iCONLOGiC ™

Adobe Captivate 8:
The Essentials

"Skills and Drills" Learning

Kevin Siegel

How Software Updates Affect This Book

This book was written specifically to teach you how to use **Adobe Captivate version 8.0**. At the time this book was written, Captivate 8 was the latest and greatest version of the Captivate software available from Adobe.

With each major release of Captivate, my intention is to write a new book to support that version and make it available within 30-60 days of the software being released by Adobe. From time to time, Adobe makes service releases/patches of Captivate available for customers that fix bugs or add functionality. For instance, I would expect Adobe to update Captivate 8 with a patch or two within a few months of Captivate 8 being released. That patched version might be called Captivate **8.01** or **8.1**. Usually these updates are minor (bug fixes) and have little or no impact on the lessons presented in this book. However, every so often Adobe makes significant changes to the way Captivate looks or behaves, even with minor patches. (Such was the case when Adobe updated Captivate from version 5 to 5.5—about a dozen features were added, and a few panels were actually renamed, throwing readers of my books into a tizzy.)

Because it is not possible for me to recall and update printed books, some instructions you are asked to follow in this book may not match the patched/updated version of Captivate that you might be using. If something on your screen does not match what I am showing in the book, please visit the Adobe Captivate 8 product page on my website for possible updates (http://www.iconlogic.com/adobe-captivate-8-essentials-workbook.html).

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Barbara Ash (www.urgoal.com) provided the **PhotoshopVignette** project you will work with beginning on page 130. Barbara is an Adobe Certified Instructor and Adobe Design Specialist. For the past 20 years, she has been teaching Adobe applications and consulting with companies and organizations of all types.

Jill McGillen (www.nextturnconsulting.com) donated the **Introduction** project you will work with beginning on page 82. Jill's company, Next Turn Consulting, is a training company specializing in improving communication, leadership, and results.

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Budgeting Considerations

Many new Captivate developers underestimate the time needed to produce projects. Although it is certainly easier and faster to create eLearning content than ever before, it still takes time. To determine your level of effort, the first thing you need to know is how long you want your eLearning course to play. And you really need to know the total play time in minutes. Once you have that number, you can calculate your level of effort.

For the sake of argument, let's calculate how long it's going to take you to produce a 60-minute eLearning course. Because you don't want to create a single project that, when published, plays for 60 minutes, it's ideal to break the 60 minutes of content into chunks. I'd suggest that each chunk play for no more than five minutes. That means you will have 12, five-minute lessons.

If you need to write the content for the course (somebody has to), you'll need a script and/or storyboard, and, if there's voiceover audio, you'll need a voiceover script. **Storyboards** are rough sketches that show the general content of your project, slide by slide. If your projects contain more screen shots of an application than captions, a storyboard is a good idea. **Scripts** are detailed step-by-step procedures. These are ideal if your project will contain a significant number of Text Captions. **Voiceover scripts** are important because you don't want the narrator simply reading aloud the text displayed on the screen. Studies have shown that a narrator simply reading the text being displayed is a distraction to the learner.

It could take at least three hours to write a script to support a five-minute eLearning lesson. Therefore, you should budget at least 36 hours to write the entire one-hour eLearning course (12x3=36). Depending on how fast you write, you could easily double those hours, meaning you may need to budget 80 hours for writing.

You can and should use a Captivate project template when creating content in Captivate. A template is essentially a completed shell project that you will use as the basis of all of your projects. It's not difficult to create a template, but it takes time. An ideal template contains placeholders, an introduction slide, transitional slides, a conclusion slide, a skin, and appropriate Start and End Properties (although these terms may seem foreign to you now, you will learn about many of them as you move through lessons presented in this book).

In my experience, writing a voiceover script is easier than writing a step-by-step main script (voiceover scripts typically take me 50 percent less time to write). If you spent 80 hours writing the script, you should budget 40 hours to write the voiceover script. Once the voiceover script is done, you'll also need to include time for recording the audio narration (voice-overs), making corrections to the script post-rehearsal, resetting the stage prior to recording, and recording the lessons using Captivate (the recording time should take the same amount of time as the process being recorded).

As I mentioned above, at two hours of production for every minute of eLearning, it could easily take 10 hours to produce a five-minute Captivate lesson. During the production process, you will likely need to add and/or edit text captions (which you will learn about beginning on page 64). Typical Captivate projects include interactive objects such as click boxes (page 173), buttons (page 31), and text entry boxes (page 177). And a typical lesson should include a quiz to measure learner comprehension of the content (you will learn about quizzes beginning on page 193).

During the production process, you'll likely add audio clips to the project's background, individual slides, and even objects on individual slides. It's also likely that you'll either record voiceover audio (or use Captivate's Text to Speech feature to

Soft Skills eLearning

You can create two types of eLearning with Captivate: software simulations or soft skills lessons. A software simulation is essentially a recording of step-by-step actions performed on a computer. You can use Captivate to create interactive software simulations (often referred to as "Let Me Try" lessons), demonstrations (often referred to as "Show Me" lessons, and videos (much like the kind you've likely seen on YouTube).

Soft Skills eLearning encompasses anything that doesn't fall into the category of a software simulation or demonstration. Over the years, I've helped my clients develop soft skills lessons covering all kinds of topics, including terrorism awareness, compliance training, conflict resolution, and policies and procedures. Anything that's a life skill would fall into the category of soft skills.
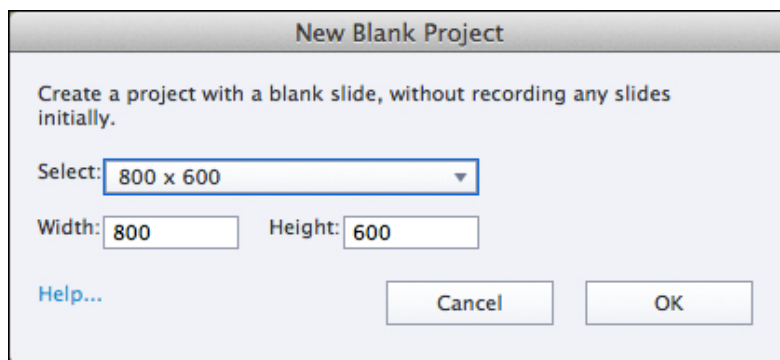
During the lessons in this module, you will create a soft skills lesson that introduces employees of an ultra-hip company called Super Simplistic Solutions. Okay, it's a fake company... I made it up. The managers you will add to the lesson don't exist either. Fake content or not, the lesson you are about to create includes multiple slides, text, images, and buttons that allow the learner to move through the lesson at their own pace. It doesn't get much more real than that, so buckle up and let's get going.

Student Activity: Create a Blank Project

1. Create a blank project.

   ❏ using Adobe Captivate, choose **File > New Project > Blank Project**

   The New Blank Project dialog box opens.

2. Specify a Width and Height for the project.

   ❏ from the **Select** drop-down menu, choose **800 x 600**

New Blank Project
Create a project with a blank slide, without recording any slides initially.

   Select: 800 x 600

   Width: 800   Height: 600

   Help...   Cancel   OK

   ❏ click the **OK** button

   The new project is created. It currently contains only a single slide.

3. Save the new project.

   ❏ choose **File > Save**

   ❏ name the project **OurManagers** and save it to the Captivate8Data folder

Preparing to Record

Typical Captivate projects consist of multiple slides, similar to Microsoft PowerPoint. You can create a blank Captivate project and insert slides, just like you learned to do beginning on page 24. If you need pictures of a software application, you can use any one of several programs to create screen captures. For instance, I use SnagIt (**www.snagit.com**) and FullShot (**www.fullshot.com**). In fact, SnagIt for Mac and FullShot for Windows were used to create the screen captures in this book. Any screen captures you create using a screen capture application can easily be inserted onto a Captivate slide as a slide object as an image.

Most people who create software simulations and demonstrations use Captivate to create the screen captures. There are three recording types: Automatic, Manual, and Video. If you use Captivate's Automatic recording type, Captivate captures the steps you take on your computer by creating a screen capture every time you click your mouse (you can left click or right click to get a screen capture). There are four Automatic capture modes: Demonstration, Assessment Simulation, Training Simulation, and Custom. Each mode is covered during this module.

If you create projects using the Manual recording type, you are responsible for pressing a specific key on your keyboard each time you want Captivate to create a screen capture (the default key is the Print Screen key in Windows). The problem with recording projects using the Manual Recording method is that you need to be very diligent about pressing the screen capture key on your keyboard. You could easily get distracted and forget to capture important screens, rendering your recording useless and requiring you to recapture some or all of your clicks.

Using the Video recording type, Captivate does not capture individual screens like the Automatic and Manual types. Instead, when the capture process is finished, you end up with a single video demonstrating everything you have done during the recording process. A video recording is ideal if you are trying to create an eLearning lesson demonstrating complex mouse actions (like those that would be required when drawing a shape in an image-editing application). However, editing a video is more limited as compared to editing individual screen captures typical in projects created using the Automatic or Manual recording types.

In the images below, both the Automatic and Manual recording types are shown at the left. Video mode is shown at the right. (**Note:** The Automatic and Manual modes are covered in this book. Recording using the Video recording type is covered in *Adobe Captivate 8: Beyond the Essentials*.)
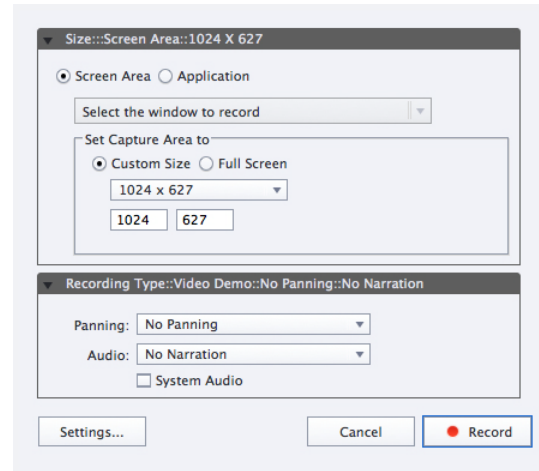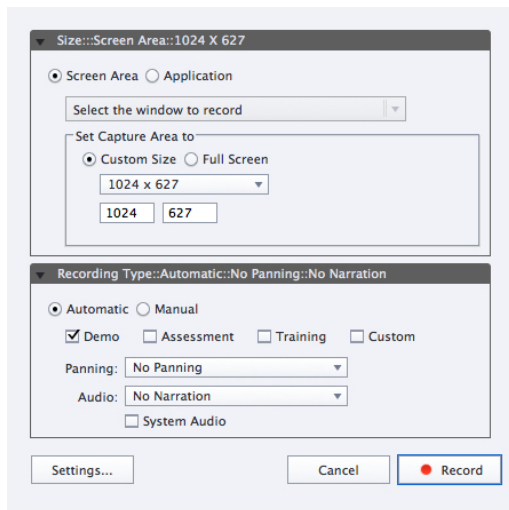
Manual Recordings

If you've stepped through all of the activities in this module, you've now used every recording option in Captivate except two—Manual mode and Video mode (Video Mode is covered in *Adobe Captivate 8: Beyond the Essentials*). In most instances, recording screen actions using Captivate's Automatic Recording type gets the job done for you. However, you will come across some applications where attempting to record automatically does not work (some applications won't get along with Captivate and prove difficult to record). This is a perfect opportunity to use Captivate's Manual recording type.

Student Activity: Manually Record the Screen

1. Ensure that Captivate is still running (no projects should be open).

2. Rehearse the lesson you are going to record.

   ❐ return to the Disney website: **www.disney.com**

   ❐ point, but don't click on some of the links on the Disney site

   You'd like to capture the process of pointing to site objects, but recording the action with Captivate is going to be difficult because it takes mouse clicks to create screen captures.

   Note: If you are running a screen capture utility (such as SnagIt), disable or close it prior to trying to record manually with Captivate. If a competing screen capture application is running, that program will grab screen captures instead of Captivate.

3. Display the recording control panel.

   ❐ return to Captivate and create a new **Software Simulation**

4. Select the Disney site as the Application to record.

   ❐ from the top of the control panel, select **Application**

   ❐ from the Select window drop-down menu, choose the Disney site

   ❐ from the Snap to area, select **Custom Size**

   ❐ from the next drop-down menu, choose **640 x 480** (if necessary)
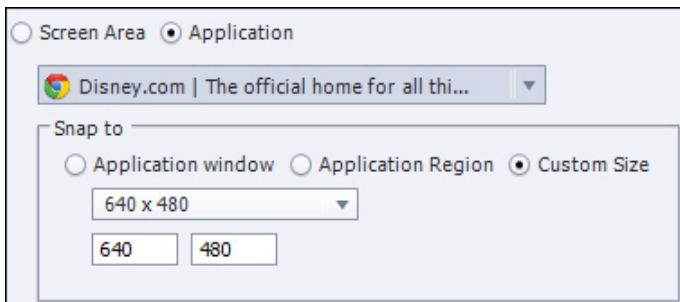
Text Captions

Text Captions are typically used to explain a concept being shown on screen. You can have multiple text captions on the same slide, and you can control how the captions look, where they appear on the slide, and when they appear (via the Timeline or the Properties Inspector).

Student Activity: Insert and Edit Text Captions

1. Using Adobe Captivate 8, open the **CaptionMe** project from the **Captivate8Data** folder.

2. Reset the Classic workspace.

    ❏ choose **Window > Workspace > Reset Classic**

    By resetting the Classic workspace, any inspectors or toolbars that you might have opened during previous lessons in this book are put away, and your Captivate window should be clutter-free.

3. Preview the lesson.

    ❏ choose **Preview > Project**

    This project is a demonstration that was recorded using Captivate's Demonstration mode (you learned how to create a software demonstration beginning on page 46). The lesson demonstrates the process of creating a new folder on a Windows-based computer. It's a perfectly fine demonstration, but there are no Text Captions telling the learner what's about to happen or why. During the next several activities, you will learn how to add Text Captions to several slides. You will also learn how to control the appearance of the captions and when they appear on the slide.
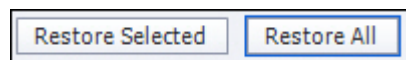
4. Close the Preview.

5. Show Captivate's Preferences.

    ❏ Windows users, choose **Edit > Preferences**; Mac users, choose **Adobe Captivate > Preferences**

6. Restore the timing and style defaults used for inserted objects.

    ❏ from the top of the **Category** list at the left, select **Defaults**

    ❏ from the **Object Defaults** area, click the **Restore All** button

Restore Selected	Restore All

    By clicking the Restore All button, any objects you insert into your Captivate projects (such as Text Captions) use the default timing and appearance specified by Adobe when Captivate was first installed on your computer. You will learn how to change the timing and style used by objects as you move through lessons in this book.

    ❏ click the **OK** button

Transitions Confidence Check

1. Preview the project.

2. Notice that the slideshow works, the photos are wonderful, but the slides move along just a bit too quickly.

3. Close the preview.

4. On the Filmstrip, select the first slide.

5. Scroll down the Filmstrip until you see the last slide.

6. Press [**shift**] and select the last slide. (All of the slides should now be selected, and you can release the [**shift**] key.)

7. Change the Slide Duration for all of the slides to **5** seconds.

PROPERTIES	TIMING
Slide Duration : 5 sec	
No Transition ▼	
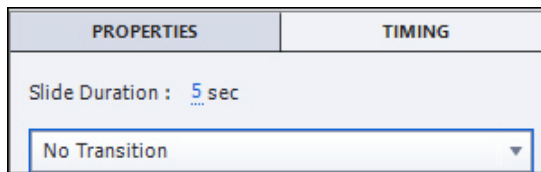
8. Preview the project.

   The timing is better. But wouldn't it be even better to have a transition between one slide and the next? You bet…

9. Select the first slide on the Filmstrip.

10. From the **Transition** drop-down menu on the Timing Inspector, select any **Transition** you like.

PROPERTIES	TIMING
Slide Duration : 5 sec	
Zoom ▼	
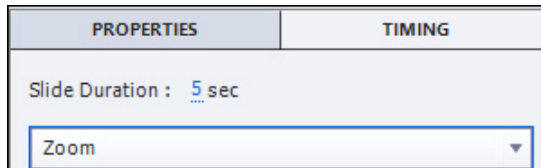
11. Repeat this process for a few more of the slides.

12. When finished, preview the project.

13. Once satisfied with the transitions, close the project. (You can save the project to the Captivate8Data folder with any name that you like, or you can close the project without saving it.)

Highlight Boxes

In addition to serving as background masks (you learned how to create a mask on page 100), Highlight Boxes provide a great way to grab the learner's attention... they are especially helpful if a slide is cluttered. Like most objects in Captivate, you can control the appearance of Highlight Boxes via Object Styles the length of time they are on stage via the Timeline or the Timing Inspector on the Properties panel.

Student Activity: Clone an Object Style

1. Ensure that the **PointerPathMe** project is still open.

2. Clone an existing style.

   ❑ choose **Edit > Object Style Manager**

   ❑ at the far left of the dialog box, click the triangle to expand the **Standard Objects** area

   ❑ select **Highlight Box**

   ❑ from the middle column, select **[Default Blue Highlight Box Style]**

   ❑ at the bottom of the column, click the **Clone** button

   The selected style has been duplicated. You can now give the duplicate any name you like and then edit its attributes.

   ❑ in the Name area at the right, change the name to **Custom Highlight Box Style**

   ❑ from the **Fill & Stroke** area, select any Fill, Stroke Color, and Width you like

   ❑ change the Transition to **Fade In Only**
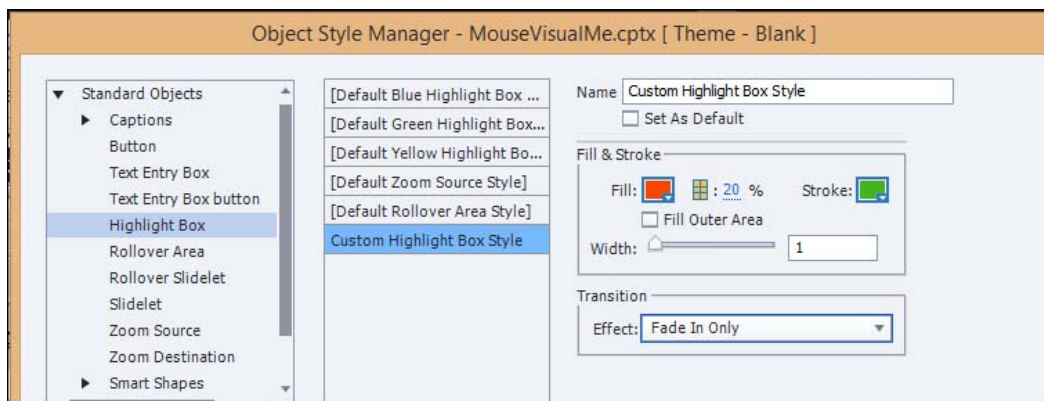
   ❑ click the **OK** button

Object Audio

You can import two types of audio files into a Captivate project: WAV and MP3. You can add audio to just about anything. During the activity that follows, you will import audio to some rollover captions and rollover images.

WAV (WAVE): WAV files are one of the original digital audio standards. Although high in quality, WAV files can be very large. In fact, typical WAV audio files can easily take up to *several megabytes of storage per minute* of playing time. If your learner has a slow Internet connection, the download time for large files is unacceptable.

MP3 (MPEG Audio Layer III): Developed in Germany by the Fraunhofer Institute, MP3 files are compressed digital audio files. File sizes in this format are typically 90 percent smaller than WAV files.

> **Note:** To learn more about digital audio formats, visit **www.webopedia.com/DidYouKnow/Computer_Science/2005/ digital_audio_formats.asp**.

Student Activity: Import Audio onto a Slide Object

1. Using Captivate, open **AudioMe** from the Captivate8Data folder.

2. Add a sound effect to a Rollover Caption.

   ❑ go to slide **2** and select the **Excellent, you hit number 1!** caption

   ❑ choose **Audio > Import to > Object**

   The Import Audio dialog box opens. By default, you should be taken to the Sound folder that comes with Captivate. (If not, navigate to the folder where Captivate is installed (typically Program Files/Adobe/Adobe Captivate 8 on Windows; Applications/Adobe Captivate 8 on a Macintosh. Open the **Gallery** folder and then open the **Sound** folder.)

   | « Adobe ▸ Adobe Captivate 8 x64 ▸ Gallery ▸ Sound ▸ | ∨ |
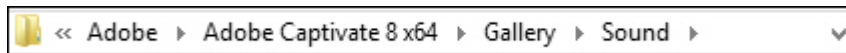
   ❑ open **Electronic Tink.mp3**

   The Object Audio dialog box opens.

3. Preview the sound.

   ❑ on the Add/Replace tab, click the **Play** button to hear the audio clip
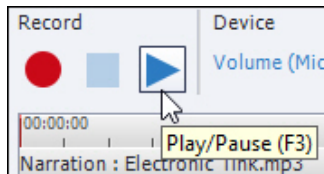
   ❑ click the **Close** button

   The audio file is attached to the selected caption.

Slide Notes

Slide Notes can serve multiple functions. For instance, if you are working with a team of Captivate developers and sharing the Captivate projects, you can add Slide Notes that serve as production comments. If you elect to publish your project as a Word document (handouts), the Notes can be included and appear within the Word document. And because Slide Notes can be displayed when you record voiceovers in Captivate, you can use the Slide Notes as a digital narration script. During the next activity, you will use the Slide Notes feature to add a narration script that you will use when recording your voice (something you will do soon).

Student Activity: Add a Slide Note

1. Using Captivate, open **NarrateMe** from the Captivate8Data folder.

2. Open the Slide Notes panel.

   ☐ go to slide **2**

   ☐ choose **Window > Slide Notes**

   At the bottom of the slide, there is now a Slide Notes panel where you can add Closed Captions, convert Text-to-Speech, and add Notes.

   ☐ at the far right of the Slide Notes panel, ensure **Notes** is selected from the drop-down menu
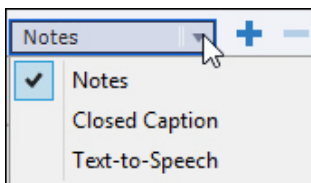
3. Add a slide Note.

   ☐ click in the space below the triangle and type **Learning to use your mouse is a fundamental computer skill. Practice those skills now by pointing to the numbers that have appeared on this screen.**
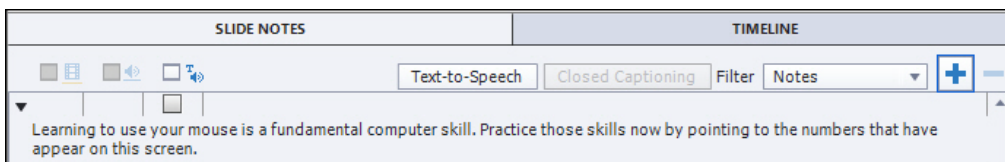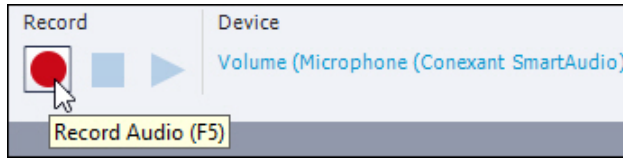
   During the next activity, you'll soon use the slide note as a narration script when you record voiceover audio.

❏ click the **Record** button in the upper left of the slide Audio dialog box

❏ after the countdown goes away, take your time and read the slide Note again: **Learning to use your mouse is a fundamental computer skill. Practice those skills now by pointing to the numbers that have appeared on this screen.**

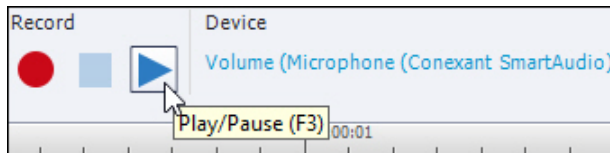❏ when finished, click the **Stop** button (located just to the right of the Record button)
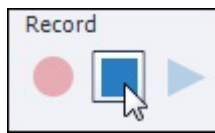
❏ click the **OK** button to close the Caption and Slide Notes dialog box

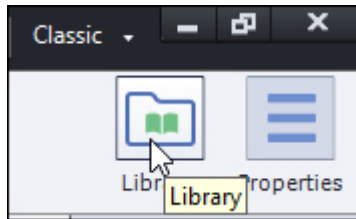Your recorded audio appears as a waveform.
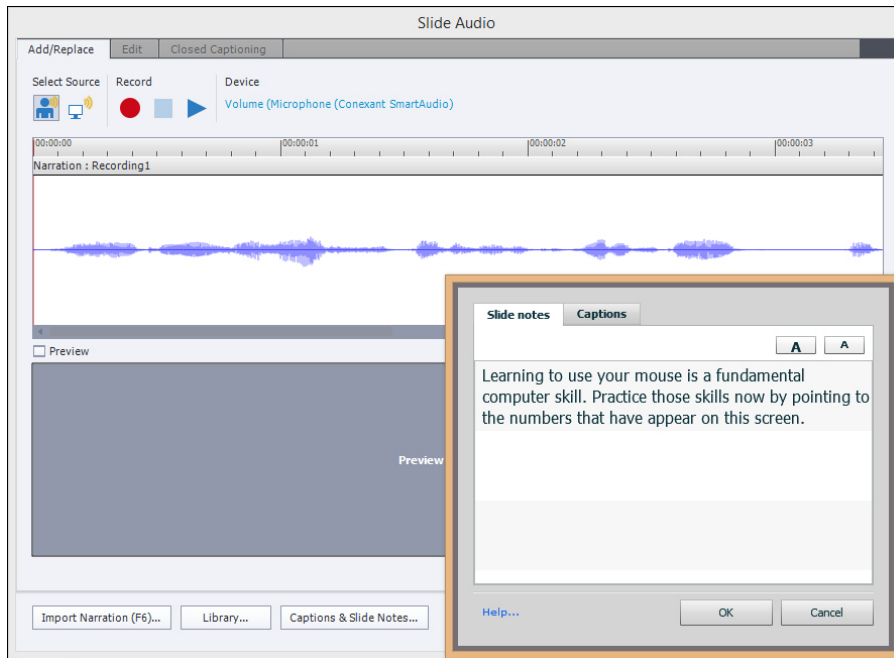
4. Preview the audio.

❏ click the **Play Audio** button, located to the right of the Stop button

6. Open the Library.

   ❑ at the far right of the Captivate window, click **Library**

   On the Library, notice that there is a **Status** column (you may need to resize the Library to see the Status column). The red button indicates that the S3_Policies presentation within the Captivate project is no longer synchronized with the PowerPoint presentation. (The changes you just made to the presentation have not yet been reflected in the Captivate project.)
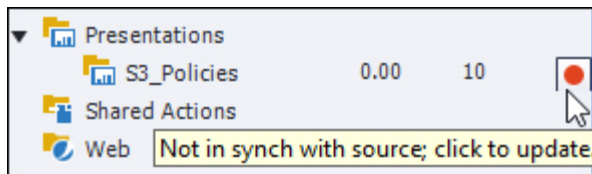
7. Synchronize with source.

   ❑ click the **Red** button

   The edited PowerPoint slides are updated in the Captivate project. On the Library, the color of the button in the Status column changes from red to green.

   Note: Be patient as the update process progresses. Depending on the speed of your computer, the process could take a few moments.

   ❑ go to slide 3 of the Captivate project

   Notice that the edits you made in the PowerPoint presentation appear on the Captivate slide.
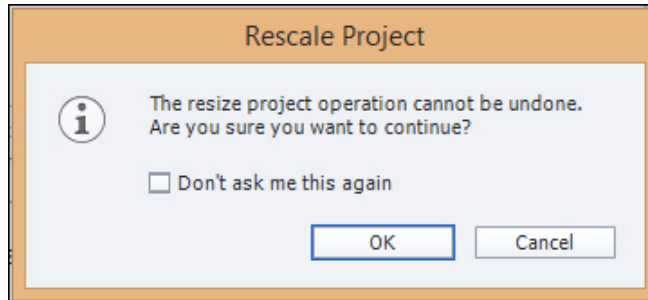
8. Save your work.

   Note: If you no longer want the PowerPoint presentation in your project to be linked to the original PowerPoint presentation, you can **embed** the presentation in your project. On the Library, right-click the presentation and choose **Change to Embedded**. Once embedded, the size of your Captivate project increases significantly and you are no longer able to receive updates from the original PowerPoint presentation. If you change your mind, you can restore the link to the original presentation by right-clicking the presentation on the Library and choosing **Change to Linked**.

Although just about everything in the project comes directly from the PowerPoint presentation, there are click boxes on every slide. Thanks to the Rescale options, each of those click boxes is going to resize proportionally to the new size of the project.

❒ click the **Finish** button

A warning appears. As mentioned earlier, you cannot undo this step. However, if you are not satisfied with the results, you can close the project without saving.

Rescale Project

(i) The resize project operation cannot be undone.
Are you sure you want to continue?

☐ Don't ask me this again

OK   Cancel

❒ click the **OK** button

The project's slides are now much larger. And while the appearance of the text might not look all that great (things may look a bit jagged), let's see how things look when you preview the project.

Rescaling Confidence Check

1. Preview the project.

2. As you move from slide to slide, notice that the quality of the slides is actually quite good (astonishing, considering that you rescaled the project to make it significantly larger).

   Note: Although the quality of the rescale worked with this particular project, keep in mind that rescaling can lead to a loss of image quality.
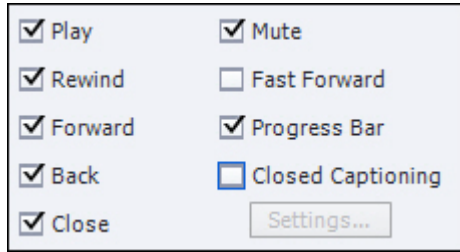
3. Close the preview.

4. Close the project (there is no need to save it).

Student Activity: Edit, Save, and Delete a Skin

1. Ensure that the **FinishMe** project is still open.

2. Remove an unnecessary control from the playbar.

   ❑ with the Skin Editor still open (Project or Window menu), ensure **Pearls** is selected from the **Skin** drop-down menu

   ❑ from the lower left of the Skin Editor window, remove the check mark from **Closed Captioning**

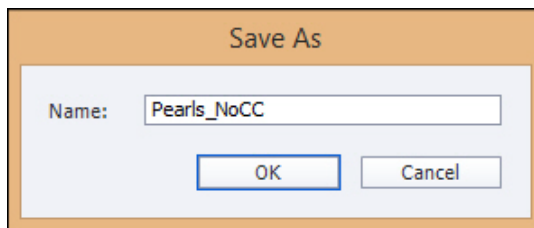 | | |
   |---|---|
   | ☑ Play | ☑ Mute |
   | ☑ Rewind | ☐ Fast Forward |
   | ☑ Forward | ☑ Progress Bar |
   | ☑ Back | ☐ Closed Captioning |
   | ☑ Close | Settings... |

   Because this project does not have any closed captions, the Closed Captioning option is not needed. (Closed Captions are important; they are covered in *Adobe Captivate 8: Beyond the Essentials.*)

3. Save the modifications to the skin as a new skin.

   ❑ click the **Save As** button

   Skin: Pearls (Modified) ▼ 🖫 🗑
   ▶ ☐ ☰ Save As...

   The Save As dialog box opens.

   ❑ change the name to **Pearls_NoCC**

   Save As
   Name: Pearls_NoCC
   OK   Cancel

   ❑ click the **OK** button