



GREETINGS FROM ODL

If you've ever seen an episode of *The Jetsons*, the 1960s cartoon about a futuristic family, you may recall George Jetson chatting with his wife Jane via a TV screen. Who would have thought that in the year 2021, we would all be using a type of Jetsons video technology to engage with our students and collaborate with our colleagues?



Technology has allowed us to stay safe while continuing our work in teaching, research, and service, something that would have been considered a challenge even a decade ago. Technology tools that help us engage with others beyond a physical space have grown in the last few years and new opportunities emerge all the time.

Explore some of the latest opportunities in this issue of *Distance Up Close*. Instructors can use PlayPosit technology to create an interactive video experience for their students. We're currently conducting a pilot for the tool and invite all interested instructors to join. The course accessibility tool Ally helps instructors create documents that can be made accessible to students in a variety of formats to meet their individual needs. And Zoom continues to be the premier technology for keeping in touch, so check out our updates to make your virtual conferencing experience even better.

These technologies have also changed our definition of the classroom by expanding options to reach students wherever they may be. Flex courses give students an opportunity to choose the format that helps them learn best. Technology has also allowed us to maintain our top spots in the annual *U.S. News & World Report* Best Online Program rankings, even during a pandemic.

So explore how technology is helping enhance the educational experience for all of us. And thank you for continuing to engage and enlighten our students.

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IN THE NEWS

ODL Seeks Instructors for PlayPosit Pilot



As remote teaching continues this spring, effectively engaging with students is more important than ever. To help instructors enrich course media to better facilitate student learning, the Office of Distance Learning is conducting a pilot study of the interactive video tool

[PlayPosit](#). All instructors are invited to participate in the 2020-2021 pilot, which runs through Summer 2021.

“I’m so excited to share the benefits of PlayPosit and how instructional videos can take students to a far more interactive experience,” said Liying Miao, ODL Instructional Development Faculty and pilot coordinator. “We can build an entire module using this tool and add checkpoints to ensure the learning activities support the learning objectives. It’s like putting your students on a ride and guiding them through each attraction. Learn with me how fun it is to add built-in interactions.”

PlayPosit, which can be integrated into Canvas, focuses on creating an interactive video experience for students. You can personalize learning pathways, embed simulations, create branching scenarios, and build threaded discussion boards into your instructional videos. You can track student participation with a monitoring feature and analytics to gain insight into how your students are interacting with the course material.

Additional benefits of PlayPosit include:

- **Premade templates.** Add premade interactions to your video for student feedback, pre-/post-assessments, or pop quizzes.
- **Hotspots.** Use custom video overlays to quiz students or annotate the video.
- **Custom timing.** Set the timing and length of interactions to ensure students have sufficient time to consider their answers.
- **Drag and drop editing.** Add, reorder, crop, or delete videos using the drag and drop editing feature.

Check out the [interactive player](#) and [video design features](#) to see what the tool looks like and take a look at the [PlayPosit blog](#) for information including case studies, user stories, and product updates.

How to Join the Pilot

If you or your colleagues are interested in participating in the pilot study, please contact Liying Miao at lmiao@campus.fsu.edu. ODL Technical Support and PlayPosit account managers will provide technical assistance during the pilot. For help, call [850-644-8004](tel:850-644-8004), email canvas@fsu.edu, or [submit a ticket](#). To learn more about the tool, visit the [PlayPosit website](#).

FSU Faculty Shares Benefits of PlayPosit



Dr. Arienne Ferchaud, Assistant Professor in the FSU School of Communication, is one of the first instructors to join the PlayPosit pilot. ODL recently spoke with Dr. Ferchaud about her work with the tool and how it has helped her better engage students through the creation of interactive videos. To view video of Dr. Ferchaud's experience with the tool, see our [PlayPosit support article](#).

Four Online Grad Programs Rank in Top 20

Four of Florida State University's online graduate programs are ranked in the top 20 nationally, according to *U.S. News & World Report's* [2021 Best Online Programs](#).

The College of Communication and Information's online graduate program in [information technology](#) jumped four spots from its previous ranking, putting it at No. 5 nationally. Among public universities, the program jumped three spots to No. 2. The master's degree is offered by the college's School of Information.



The College of Criminology and Criminal Justice's online graduate program remained ranked at No. 8 in the nation and No. 6 among public universities. The college offers a master's degree in [criminal justice studies](#).

The College of Education's online graduate program stayed steady at No. 15 nationally and No. 14 among public universities. The college's graduate specialty programs ranked among some of the best in the nation. The [instructional systems and learning technologies](#) program maintained its No. 1 ranking, making it the best among both private and public universities. In addition, [curriculum and instruction](#) (No. 4), educational administration and supervision (No. 7), and special education (No. 7) ranked as top 10 individual graduate programs.

The College of Business's non-MBA online graduate program ranked at No. 13 nationally and No. 9 among public universities. This program offers degrees in [management information systems](#) and [risk management and insurance](#). The college's online [MBA program](#) checked in at No. 40 and No. 28 among public institutions. Individual MBA graduate programs, including marketing (No. 14), general management (No. 16), and analytics (No. 16), placed among the top 20 programs in the nation.



"We are very proud to see our online programs consistently positioned so highly in the rankings," said Robert J. Fuselier, Director of the Office of Distance Learning. "The results are judged primarily by the excellence of our students, the expertise of our faculty, and by services and support our instructors and staff provide. To see FSU's programs ranked among the top in the country is a reflection of the incredible effort put forth by the university's dedicated community of educators and students."

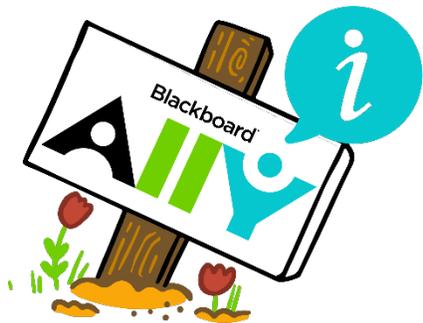
In the two years that veteran programs have been ranked, Florida State University continues to excel in meeting the diverse and unique needs of online veteran learners. The online programs for veterans ranked in the nation's top 25 online graduate programs, with information technology at No. 3, criminal justice at No. 5, education at No. 7, and MBA at No. 23.

The methodology for ranking online programs included five general categories: student engagement, faculty credentials and training, student services and technology, peer reputation, and admissions selectivity.

For more information on all of FSU's online graduate and doctoral programs, visit our [Programs](#) page.

Ally Is Up and Running for All Courses

With the December 2020 launch of [Ally](#) for all courses and organizational sites, instructors have access to a tool that helps ensure course content is accessible to all learners. Working in Canvas, Ally checks images, Canvas pages, uploaded HTML files, and PDF, Word, PowerPoint, and LibreOffice documents for accessibility. Each item is given an accessibility score and instructions on how to correct materials, if necessary. Ally finds common issues such as untagged PDFs, missing headings or titles, and images without descriptions.



To help you target fixes for these issues, Ally features course reports. These reports provide a big-picture view of your course's accessibility and are a great way to see what content needs to be addressed and which edits are the easiest to make. You can learn more about how to use Ally course reports in our [support article](#).

Students benefit because Ally provides them with alternative accessible formats so they can engage with course materials in the format that works best for them. Keep in mind that your students won't see an accessibility score for your course materials. They can view only the alternative formats created for content.

We're here to help as you begin working with Ally:

- **Resources.** For support materials designed to help you make learning more inclusive, visit the [Ally Resource Guide](#). You'll find a video introduction to Ally, [FAQs](#), [quick and easy fixes](#), and more.
- **Training.** You can participate in an Ally webinar to learn about accessibility check meters, alternative format options, and more. [Sign up for a session](#) or check out a [one-on-one consultation](#) for individualized assistance.
- **Technical support.** For help with an Ally-related technical question or issue, [contact our ODL technical support team](#).

Ally Insights from FSU Faculty



The Office of Distance Learning conducted a pilot of Ally in 2019, which involved 349 courses from six colleges/departments and over 40 faculty participants. Dr. JR Harding, teaching faculty in the FSU College of Business, participated in the pilot and shared his experience of working with Ally and how ensuring accessibility benefits everyone:

“As someone who teaches workforce inclusion, 508, and all the other accommodation perspectives, I find the Ally software to be an asset. Its meter image regarding accessibility functionality is most useful. It helps me know in advance that I am leading by example.

Just the other day I was teaching a colleague how to install alt texts into their images. Creating, producing, and sharing accessible documents is simply a win-win for everyone.

If I require my students to produce accessible documents, the least I can do is post accessible documents. Only through our collaborative efforts will the barriers to full inclusion come down. I appreciate the leadership of the Office of Distance Learning and all of those across FSU who are advancing inclusion in all its forms. It's not only the right thing to do, but it's the law.”

Flex Delivery: Strategies and Support

FSU is committed to flexible learning opportunities to accommodate both on-campus and remote students. If your class includes a mix of in-person and remote learners, we have some resources that can help you:

- The [Introduction to FSU Flex](#) webpage provides six steps for flexible course planning.
- The [Strategies for Flexible Course Delivery](#) webpage offers an overview of flexible course teaching.
- The [FSU Flex Teaching module](#) in Canvas serves as a one-stop course planning resource.

You have university partners who are ready to support you with flex teaching. Be sure to reach out to them for assistance:

- [Office of Distance Learning](#)
- [Technology Enhanced Classrooms](#)
- [Program for Instructional Excellence](#)
- [Center for the Advancement of Teaching](#)

Testing Services Update for Spring

The [main campus Testing Center](#) is offering live proctoring services for both face-to-face and [FSU Flex](#) courses this term.

- FSU instructors can request services by completing the [Spring 2021 Instructor Request Form](#).
- We recommend [including our proctored exams sample text](#) in your course syllabus to ensure students have information on testing procedures and policies.
- We are committed to protecting the health and safety of our students and proctors and are closely following all CDC and university health guidelines.

Testing with Honorlock?

While we encourage instructors to use [alternative assessment strategies](#) whenever possible, Honorlock is available for online proctoring of exams, especially for remote students who may have difficulty finding an off-campus testing location.

- If you haven't received training already, we encourage you to register for a [Remote Proctoring for High-Stakes Assessment](#) webinar to learn how to configure your Honorlock settings, set up your Canvas Quiz to work with Honorlock, and access and review exam logs.
- Students seeking an exemption from Honorlock testing are advised to consult their instructor, who can [request in-person proctoring](#) if warranted.
- Find additional information in the [Honorlock Resources for Instructors](#) article.

Scanning Services

Our scanning department is open and provides optical mark scanning for paper-based, multiple-choice exams and surveys. You can order blank forms, review test data, and can now view images of your scanned forms via our online system. Learn more at odl.fsu.edu/scanning.

For questions about testing services, please visit odl.fsu.edu/testing, call [850-644-3017](tel:850-644-3017), or email us at testing@campus.fsu.edu.



Lights, camera, action!

Just a reminder that the ODL Media Production Team is ready to help you with videos for your online or remote courses, whether you're on location or you visit our on-campus production studio. In this shot, Dr. Kim Harris, the Bessie Morgan Marshall Professor in Hospitality Management with the Dedman College of Hospitality, chats with Kool Beanz owner/chef Keith Baxter at the restaurant for the course, HFT 3806: Introduction to Food and Beverage Management. Read more about our [media production](#)

[services](#). For information on coordinating video shoots or other media needs, contact Media Production Administrator D.D. Garbarino at dgarbarino@fsu.edu.

CANVAS FYI



Ally Training Added to Spring Schedule

The Office of Distance Learning is offering [Ally webinars](#) to help instructors get up and running with this powerful tool for inclusive learning. Ally, which was recently enabled for courses in Canvas, helps instructors make course content accessible for all learners. In the webinar, you'll learn about Ally's accessibility check meters and alternative format options for students.

In addition to the Ally sessions, we continue to offer training opportunities from our Remote Teaching series, which cover course templates, module-level objectives, student engagement, assessments, universal design, and instructor presence. (You can access the one-hour video recordings of this series on our [Guide to Remote Teaching](#) page.) Additional workshops will help you manage media in your course site, promote participation with web conferencing tools, and demonstrate how to use library tools in your online courses.

Register now

You can sign up for any of these workshops on our [Training & Workshops](#) page. For more customized assistance, check out our [one-on-one online consultations](#) via Zoom.

Designate Your Canvas Sub-account Admin

To take advantage of valuable communication and reporting tools for your college or department, consider designating a Canvas sub-account administrator. Canvas is a robust source for data that can help your department create goals, measure progress, and communicate more effectively.

A sub-account admin helps your department to:

- Provide department-level technical support
- Post department-wide announcements via the Canvas dashboard
- Provide a mechanism for searching for and accessing courses within your specific sub-account
- Access the Ally Institutional Report, which in turns allows you to:
 - Obtain a big-picture view of how accessible your sub-account's course content is through data and visualizations
 - Drill down and determine specific course content that needs more attention
 - Directly fix content in courses if applicable

How to Designate a Sub-Account Admin

If you're a dean or department chair, you can designate one or more Canvas sub-account administrators by emailing ODL Business Analyst Dewel Lindsey at dlindsey@campus.fsu.edu. Please be sure to include the full name, email, FSUID, college, and department for anyone you'd like to designate as a sub-account administrator.

Canvas Release Notes

In the [January release notes](#) from Canvas, you'll find a design and functionality update of the buttons that manage feature flags at the account, course, and user levels. This change allows administrators to better operate subaccount- and course-level feature defaults. The notes also mention the New Rich Content Editor (RCE) has become the default editor for all Canvas users. Because FSU has been using this updated version of the RCE since May 2020, this adjustment does not affect FSU Canvas users.

An updated feature for February allows users to use mathematical equations in more areas of Canvas and manage equations more effectively. For example, users can now enter LaTeX equations in any Canvas text field. Read about additional features in the [February release notes](#).

TOOLS & TECHNOLOGY

Tool Helps with Name Pronunciation

As instructors welcome new students each semester, NameCoach can help enhance engagement by making it easy to communicate the pronunciation of faculty or student names. In a time of remote learning, NameCoach promotes respect, diversity, and inclusion by ensuring an accurate audio pronunciation of names in a classroom setting.

 **namecoach** NameCoach integrates within Canvas and allows both you and your students to log in and record your names, which will be stored in the system. To get started, you'll first need to enable NameCoach on your course's navigation menu. This gives students the capability of adding an audio pronunciation of their name. For instructions, as well as how to create a NameCoach recording assignment, read our [support article](#). If you have questions about using the tool, please call [850-644-8004](tel:850-644-8004), email canvas@fsu.edu, or [submit a ticket](#).

Hypothesis Available through August 2021

 **hypothes.is** [Hypothesis](#) is an annotation tool available for use in Canvas through August 2021. With Hypothesis, your students can annotate online course readings and webpages, encouraging them to connect and engage with the content and their peers. The tool is intended to help with student engagement, reading comprehension, and the development of critical thinking skills.

To provide you with strategies to implement annotation in your courses, Hypothesis offers the following online workshops. Click on the link to register for the session that best fits your schedule.

- **Implementing Social Annotation with Hypothesis.** This workshop focuses on developing a supportive learning environment for using social annotation. You'll learn the steps for encouraging students to create annotations to enhance their own learning.
 - [Tuesday, February 16, 9 am PST](#) (12 pm EST)
 - [Monday, February 22, 12 pm PST](#) (3 pm EST)
- **Using Hypothesis with Small Groups.** This workshop explores how to use Hypothesis in small groups and how social annotation can foster a collaborative learning environment.
 - [Thursday, February 18, 10 am PST](#) (1 pm EST)
 - [Wednesday, February 24, 11 am PST](#) (2 pm EST)

For ideas on how to use Hypothesis in your Canvas course, see this resource on [10 ways to annotate with students](#).

Collaboration at Core of Online Tool



Padlet is an online tool for student engagement and collaborative learning. Instructors can create a padlet—a type of digital bulletin board—to share content with their students, and students can work together on projects, assignments, and activities. With Padlet, you can post documents, files, images, and videos, and embed content from the web, including YouTube, Twitter, and other apps.

The user-friendly tool integrates within Canvas and is available for use in all FSU courses. For information on logging in to FSU Padlet, see our [support article](#). You can find how-to guides, FAQs, and presentations on the [Padlet support](#) page. For knowledge base articles, visit the [Padlet Help Center](#).

Zoom Updates Help Ensure Effective Meetings

Zoom remains an essential tool for delivering online course content that requires synchronous interactions. If you're using Zoom in your remote classes, these updates can help ensure a successful experience:

- ITS created a new option in Zoom that allows the meeting host to [restrict course meetings to only FSU users](#) in order to reduce the possibility of Zoom-bombing in course meetings. This restriction does require that all attendees log in to their FSU-provided Zoom account before they will be allowed to join the meeting. We've updated our [join Zoom course meetings](#) article to advise that students log into their FSU accounts as a best practice regardless of the meeting settings.
- It is now possible for instructors to use [breakout rooms that allow students to self-select the rooms](#) they join instead of having to assign all students to specific rooms. This may be helpful for instructors who wish to use breakout rooms and have had difficulty in the past. However, it is important for students to sign into their FSU Zoom account before joining the meeting and also to use the Zoom desktop app rather than joining only within their web browser.
- We recommend FSU instructors ensure their emails in their Canvas account and their FSU Zoom account match. This tip helps if you're teaching for the first time since last spring or earlier (e.g., because of sabbatical), or if you're new faculty teaching at FSU for the first time.

For more information on Zoom and other remote teaching tools, see [Facilitating Learning Remotely](#).

Support Articles

Check out the latest articles from our [Canvas Support Center](#):

- [How to restrict courses to FSU Zoom users only](#)
- [How to use Ally Institutional Reports](#)
- [How to use Ally Course Report feature](#)
- [How to use Microsoft Teams to facilitate a virtual course meeting](#)

ODDS & ENDS

Conferences

- [OLC Innovate: Education Reimagined](#), March 15-19, 2021. Fully online conference presented by Online Learning Consortium and MERLOT. Registration is now open.
- [Florida Online Innovation Summit](#), March 23-24, 2021, and [TOPkit Workshop](#), March 25-26, 2021. Both live virtual events hosted by the University of Central Florida. Free for higher education professionals in the State University System of Florida and Florida College System.
- [UPCEA Annual Conference](#), April 7-9, 2021. Virtual event presented by the University and Professional Continuing Education Association. Early registration is now open.

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