Checking Out Video Creativity:

A Pilot Program for Circulating Digital Licenses to a Cloud-Based Video Editor

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Abstract:

A two-year pilot program at an academic library tested a system developed in-library for digitally provisioning library users with semester-long licenses to access a student-oriented commercial cloud-based collaborative video editing tool and explored the development of related learning resources and instructional sessions. This program aimed to mitigate instructional and equity challenges associated with video editing programs that cannot be used across operating systems or that require high-performance computers. A literature review considers the role of libraries in facilitating multimodal composition and as spaces of creative democracy. Collected usage and survey data (n=111) reveal a strongly positive user response to this tool and library service. Significant obstacles, including accessibility problems, were encountered during the pilot study. However, subsequent platform improvements may have mitigated or resolved many of these challenges.

Checking Out Video Creativity:

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This article describes the results of a two-year pilot program in which the Libraries at Miami University, in Oxford, Ohio, sought to support multimodal creativity by allowing students and faculty to "check out" digital licenses to a commercial cloud-based collaborative digital video editing platform (WeVideo) for a semester at a time. It also describes the deployment of this editing tool, including the provision of instructional support for its users, and considers usage data from this platform and the results of a survey (n=111) of students and faculty users on how they used this tool and about their attitudes toward library support for video editing and creation. The general response to the platform and the lending program was positive, with 78% of the responses reporting a positive assessment, 7% reporting negative assessments, and 14% unsure or neutral. More than 91% of the respondents agreed that universities should provide instruction in video editing, and more than 96% agreed that universities should provide access to video editing tools.

This pilot program will be considered in the broader context of a historical shift among libraries toward 1) providing access to digital audio and video content, and 2) providing tools and support for the creative transformation of information, in addition to providing access to information itself. This change in library practice is considered in relation to analogous changes in composition studies, as writing and composition instructors have moved to encourage and support learners in creating video and other multimodal content in addition to alphabetic texts.

Literature Review and Background

The disciplines of librarianship and composition studies have both inherited practices and norms that were shaped over time by the affordances of written and printed alphabetic texts. In developing their collections, libraries have traditionally focused on print materials (and more recently, the digital equivalents of print materials), while writing and composition instructors have in the past usually asked students to create written texts, whether using pen and paper, typewriters, or word processors. Yet librarians and writing instructors have also shared a long-standing interest in the potential of audiovisual technologies to disrupt traditional models of service and instruction and to enable new forms of creativity and social participation.

In the last decade, academic libraries have undergone a dramatic shift in the amount of streaming digital content they provide to their users. A 2022 Ithaka S+R survey found that at least 94% of academic libraries provide digital streaming media to their users.[1] Although this trend was likely accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic,[2] it seems likely to continue, with significant impacts on library collection budgets over time: libraries predict that "the proportion of their materials budget dedicated to streaming media will double over the next five years."[3]

This sudden move toward providing a greater range and quantity of streaming digital video in some ways represents the fulfillment of an idea described in the early twentieth century: that "libraries of the future" would feature video content, using "moving picture machines" to "stimulate youthful brains," with the aid of Thomas Edison's motion picture technology.[4] In the early twentieth century, many saw the importance of motion pictures for libraries as likely to increase, with an expectation that "every well-equipped library, every school and every private family will have moving picture equipment in their possession."[5] The shift toward the provision of streaming media by libraries thus represents the fulfillment of technological possibilities imagined long ago, and might be understood, optimistically, as a move toward a future in which

academic libraries "embrace connecting with their campus communities to foster consumption, production, curation, preservation, collaboration, and inquiry among cultural resources."[6] I have argued elsewhere that such practices, in which libraries provide access to content, and also systematically support the social creativity of their users across multiple domains, could be usefully conceptualized through an information creativity instructional and service model.[7]

However, the recent shift in library spending and improved access to video and multimedia content has tended to favor video content consumption rather than creation, since the purchasing of streaming licenses from commercial sources such as Kanopy, Swank, and ProQuest has far outstripped library investment in tools for the creation or distribution of patron-created video and audio content. Reliable data on library investment in support of video creativity is scarce; however, the ACRL *Guidelines for Media Resources in Academic Libraries* (last revised in 2018) focus almost entirely on providing access to video content, barely mentioning resources supporting video creation, although noting in passing that "access to media resources may also require [. . .] equipment required for playback, production, and editing individually and in groups,"[8] indicative of a relative lack of focus in this area.

The increasing availability of streaming content from public and academic libraries can be regarded as beneficial in many ways. For example, it represents progress toward the ALA's Freedom-to-View statement on media access.[9] However, the recent growth in providing access to content, as opposed to video creation resources, calls to mind the caution offered by progressive educators such as John Dewey in the early twentieth century about the notion of "Edisonized" motion picture education: that without the "actual doing" of creation, the mere exposure to content can result in education that becomes a mere "pouring-in process," that fails to provide learners with opportunities for active and intrinsically motivated learning.[10]

Indeed, the dangers of providing video content without corresponding support for video creativity can perhaps be suggested by another early twentieth-century figure: W.D. Griffiths. In 1915, Griffiths, whose racist and misleading historical epic *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) had only recently debuted, described the instructive power of moving images in the library of the future:

> Imagine a public library of the near future, for instance. There will be long rows of boxes or pillars, properly classified and indexed, of course, at each box a push-button and before each box a seat. Suppose you wish to 'read up' on a certain episode in Napoleon's life [. . .] you will merely seat yourself at a properly adjusted window, in a scientifically prepared room, press the button, and actually see what happened.[11]

This prediction of Griffiths, who was, of course, a propagandist, is both visionary and disturbing in its suggestion that visitors to the library of the future will be able to push a button to "see what actually happened" in history, and can serve as a reminder of the importance of democratizing media creation and disrupting hierarchical and oppressive media systems.

Librarians have often expressed a desire for libraries to play a role in more equitable and democratic forms of media production and dissemination. For example, a 1976 article by Denis LaComb in the *Library Journal* observed that, in the era of the VCR, libraries were in the midst of "a telecommunications revolution," that would "allow average citizens access to video equipment and production tools," that could in turn foster new "gatherings where citizens can exchange ideas and generate action within the community."[12] These themes were articulated more systematically in the early 2000s by the Edge Initiative, a coalition of library and educational institutions[13] that received support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and produced a tool to assess library technology, including video and audio editing software. A *Report on Digital and Media Literacy* shared by the Initiative described the importance of video creativity in civic terms:

> Today full participation in contemporary culture requires not just consuming messages, but also creating and sharing them. To fulfill the promise of digital citizenship, Americans must acquire multimedia communication skills that include the ability to compose messages using language, graphic design, images, and sound, and know how to use these skills to engage in the civic life of their communities.[14]

As Katie Day Good has observed, it is important to view recommendations about instructional technologies offered by corporate-affiliated groups, such as the Gates Foundation, with appropriate skepticism.[15] However, the stated goal of the Edge Initiative, to provide communities with resources for creating and distributing multimedia content, seems worth revisiting, perhaps in concert with community-based media creation and distribution, or as "hubs for deliberative democracy"[16] rather than as suggested by the Gates Foundation.

At the same time as libraries have begun providing more access to digital content, teachers of college composition have emphasized a gradual "turn" toward multimodal instruction and sought to develop practices within academic writing programs that support learners in becoming skilled and thoughtful creators of compositions that are "made not only of words."[17] Advocates of multimodal instruction have argued that writing programs must revise practices to more fully reflect the fact that students in the 21st century are "sign-makers who select from a number of modalities of expression (including sound, image, and animation, for example), depending on rhetorical and material contexts."[18] In a widely cited address delivered in 2004 at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in San Antonio, Kathleen Yancey called for a "tectonic change" within writing studies, which would create conditions for a "writing public made plural," that could foster social change by supporting a more comprehensive range of communication practices.[19] In 2014, growing support for multimodal approaches resulted in the adoption by the Council of Writing Program Administrators of a new set of outcomes that indicated for the first time that students who complete first-year college

writing programs should be able to "adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities."[20]

Although the concept of multimodal writing is not a recent invention,[21] there has been a sense among writing instructors that the long-anticipated shift toward practical multimodal instruction in college writing programs has been slower in arriving than some anticipated. Several observers have identified a "disconnect" between multimodal theory and educational practice, and even concluded that perhaps, "we do not yet value multimodality in the way our published scholarship suggests we should or perhaps in the way that the sheer volume of scholarship on multimodality suggests we already do."[22] College composition courses have continued to focus primarily on the production of written texts, despite the growing consumption of video on social media sites, such as TikTok and YouTube, and despite the challenge that the emergence of AI language models and writing tools has posed to the practice of heavily emphasizing the traditional written college essay.[23]

Various explanations for the gap between multimodal composition in theory and the slower pace of changes to instructional practice have been proposed, such as the location of many composition programs within English departments that are primarily concerned with alphabetic texts, and the omission of multimodal outcomes from many curricular documents.[24] Other factors could be added, such as the (often unstated) views of traditionalist writers and instructors who may hold that non-alphabetic arguments are generally more given to ambiguity or indeterminacy than verbal arguments, or who otherwise view "making a clear point as being an affordance of the print essay" or who view the production of alphabetic text as a skill especially valued by employers.[25]

However, while there are many explanations for the delay in the broader adoption of multimodal practices in composition programs, the technological challenges involved in multimodal video composition should not be overlooked as potential obstacles to multimodal instruction. A considerable body of evidence suggests that technical challenges associated with capturing and editing video, particularly in the context of group projects, may present impediments to multimodal college writing. For example, a survey of students who were asked to participate in multimodal writing revealed that they were "disappointed with the constraints technology placed on their work as composers" and were challenged by the "all-encompassing role of technology in data collection, drafting, and editing,"[26] prompting one of them to compare the challenge of multimodal composition to handling "a bag full of snakes"—a memorable phrase that evokes both the technical difficulties involved in video creation and the fact that these challenges, which sometimes involve audio-visual equipment, as well as software, may not initially be clearly visible to students.

Although most students report that composing with video technologies increases their interest and motivation, the technological challenges posed by video creation remain an obstacle for both students and instructors, as a number of studies have indicated.[27] Xiao Tan and Paul Kei Matsuda find that "the lack of technical expertise on the part of English teachers has stood in the way of multimodal practice,"[28] and report that many writing instructors would value additional training in video and other multimodal technologies. The technological challenges cited in such research inform the design of this study, which seeks to assess the value of lending licenses to a cloud-based video editing platform as a way to mitigate these difficulties.

Library Instructional Support for Video Creation

The technological obstacles associated with video and multimodal creativity are one reason learners and instructors have often turned to libraries and librarians for support in creating multimodal work. Research by Givens et al. (2020), Carlito (2018), and Cordes (2009) has suggested that library instruction can support students in creating video content and in developing multimodal literacy, although these studies take different positions on which forms of support to prioritize.[29] Delores Carlito observes that because "librarians are the experts in the paradigm shift from print to multiple modes," they are well-positioned to "become the primary resource on campus for creating multimodal artifacts."[30] However, perspectives on library support for video and multimodal creativity have differed concerning whether librarians should provide guidance about the affordances of different communicative modes (helping learners develop conceptual understanding of multimodal communication), or whether they should be expected to provide skills training on the use of particular tools involved in video and audio editing and other aspects of video creation.

While Carlito emphasizes the role of the librarian as experts in the paradigm shift away from print, others have placed an explicit emphasis on the need for librarians to provide training on the use of particular tools, stressing that librarians should have "the ability to assist with video, graphic, presentation, and other information modes and development tools,"[31] or to offer hands-on workshops in which librarians "model the creative techniques" that students will use, helping them to "build confidence for those who may be overwhelmed by the technical skill associated with [video] editing."[32] This difference in emphasis among librarians parallels similar differences of emphasis on theory versus tool use among advocates of multimodal composition instruction.

However, concerning this distinction between multimodal theory and practice, it may be wise to heed the observation offered by Rick Wysocki and others:

> Students need to engage in not only the technical (how-to) aspects of work with digital communication and composition media and technologies, but also in critical analysis of those media. At the same time, scholars, teachers, and students alike should recognize that distinctions between theory and practice are not necessarily tenable, and we should keep in mind the recursive, co-constitutive, and to some degree inseparable natures of thinking, acting, making, and doing.[33]

If we accept Wysocki's suggestion that students need hands-on editing experience to understand the affordances and characteristics of a "mode" of communication such as video, then educational institutions must provide such experience in a systematic or "infrastructural"[34] way. While it may be tempting to assume that college students, having grown up with technology, can quickly identify and become proficient with the tools needed to create video content on their own, research shows that this assumption is mistaken.[35] Furthermore, since research shows that this assumption can be especially harmful to students from minoritized and underprivileged backgrounds, educators and librarians must be mindful of the "role that power plays in determining access to these technologies,"[36] and seek to ensure that all students have access to video editing tools and instruction on how to use them.

The Pilot Program at Miami University

Instructional librarians at Miami identified a range of challenges faced by students and faculty working with video composition, particularly when working on video projects in small groups. These challenges included:

- The reliance of students in the same group on different operating systems (such as Mac OS, Windows, iOS, and Android) that use different software and file formats.

- The fact that different students have access to different levels of hardware.
- Difficulties uploading or otherwise sharing files and establishing workflows in group projects.
- The cost of video editing software, such as Adobe Premiere, Final Cut, or Avid.
- The fact that many well-known video editing tools are designed for professional video editors.
- The fact that workstations in library media labs are not equally available to all students.

To help overcome the challenges students and faculty face in creating multimodal video projects, in 2018, Mark Dahlquist, Mike Bomholt and Jody Perkins of the Miami University Libraries developed and submitted a proposal to provide Miami students and faculty with access to a cloud-based video editing tool, with an aim of reducing the inequities that arise when some students have access to more powerful computers and software than others, or when some students must visit a library media lab to access video editing software.[37] It was hoped that a cloud-based video editor would also solve problems of file storage and incompatibility, while allowing video editing instruction to focus on a shared tool designed for students (although it is also relatively full-featured[38]), rather than software designed for professional video editors. This proposal thus addressed the need to "match up desired multimodal experiences with affordable, accessible models that will work successfully for large cohorts of students."[39]

After this proposal received funding, the Miami Libraries entered an agreement to lease 2,000 reassignable user "seats" to WeVideo, a cloud-based video editing tool widely used in K-12 educational institutions. This proposal suggested that these "seats," or licenses, could be digitally loaned or "checked out" for a full semester to students under a software as a service (SaaS)-based model recommended by Mike Bomholt. While the survey described in this study asked students and faculty to assess their experience with this cloud-based tool, the Miami

Libraries have also developed a method for the automated provisioning of shorter-term licenses to downloadable video editing software.[40]

The WeVideo online platform includes cloud-based file storage, a mobile application to capture and upload video content, and a library of royalty-free stock video and audio content.[41] Designed for institutional use, WeVideo also works with single sign-on user identification and is compatible with Google SSO and Microsoft Entra ID, allowing users to authenticate and permitting the provisioning of licenses to students who are enrolled in particular courses.

To manage the lending of licenses to WeVideo, Project Manager Mike Bomholt in the Miami Libraries IT department developed a way to use an automation tool (Zapier) to assign digital licenses to individual student and faculty user accounts. This system was linked to student directory information through Azure Active Directory (Microsoft Entra ID), which allowed the creation of accounts for students in course sections for which instructors had requested student WeVideo accounts.[42] This system allowed students and faculty to "check out" licenses to use this cloud-based platform until the beginning of the following fall or spring semester. This arrangement allowed a relatively small number of licenses (2000) to serve the needs of a university with approximately 16,000 students. At around $3-4 per seat per year, WeVideo pricing would have been unsustainable if it had been necessary to purchase licenses for all of the approximately 16,000 students enrolled at our institution. However, this license-lending system allowed the Libraries to purchase enough licenses to support students and faculty who particularly needed to edit video content throughout the course of an academic semester.

Library IT used the Zapier automation tool to create an automated sign-up form that linked individual users to WeVideo user licenses until the end of the semester. Library IT also created a form that instructors could submit to request that WeVideo licenses be assigned to all

students enrolled in one or more of their courses, providing instructors with an assurance that all students in their section will have access to an online collaborative video editing tool that can be accessed throughout the semester from any internet-connected location. WeVideo licenses were manually reset twice a year (account holders were sent reminder emails and invited to renew their licenses), shortly before the fall and spring semesters began.

Instructional support for this tool was provided in two ways: first, by creating a brief instructional video, which was embedded into the webpage where users submitted requests for WeVideo licenses. In addition, instructors could request in-person librarian instruction sessions for their courses. In these cases, a librarian would visit the instructor's class and provide an introductory video editing workshop using WeVideo. These were popular and well-liked by students and could be reduced, if necessary, to as few as thirty minutes, making these sessions more convenient for instructors than taking their students to a traditional media lab. Some instructors preferred to request video editing instructional sessions in multiple semesters, while others became comfortable enough with this tool that they began offering editing instruction to their students without librarian assistance.

In-person video instruction sessions benefitted from a large library of royalty-free video "stock footage" that is available within the WeVideo for Education platform. This footage provides students with opportunities for selection, discovery, and creativity in their initial learning sessions (in contrast to sessions where the instructor pre-selects video clips for students to edit while learning editing skills), as well as providing video content for students to use in creating projects later in the semester. Students can also upload content to their WeVideo account or capture video from a webcam or through a phone app that allows iPhone and Android users to save video directly to a sharable online folder for editing in group or individual video

projects. WeVideo's stock footage library and content importing tools work with a familiar multi-track timeline-based interface for editing video, similar to those found in Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro, and most widely used editing applications.

Accessibility Issues and the Pilot Program's Conclusion

In 2021, it was determined that WeVideo was not fully accessible to users with disabilities, failing to meet several WCAG requirements. Additionally, WeVideo's representatives did not agree in 2021 to share with the Miami Libraries a plan or roadmap to improve their product's accessibility (although WeVideo's accessibility has since improved, as this paper will discuss).

For this reason, the Miami Libraries made the difficult but necessary decision to discontinue the WeVideo digital license lending pilot program, communicating to students and faculty that this service would be discontinued at the end of the 2021 spring semester. Although this decision caused frustration for many faculty members who had come to depend on this resource, the faculty ultimately understood the need for this decision, given the legal and ethical requirement to provide equal access to educational content and experiences to all students and the importance of accessibility in educational technologies.[43]

As the pilot program was discontinued, a survey was developed and sent to WeVideo users to gather information about who had used this tool, how they had used it, and how its users would assess its value. We also included questions about the importance of video creation as an educational need and about instructional support for video editing tools. The survey (n=111) found that most WeVideo users had used the tool to create videos to complete assigned

coursework, and revealed that most respondents found the tool to be a valuable educational resource. The majority of respondents also indicated that they would like to see the libraries provide instructional support for video editing tools in the future, that they believe it is important for universities to provide access to video editing tools, and that they had been enrolled in a course that was better because it involved the creation of video content.

Detailed Survey Results and Use Data

During the two-year pilot program, between May 2018 and May 2021, 2337 unique users were assigned WeVideo accounts, either because a user requested an account for themself, or because they were provisioned with an account at the request of an instructor. These users logged into WeVideo approximately 9,500 times. Figure 1, below, displays usage data as provided by WeVideo.

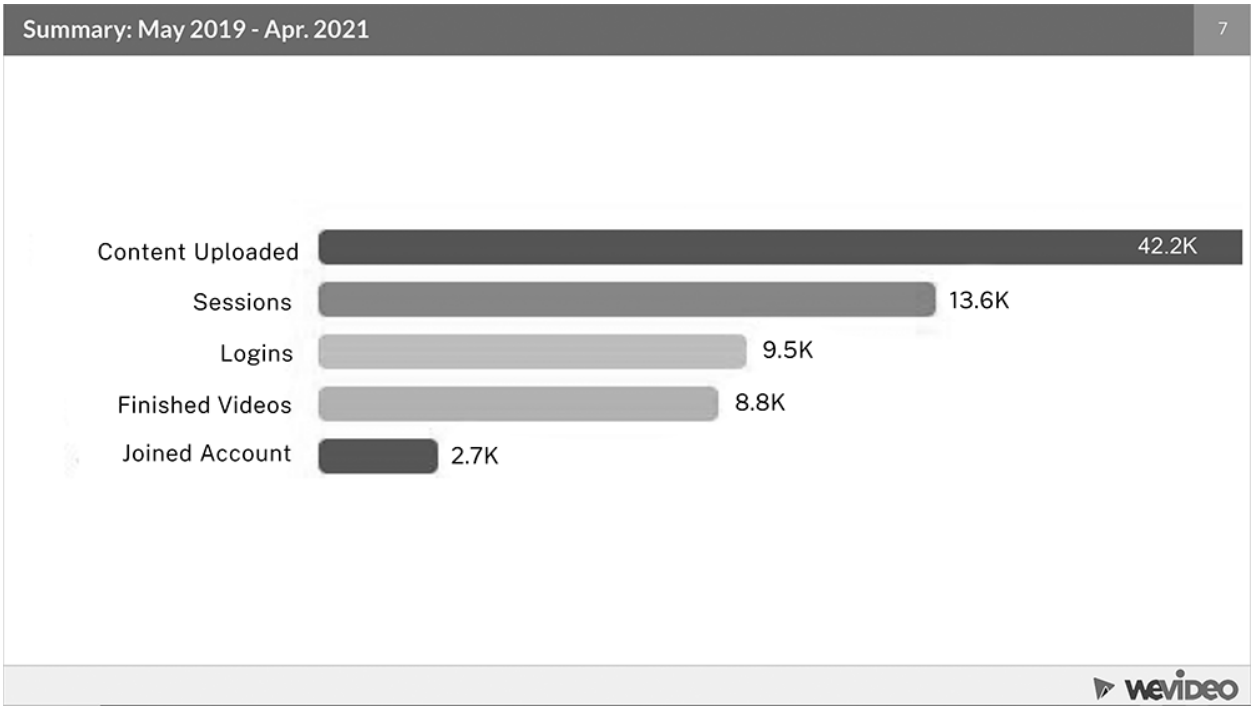

Fig. 1 WeVideo summary (5/2019-4/2021)[44]

WeVideo also provided data about media uploads. Figure 2, below, displays data provided by WeVideo indicating when media content was uploaded; perhaps unsurprisingly, most video uploading (and, presumably, editing) occurred around the end of the fall and spring semesters, in December and May.

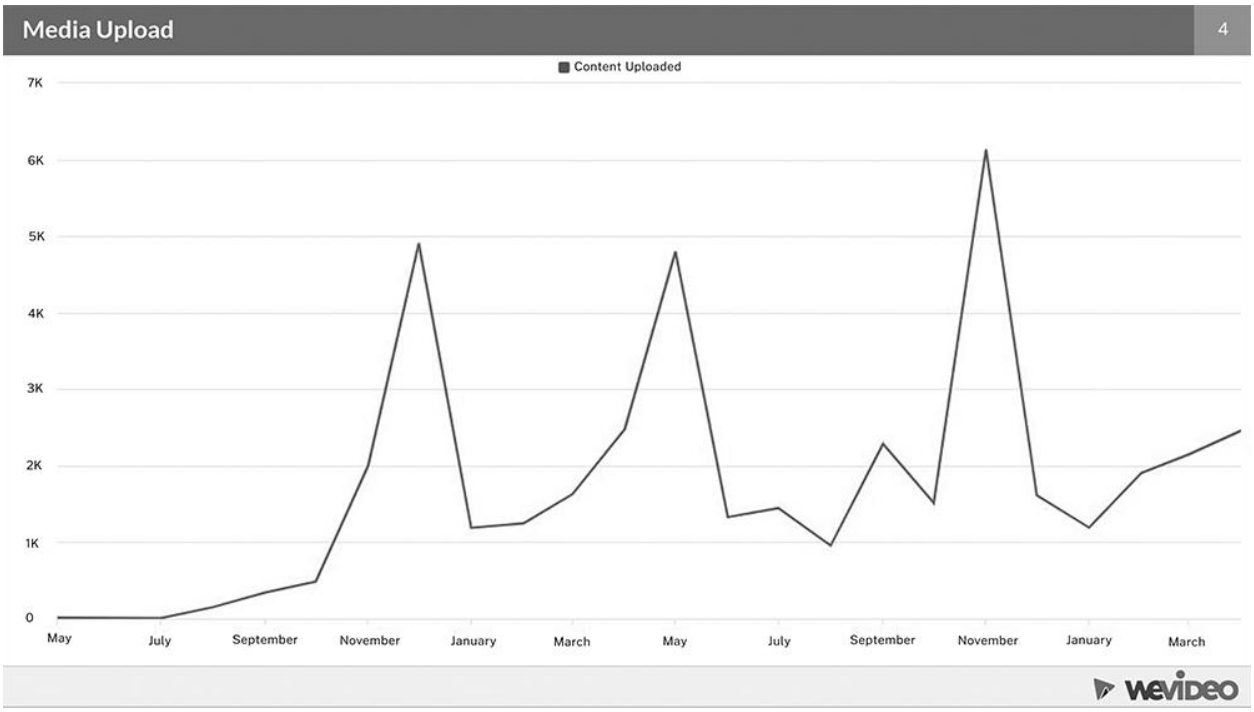

Figure 2: WeVideo Media Uploads (5/19-3/2021)[45]

As this service was discontinued, an IRB-approved 15-question survey was distributed to 2337 students and faculty members who used WeVideo during its pilot program. Participants were informed that completing the survey would provide helpful data, that their participation was strictly optional, and that one submitter would receive a $35 Amazon gift certificate. 111 of 2337 WeVideo users completed this survey, providing valuable information about their experience checking out and using his tool during the pilot program. This survey sought to assess whether this library-provided tool provided value to students and faculty at Miami University and to gather information about how this tool was used.

The survey's first question asked users to indicate their major or (in the case of faculty) the department in which they were employed. The results appear to reflect that one of the early adopters of WeVideo at our institution was the first-year business communication course at Miami, which has a large business school. Almost half of the survey participants were business majors or faculty members, which should be considered when interpreting these survey results. The sciences, humanities, social sciences and creative and performing arts were also represented in our data, although in lower numbers.

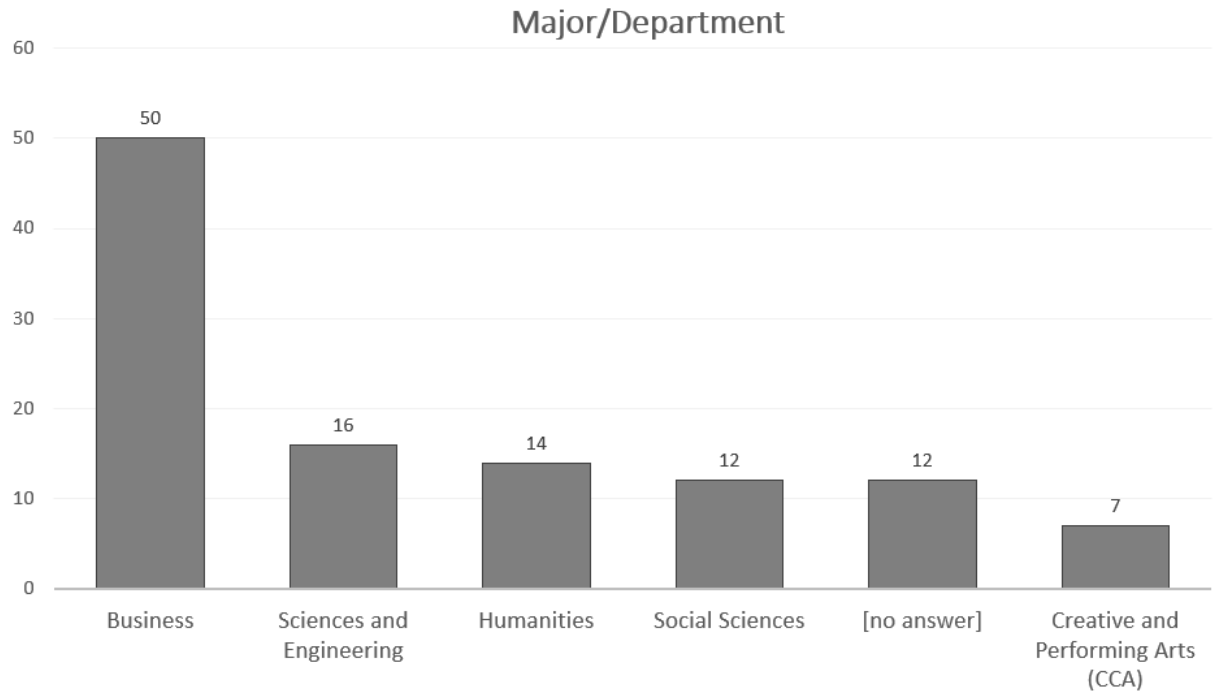

Figure 3: Major or Department

Another survey question asked users how they used this tool, focusing on the types of content users created. Responses to this question again reflect the use of this product in the business school's introductory communications course and, in particular, an assignment that asked students to create a self-introduction video of the sort that might appear in business-oriented social networks. This was the most significant single use case of WeVideo at our institution (57

respondents), coming in slightly ahead of "argument/persuasive presentation" (56 respondents), which is a more frequently discussed use case in the literature on multimodal composition. There were also significant numbers of other use cases reported, including recording lecture content (33), creative content (31), subject interviews (23), and technique demonstration (22); (see Figure 4 below). This finding indicated that video editing tools and platforms have a wide range of uses in educational institutions, extending beyond the informative or persuasive argument or video essay that is the most frequently considered use case in the composition studies literature.

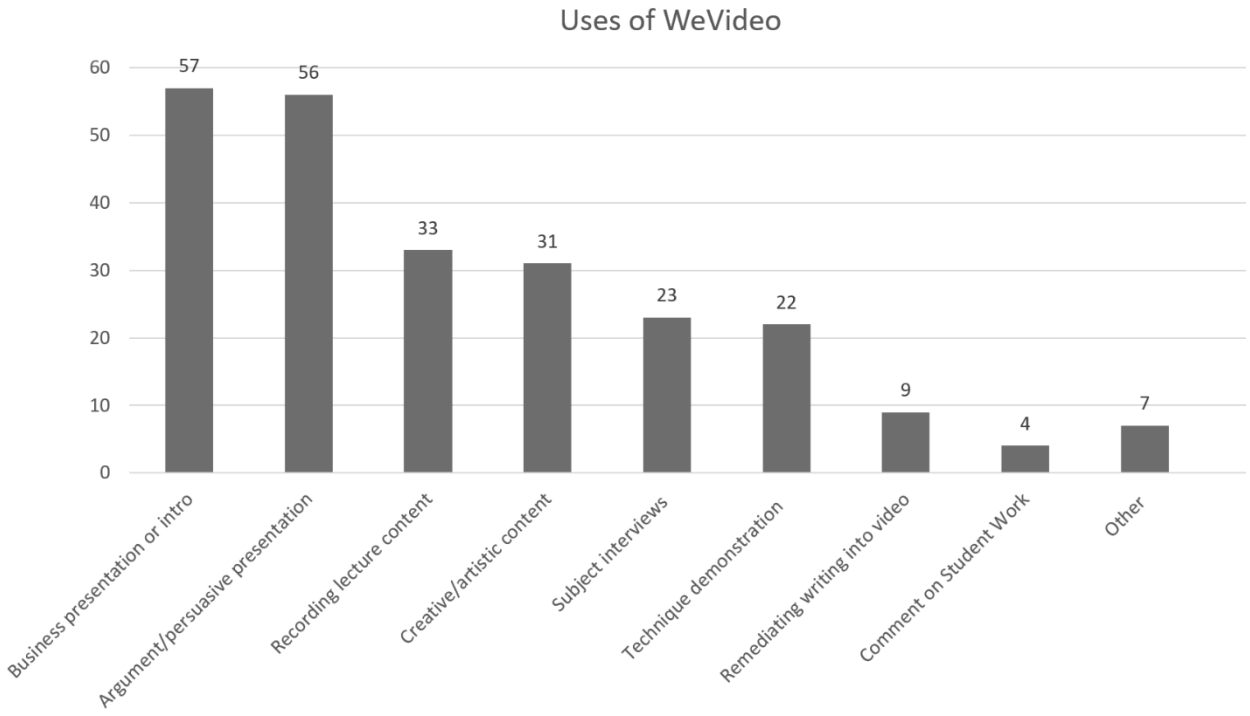

Figure 4: Uses of WeVideo.

The survey included a question asking users to agree or disagree with a statement indicating that their experience using WeVideo was generally positive. The user response to this question reflected a strongly positive evaluation of this tool, with 84 of 111 respondents reporting that they agree (40) or strongly agree (47) with the statement that their experience using WeVideo was positive (see Figure 5, below). Eleven respondents reported a neutral or "does not apply"

opinion, and eight users either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their experience with this tool was positive.

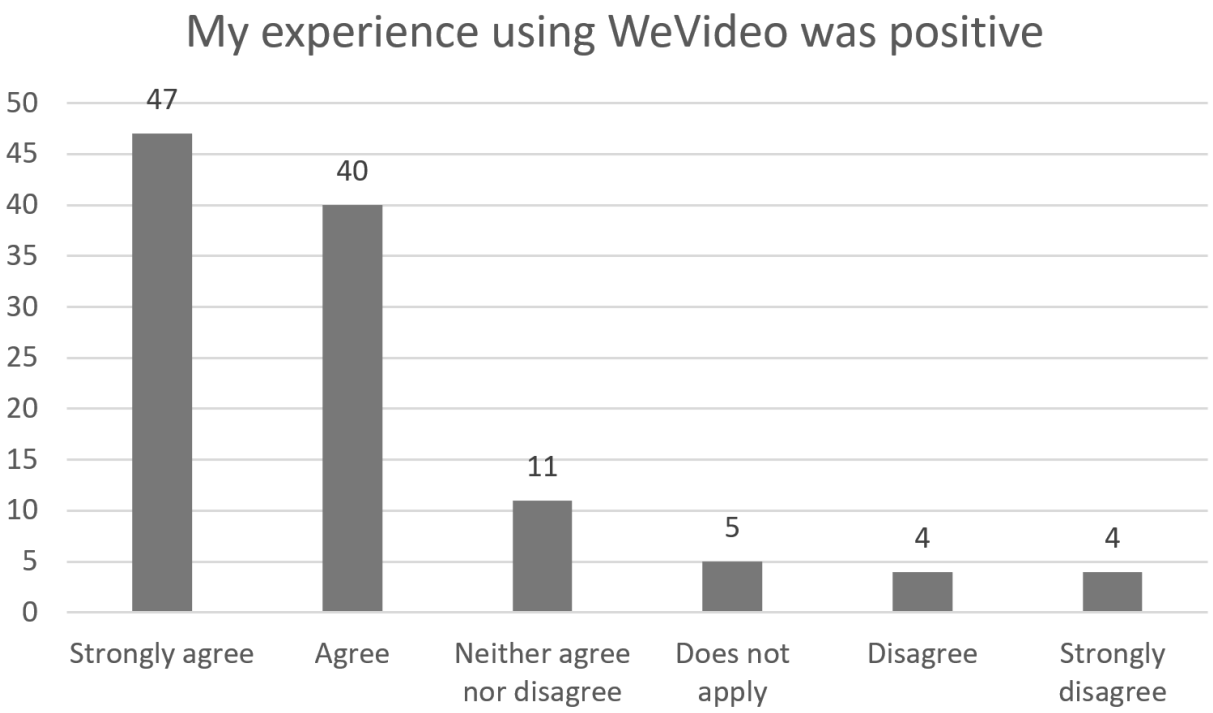

Figure 5: My experience using WeVideo was positive.

The survey also collected the opinions of WeVideo users on the use of video in educational contexts through a number of opinion-based questions on the topics of video and video instruction more broadly. The first of these questions asked respondents to indicate whether they consider video editing skills to be professionally useful (see Figure 6, below). In this case, a very large majority of respondents indicated that they view video editing skills as professionally useful, with 94 of 111 respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this claim, and only four students disagreeing or strongly disagreeing with the claim that video editing skills will be professionally helpful.

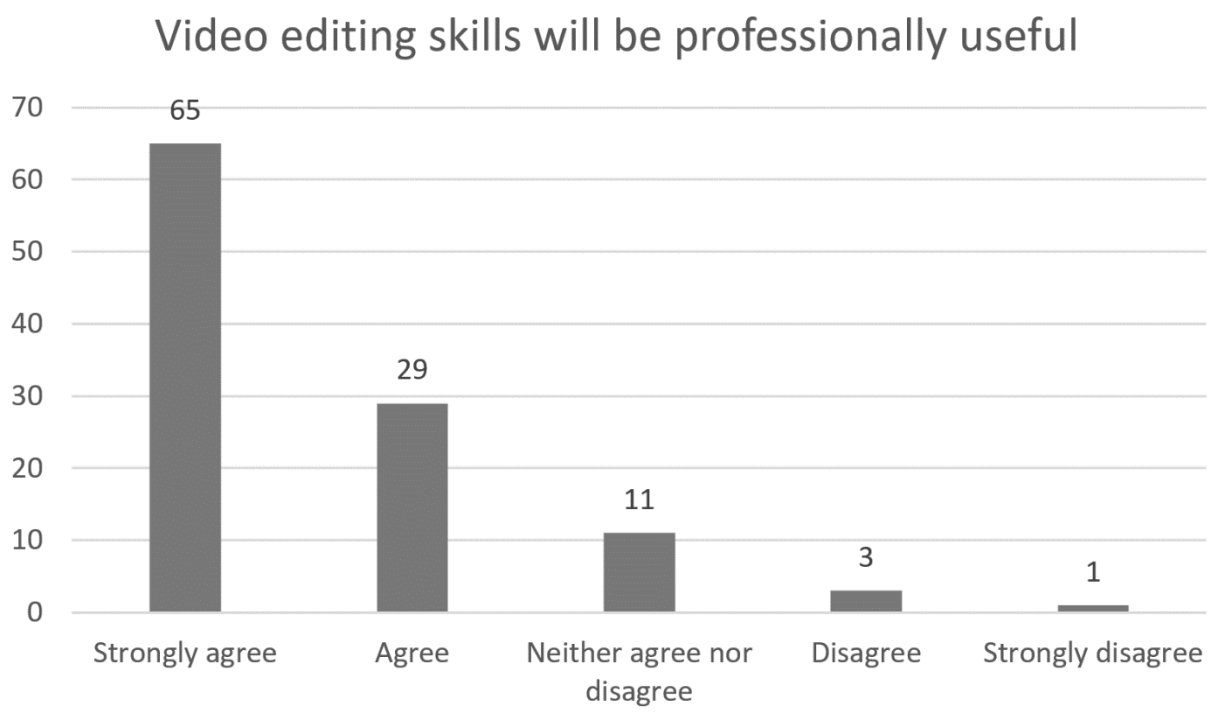

Figure 6: Video editing skills will be professionally useful.

The survey included two questions about whether universities should provide access to or instructional support for video editing tools and technologies. The first of these (see Figure 7 below) asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement that universities should provide access to video editing tools. An overwhelming number of respondents (106 out of 111) indicated that universities should provide access to video editing tools, with 89 respondents strongly agreeing with this claim and 17 agreeing. Three respondents were neutral on this question, and two respondents disagreed. These answers reflect very strong agreement that universities should provide access to video editing tools.

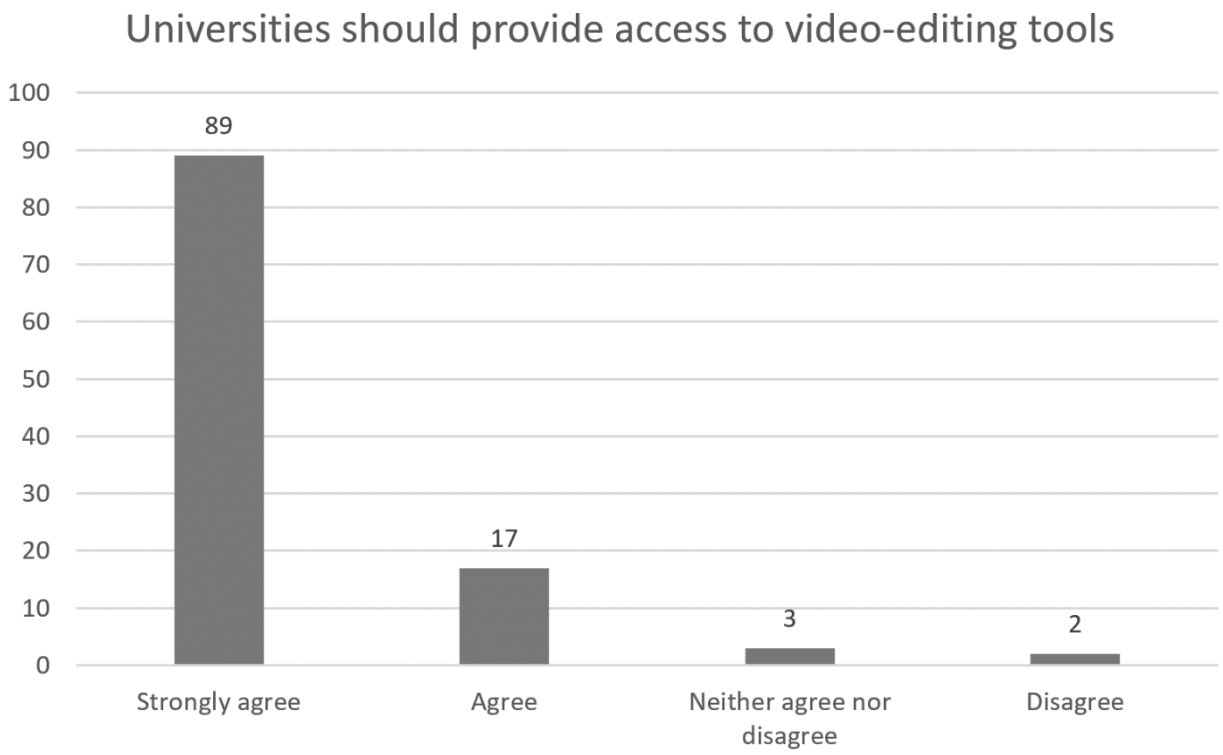

Figure 7: Universities should provide access to video editing tools.

The survey also asked the respondents whether they believe universities should offer video editing instruction (see Figure 8, below). Responses to this question very strongly endorsed the proposition that universities should offer video editing instruction, with 101/111 strongly agreeing or agreeing with the claim that universities should offer such instruction. Ten respondents expressed a neutral opinion on this proposition, and none disagreed. This indicates a strong agreement among students and instructors who have taken or taught courses incorporating video that universities should provide some form of instructional support for video editing tools.

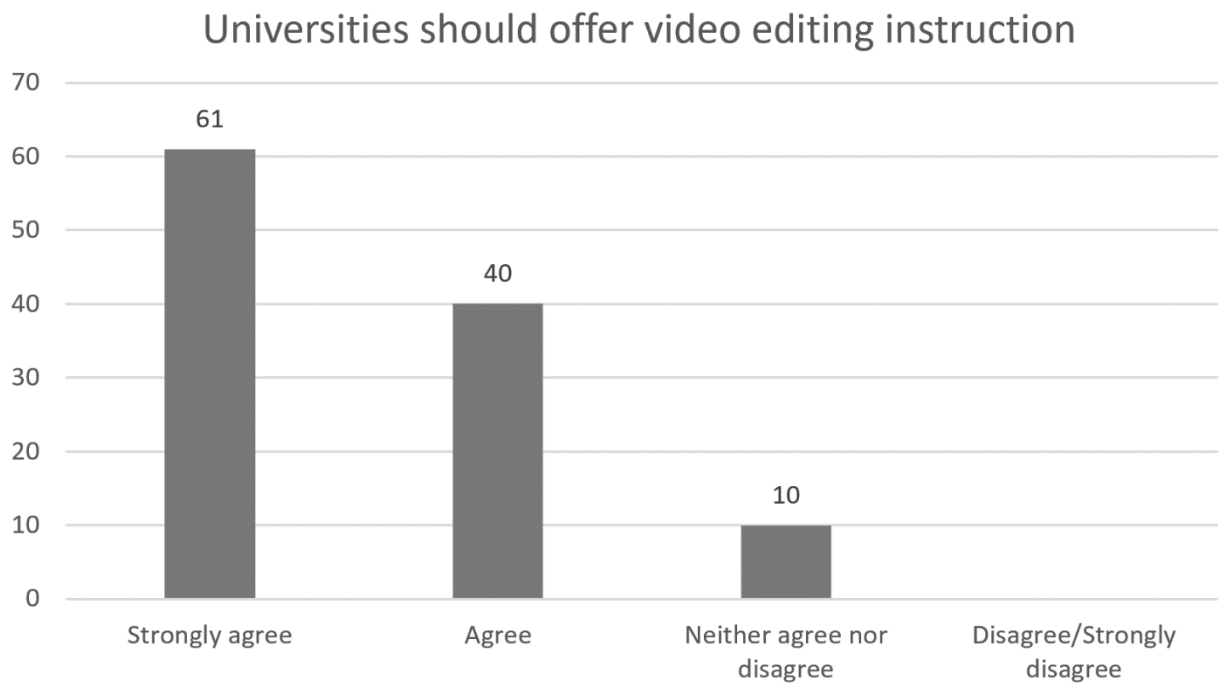

Figure 8: Universities should offer video editing instruction.

The Libraries were also interested in the question of how students and instructors regarded the activity of video editing, whether as a professional skill, or as an engaging creative activity, or both. Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the claim that video editing is an engaging creative activity (see Figure 9, below). In response to this proposition, 94 of the 111 respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that video editing is an engaging and creative activity, although a relatively small number of respondents (31/111) reported having actually used WeVideo to complete creative or artistic content (see Figure 4, above). Twelve respondents gave a neutral response to the proposition that video editing is an engaging and creative activity, and four respondents disagreed (3) or strongly disagreed (1) with the proposition that video editing is engaging and creative.

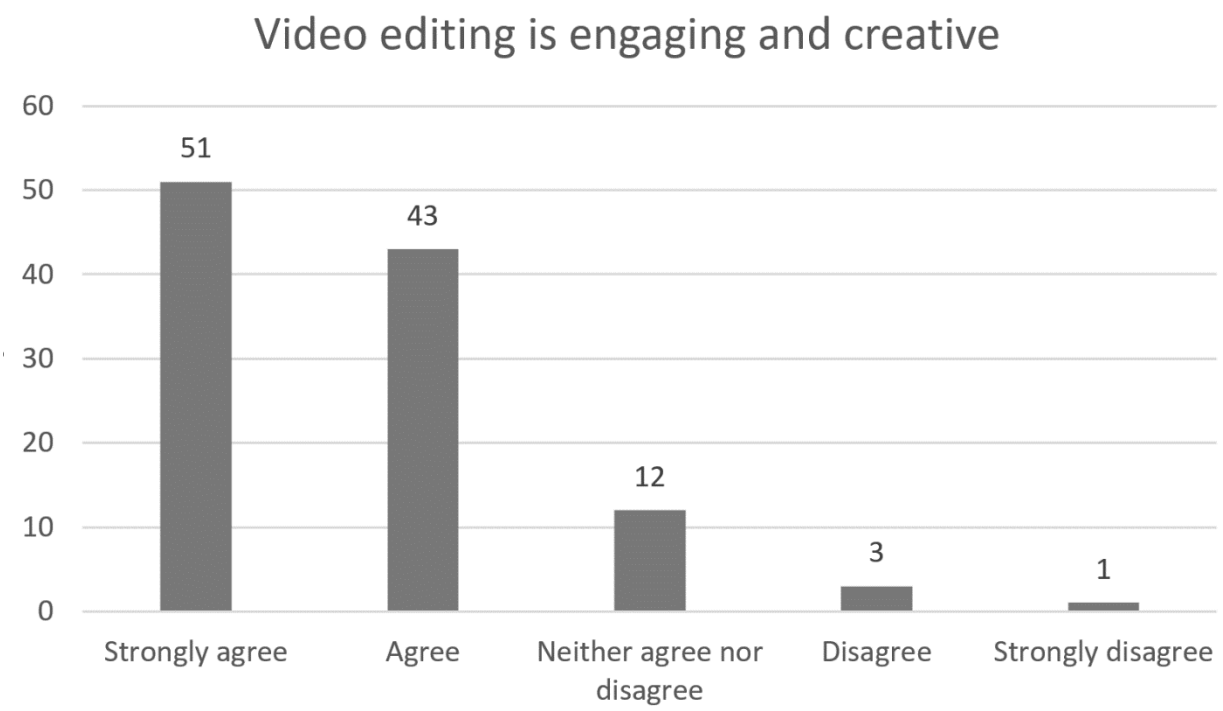

Figure 9: Video editing is engaging and creative.

Perhaps consistent with the views expressed above that video editing creation is an engaging and creative activity with high professional utility, most survey respondents indicated that they had taken a college course they judged to be better because it involved video creation. Sixty-eight out of 111 respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they had been in a course that was stronger because it involved video creation, while 29 neither agreed nor disagreed, six disagreed, and eight indicated that this question did not apply to them. See Figure 10, below.

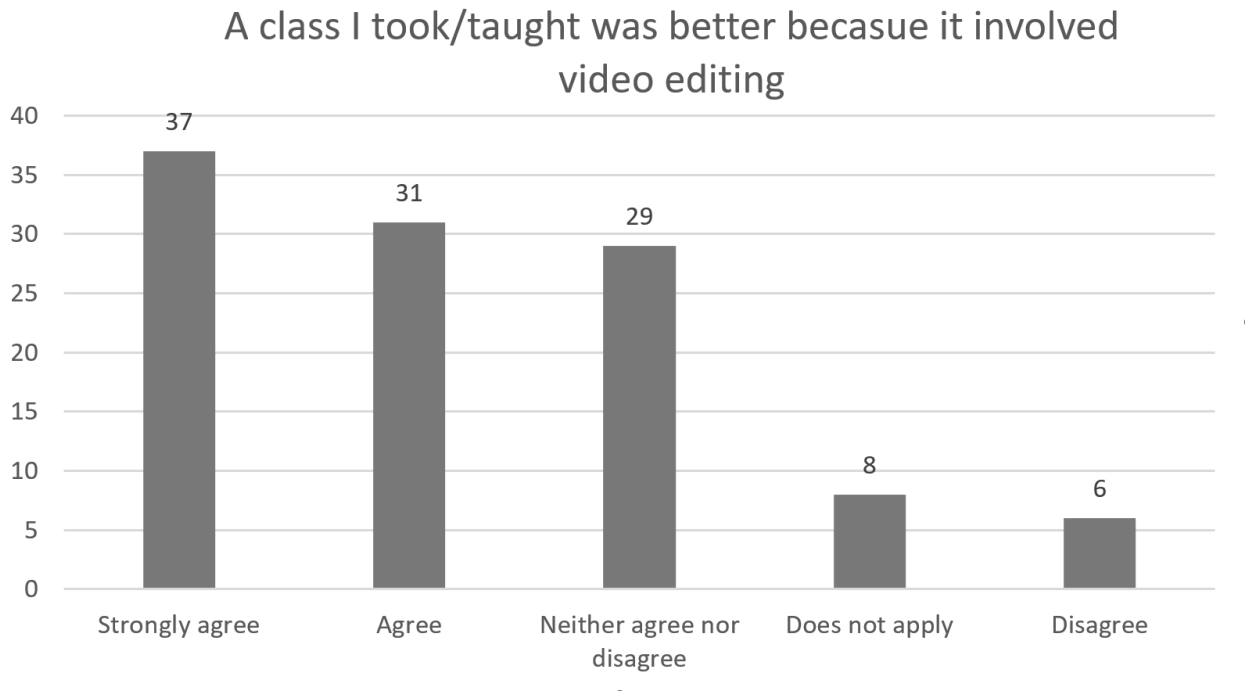

Figure 10: A class I took or taught was better because it involved video editing.

These results indicate that many, though not all, respondents felt that they had taken a course that benefitted from incorporating video creativity.

Discussion and Conclusions

The usage data provided by the vendor, together with the survey data we collected, indicate that this pilot project was a success in many ways. Use of this platform increased semester after semester, and instructors used this tool to support a wide range of assignments. Users of this tool reported strongly positive assessments of it, and also strongly felt that universities should provide instructional support for video editing tools. This finding may suggest that providing instructional support for video editing tools is a potentially valuable (and perhaps underserved) role that may be played by libraries or other campus instructional units, contrary to the assumption that questions of practical tool use should be left entirely to end-users.

The large number of respondents that reported using a cloud-based video editing tool to create business-oriented professional video introductions or presentations is likely the result of a decision by the instructors of a large introductory business communication course to encourage the use of this tool by their students. However, students and instructors put this editing tool to a wide range of uses. These uses included not only the personal introduction assignment of the large business communication course, but also technical and teaching demonstrations, artistic projects, video essays, subject interviews, and others. Some uses emphasized the development of skills of personal self-presentation that are more associated with public speaking courses, or perhaps even with the skills emphasized in nineteenth and early twentieth-century courses in elocution, which focused especially on the effective use of voice and gesture.[46] These survey results provide a reminder that video editing tools have innovative and cross-disciplinary uses that extend beyond video or "remediated" versions of the traditional college essay.

The pilot program that provided access to this cloud-based video editing platform was concluded in May 2021, although this tool was widely used and appreciated by both students and instructors. There were some technical challenges to implementing the license-lending system that allowed the Miami Libraries to serve the instructional needs of 16,000 students and faculty with a relatively small pool of only 2,000 licenses (although it was clear that this pool would have needed to be expanded as familiarity with and use of this tool increased).

One challenge was that the license lending system at the Miami Libraries was partially but never fully automated. Twice a year, user accounts needed to be manually reset by library IT, after sending email notifications to users, warning them to request renewals if needed, and informing them that deactivated accounts would revert to free WeVideo accounts and would

eventually be deleted, after a period of account inactivity. Although WeVideo integrated well with our campus Entra ID directory and SSO authentication tools, we found that using it required some monitoring and active support from library IT.

It was also discovered early in the pilot program that the adoption of a software tool initially developed for K-12 educational contexts posed challenges in the context of higher education. Although the relative simplicity of the WeVideo user and system administrator interfaces was appreciated, we found that the assigned “teacher” and “student” roles as implemented by WeVideo in the early 2020’s were problematic, as they gave teachers not only the ability to view the developing video compositions of their own students, but also, potentially, the ability to view the work of students in courses being taught by other instructors. Turning off the teacher role in our instance of WeVideo solved this problem, but created some project management challenges for instructors.

Ultimately, we found that the technical challenges of maintaining the digital license-lending system developed at the Miami University Libraries were reasonable and likely to decrease over time. However, it was discovered that the use of this tool was not sustainable at our institution due to significant accessibility deficiencies for users with disabilities. An internal accessibility review of WeVideo conducted at our university found problems with contrast, focus order, and other issues with the WeVideo user interface. After representatives from WeVideo declined to convey a commitment to remedy these deficiencies, the Miami Libraries ended student and faculty access to WeVideo at the end of the two-year pilot program. The termination of WeVideo was a source of concern to instructors who had come to rely on it, and posed a communication challenge for the libraries; however, faculty understood the importance of accessible technologies in instruction and came to accept this decision.

The market of cloud-based video editors is changing rapidly, with many new entrants to this fast-evolving field. Since discontinuing the WeVideo pilot project, the Miami Libraries have been monitoring and evaluating several cloud-based and other video editing tools, including open-source projects, as potential replacements for WeVideo. However, significant developments have occurred since the discontinuation of WeVideo Miami. In November 2021, an accessibility-related lawsuit was filed in New York state against WeVideo, which was dismissed in July 2022. Following this dismissal, WeVideo published a statement indicating that WeVideo would undergo a third-party accessibility evaluation, promising to "conduct a comprehensive audit of both our website and product in order to identify areas where accessibility can be improved."[47] Subsequently, WeVideo released a new version of their product that was found by a third-party assessment to be compliant with WCAG 2.0 AA accessibility standards.[48]

However, there are many competing products in this category. While this paper does not present a detailed review of WeVideo nor a survey of similar products (such as Motionbox or Clipchamp) and downloadable products such as Adobe Premiere, Final Cut Pro, DaVinci Resolve or Descript), it considers the potential benefits of a digital license-lending arrangement through the particular example of the Miami Libraries' experience with a digital license lending and instruction program developed to support a cloud-based video editing tool. The proliferation and continuing improvement of such tools is good news for multimodal composition generally, though cost and accessibility remain obstacles to the widespread adoption of commercial products in libraries at this time, even when costs can be mitigated with digital license-lending arrangements. Nevertheless, the usage data and survey results considered by this study indicate

that students and instructors find value in library-provided access to and instructional support for video creativity tools.

Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Subject Area and User Information (1/4)

1. In which subject area do you primarily major or work
   - Business
   - Creative and Performing Arts (CCA)
   - Humanities
   - Social Sciences
   - Sciences and Engineering

2. What is your year in college, or graduate student or faculty/staff status?

   - 1st year undergraduate
   - 2nd year undergraduate
   - 3rd year undergraduate
   - 4th year undergraduate
   - Graduate (Masters level)
   - Graduate (PhD level)
   - Faculty or Staff

3. While enrolled or employed at [institution], for what purposes have you used video editing tools? (check all that apply)

   - None (I have not used WeVideo or other tools to edit video)
   - Editing a video argument, story, or persuasive presentation to submit for a class
   - Editing videos of instructional content (such as a professor recording a course lecture)
   - Providing video or audio comments on student work
   - Demonstration of a technique (such as using online tool or a lab procedure)
   - Editing recorded videos of interviews such as for a news report, etc.
   - Recording a business presentation or a professional introduction
   - Remediating or translating a non-video work, such as a written argument, into video form
   - Editing creative and/or artistic content to share publicly online
   - Other

4. While enrolled or employed at [institution], how have you used video editing tools?
   - To create content related to a course I am enrolled in or teaching
   - To create non-course related content
   - Both
   - Neither

5. While at [institution], which types of video-related assignments have you completed (or assigned)?
   - Collaborative (group) assignment

Individual assignment
Does not apply

6. Today, recorded video content plays an important role in public and professional communications.
   strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

7. Assignments that involve creating video content have the potential to be useful in university teaching.
   strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

8. Having or acquiring video and media creation and editing skills would be valuable to most university students.
   strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

9. Universities should provide students and faculty with access to video editing software tools.
   strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

10. Universities should provide access to video and audio hardware such as cameras, microphones, lighting equipment, and studio space.
    strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

11. Universities should offer instruction (such as workshops or online resources) on how to access and use video production resources including editing software.
    strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

12. Having video and media creation and editing skills is likely to be helpful in my professional career.
    strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

13. I have found editing and producing video content to be an engaging creative experience.
    strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

14. A class I took or taught was a better class because it involved the creation of video content. (Agree)
    strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

15. My experience using the WeVideo video editing tool was a positive one.
    strongly agree/agree/neither/disagree/strongly disagree

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