening the initial Word Lecture Notes file. Here is a brief explanation of how I use hyperlinks and bookmarks to resolve the problem discussed above.

The first step is not necessary, but I think it is worthwhile because it is the first thing your

MacLean, G. R., (2013). A faster start-up before class: Hyperlinks, bookmarks, and the *freeze image* button. *OTB Forum, 6*(1), 42-44.

students will see projected, and it helps to set the tone for the rest of the class. I like to insert a playful image at the top of my lecture notes. To do this you should (a) insert a textbox about the size of the image you choose to use. Next, you should (b) insert an image of your choice. Then (c) add a speech bubble above the image and type in whatever text you like. This will be your bookmark to the place you left off in the previous class. In my case it sometimes looks like this:

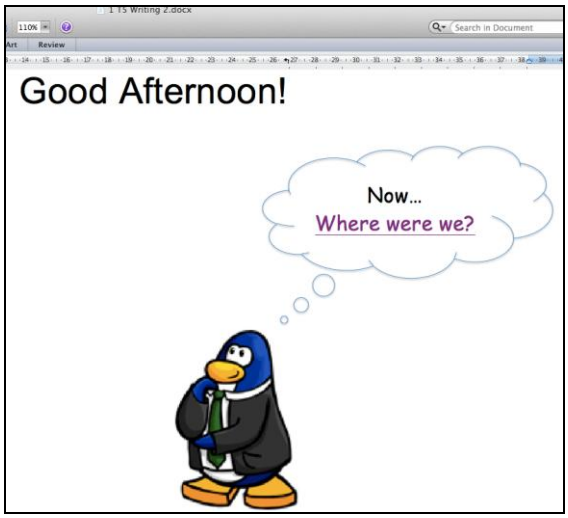

Figure 1. The class's first image.

I like to finish a class by letting students know their homework, so that is where I bookmark for the next lecture. That way I start precisely where we left off, and students are reminded about their homework. At the same time I write the date for the next class and use it as a hyperlink to open my Excel attendance/grades file. This makes it possible to (a) open the word file used for your lectures, (b) hyperlink to where you left off last class, (c) freeze the image so that students can see their homework from the previous class and confirm how to write the date for the current class, (d) open a hyperlink for your Excel attendance/grades file, as well as (e) open any other hyperlinks you might want to input for the current lecture. As I mentioned above, it is easily possible to accomplish all of this from a cold start up in under three minutes!

To insert a bookmark in a Word document, (a) choose and highlight the place you want to mark in the Word document. (b) Click on *Insert – Bookmark…* a dialog box will appear where you should designate a title for your bookmark and click *Add* and *Close*. Note that you cannot include spaces between words in a bookmark title. I like to use the date that homework for the previous class was assigned.

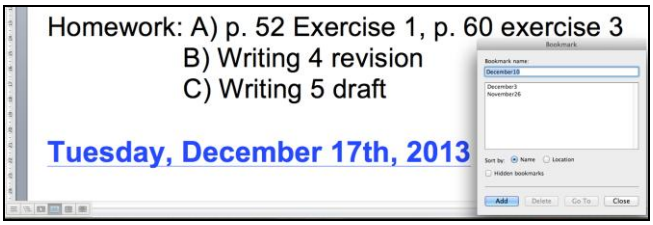

Figure 2. The previous class's homework and the hyperlink to the Excel attendance file.

Now return to the top of your Word document and highlight whatever text you would like to use as a hyperlink to your Bookmark. This time (a) Click on *Insert – Hyperlink…* Next, a dialog box will appear, (b) click on the *Locate* button below *Anchor*. (c) Another dialog box will appear where you should click on the (triangular) *Bookmarks* bullet. This will give you a list of bookmarks to choose from. Click on the bookmark that you titled, click *OK* in both dialog boxes, and your hyperlink should be ready to go.

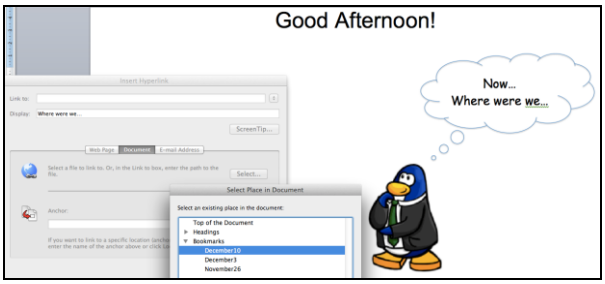

Figure 3. Inserting a hyperlink.

Next you want to insert hyperlinks to open your Excel attendance/grades file and any other files or documents you'd like to open at the start of your class. Initially, the procedure is the same as above: (a) highlight the date and click on *Insert – Hyperlink…* Next (b) a dialog box will open where you should click on the *Document* button. (c) Click the *Select* button to the right and a Finder/Explorer menu will appear to help you locate the file you wish to open. Repeat this step for any other documents or files you wish to open.

Where opening webpages is concerned, hyperlinks are no faster than simply pasting a URL into a Word document. However, with a hyperlink you can write any text and it will

appear and open the URL. Personally, I like to use a word or phrase that will entice students to anticipate and/or think about what is coming next; for example, directing students' attention toward the difference between the pronunciation of "θ" and "s".

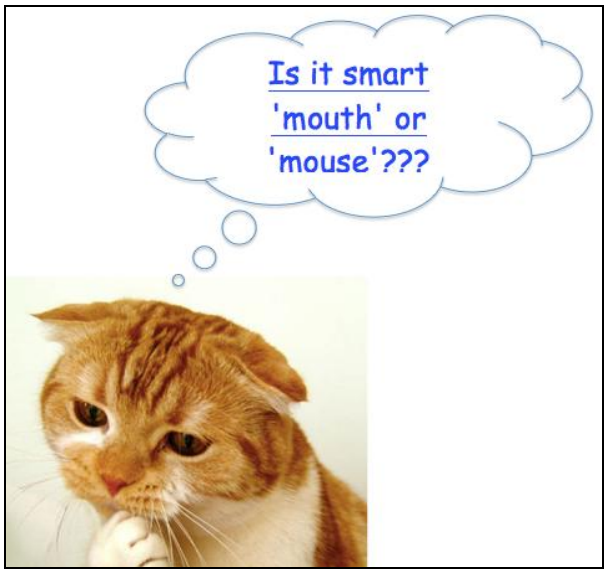

Figure 4. An easily-remembered hyperlink.

Hyperlinks, bookmarks, and the *freeze image* button have been very helpful for me to incorporate multimedia in my classes and to easily start a class. I hope this tip was useful and that they are equally helpful for you.