

## SET-UP GUIDE FOR CURRICULUMVISIONS.COM VIDEOS

Here is the technical information that you or your ICT technician may want to read.

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If you need any help during installation please call 01491 628 188.

FIRST, make sure you have Quicktime installed. You will know if you don't because you will not hear any music or voices (for example on the audio guide). Go to <http://www.quicktime.com> to download it.

Then, on the home screen click the 'First Visit' button and on that screen click on the bottom line: "To take a brief audio tour **CLICK HERE**". Each member of staff should do this as it explains how the site works. It is a self-guiding tour. (Subsequently you can click the log-on button or use the **QUICKLINKS** menu.)

Make sure your speakers are turned ON. Part of the guided tour involves video use. All videos work with a plugin called divX. An increasing number also work with Flashplayer 10 and we are extending this option all the time. To see what you need please go to <http://curriculumvisions.com> and click on the word multimedia, then choose History and Ancient Egyptians. Now select Cinema and you will see two buttons. Start with the one marked FLASH and watch the video load, or follow the instructions to get the appropriate plugin from Adobe. Then close that video and choose the one marked divX. Again, get the plugin from divX if needed. The choice between divX and Flash will depend on your school firewall. Use whichever works best for you. Otherwise there is no difference in the video.

Just make sure you do NOT have Realplayer or WMP selected as the default videoplayer as this can cause conflicts. Tip: During normal use, to get full-screen cinema-sized whiteboard videos, double-click the video as soon as it starts to play in divX, or click the arrow at the right hand end of the controls in Flash

**IMPORTANT:** If the home screen partly disappears off the bottom of your screen, remove some browser bars. Windows users press key F11. If you get a video error message this may be because your local authority is blocking videos except from trusted sites. Just phone them and ask them to whitelist our sites (see below) or it will be because you do not have a copy of divX installed on the computer you are using (it must be on each computer, not the server) .

A quick way of opening up Curriculum Visions in windows: Go to [www.curriculumvisions.com](http://www.curriculumvisions.com). Then left-click on to the icon to the left of that address and drag it to the desk top. An icon labelled Curriculumvisions.com will appear on your desktop. In future, double click on that icon to go straight to the home page.

●●●●●●●●●●Create your own Curriculum Visions video cache box for free●●●●●●●●●●

Videos are large files (tens of MB) and they can sometimes take a while to download. And now from us you have choice of many hundreds. But now you can access them instantly (after the first time download) by creating your own hard disk cache box. So, if for example, you use a laptop to prepare your work, then you can run (and automatically cache) the videos you want by accessing the site at home or some other non-lesson time, then when you come to run them in class they will play instantly. You can do the same with in-class computers, of course. This works only for divX. Flash has no caching system.

It's simple and needs just a few clicks (and a two button mouse if you are a Mac user).

This is what you do:

1. Go to any Curriculum Visions video. Choose higher quality.
2. Once the video begins to play right click on the video. A popup menu appears.
3. Choose preferences (at the bottom of the menu)
4. Under the 'general' tab choose 'autosave all video downloads' (deselect the 'alert me' box that then appears. Leave the rest checked. Change 'check for updates' to once per month.

Do NOT click OK but move to the 'download cache' tab (next one along the top of the popup)

Check 'enable download cache'

Uncheck 'limit size of cache'

Uncheck 'do not cache file' (two boxes to uncheck)

Move to the 'desktop dimmer' tab and check 'enable desktop dimmer'

Uncheck the 'show the desktop dimmer help message box'

You can now click OK and you will have created your own cache box for free, and when you play a video the surround will darken to leave children focused only on the video (1 click on the video brings up the controller if you want it).

5. Restart your computer.

And that is it.

All other screens will still have to download live from our web site but they are mostly very small files, and the videos will be in your cache and will load instantly. That is why I said choose high quality. It might take longer to download the first time but you will get the better quality instantly after that. (But the fast quality file has a different file name, so if you click the fast button later by accident you will have to wait for it to download for the first time, too, of course.)

6. For a far faster response still choose Express (see below)

•••If you get an error message when trying to load videos and your school is on a local authority network, the most likely reason is that they are filtering the video or the

website. Please contact them and ask them to whitelist [www.curriculumvisions.com](http://www.curriculumvisions.com) AND the linked site [www.curriculumtv.com](http://www.curriculumtv.com). Then everything should be fine.

•••Please also note that you can get discounts on our books by clicking the discount button which can be found under LINKS on the home screen. Whichever way you access it, curriculumvisions.com is outstanding value.

- If you have free months and they run out, remember that the access covers all subjects and can be topped up by other subjects buying books as well as yourself.
- If your head or ICT co-ordinator wants to subscribe on behalf of the school you can do this from the subscription link at the bottom right of the home page. You can print the shopping cart and send it in with the official order if you cannot order directly by Internet. Or you can just send us your own purchase order.

For the ultimate convenience in class, we strongly recommend you purchase the Express add-on, as described below.

## WORKING WITH THE VIDEOS

The videos are an integral part of the concept behind CurriculumVisions.com. They give best classroom value if they are integrated into your teaching and shown as part of a planned lesson. It is always best to see the video through yourself before showing it in class, and to show it with specific objectives in view.

The pattern is: objectives >> lesson, including video >> outcomes.

Children should be aware of the intended objectives and outcomes of the video before it is shown or they may not know what to look out for, and the purpose of the video may be compromised. Most videos are best shown through more than once as reinforcement and accompanied by a question and answer session to achieve the desired outcomes.

There are often gaps in some narratives to give you time to comment and ask questions without stopping the video or turning down the sound.

### 1. QUICK HINTS

- a. If you are showing the video on a whiteboard, please use some kind of blackout so that the vibrant colours of the video can be enjoyed by all.
- b. Double click on the video to make it fill the screen.
- c. Double click a full-screen video to shrink it.
- d. Use the controller under the video to start, stop, advance etc.

### 2. VIDEO LOADING SPEED- IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

If you have developed your own cache as described above, everything will be almost instantaneous. For any newly watched, un-cached videos, how quickly your video opens depends on the speed of the LOCAL connection coming in to your school and the

number of people using it at the same time in your school (not our server connection: we always have spare bandwidth at the server end).

As a rule, do NOT encourage a class full of children to connect to big videos online individually unless you are using EXPRESS. This may slow things down. Connect just one computer, preferably yours, and play the video on the whiteboard or a large screen monitor. Remember to double-click the video to make it fill the screen so that children can see it from a distance.

Full screen videos should be used like TV programmes. Full screen videos are not intended to be watched close up, no more than TVs are. If you decide to look at the video full screen on a large monitor, view it from several feet away, just as you would a TV, or you may see the pixels. This is especially true in faster start mode. Of course, you cannot get more information out of any video simply by showing it at a larger size. If you want your video to have more detail, you must choose Higher Quality mode (see below). There are a choice of 2 connection modes, one for those with high quality connections, and those with more basic connections. We call them Faster Start and Higher Quality. Faster Start videos are smaller, Higher Quality videos are bigger (between 1.5 and 3 times bigger). The difference between Faster Start and Higher Quality videos is more noticeable where there is a lot of movement (for example rivers flowing, waves breaking) because movement needs more bandwidth.

**If you have a WIRELESS connection**

Wireless connections may be convenient, but there is a penalty: the rate of the transmission over the wireless is much slower than a hard-wired connection. So if your video loads more slowly at school on wireless than at home on a fixed connection, then this is why. There is nothing wrong with our server connection speed, it is the local wireless connection transmitter.

**If you have a FAST connection**

(say, 8Mb/sec or more - usually the case when schools are on a grid), then you can choose the Higher Quality video option all the time.

**If you have a BASIC connection**

(1Mb/sec), then you may find the video takes a few moments to buffer. This is more the case with our flagship videos because they last from 10-20 minutes each. It is rarely the case with the short videos (1-2 min).

Choose the Faster Start option and play the video at the size it is displayed. If you double-click to make it fill the screen you may see the pixels because fast start is a small file and contains less data.

If you know the video you want is big, then choose the Higher Quality version and get it under way several minutes before you need it. The buffering monitor shows the run-up to playing in terms of percentage buffered. Waiting for the buffering usually takes no longer than it used to take you to get a video out, turn the TV on and load the video.

Please PLAN AHEAD and your class continuity will be maintained easily.

For best experience, give the video time to load before the beginning of the lesson, or arrange for students to be doing some activity or research, or reading the appropriate page of one of our books while the video is buffering.

**If you have EXPRESS**

Everything will be instantaneous all of the time as you don't use the Internet for downloading videos.

**During full screen playing**

You can make the controller appear by clicking once on the movie. Click the video again to hide it.

**At the end of the video**

If you are in full screen mode, double click the video to reduce it and then press exit, or use the close(X/red) button at the top of the screen.

For divX, **right-click on the video** (when you are not showing it to a class) and select **preferences**. Choose "full" mode for best quality video playback. You can also change the time before desktop dimming happens.

Anything needed to make it all work?

The videos run with divX and Quicktime7.

You can get the software now by going to these links:

[www.divx.com](http://www.divx.com)

[www.quicktime.com](http://www.quicktime.com)

If you have not installed the plugins, you will be prompted to download the software needed at the start of the video. In windows, look for the flashing bar at the top of the screen asking you to agree to install. It is reputable and safe to install. These videos will NOT run on real player or windows media player, so if you see these player symbols and a blank screen, cancel and install the software needed.

For those with technical inclinations: faster start videos play at about 4Mb/minute (66Kb/sec) and higher quality play at 6-8Mb/minute (90 or so Kb/sec). If your connection can play those speeds (for example, as basic 1MB broadband connection with only one computer in use), buffering will be almost instantaneous at both quality levels, but, as you know, if other people are using the same connection, your share of it will decrease, so buffering times may vary between one session and another.

**Curriculum Visions is now available for installation on school servers and VLPs: CurriculumVisions EXPRESS**

When we started CurriculumVisions.com we envisaged only teachers using our material in conjunction with whiteboards and our books. But things have moved on. Schools regularly ask how they can speed up their connection when they have over a hundred children on separate computers all wanting to look at videos at the same time. Further, more and more schools want to incorporate CurriculumVisions as part of their virtual

learning platforms (VLPs or VLEs) and make materials available through school servers to students at home.

Access speed is not due to our server, but rather the bandwidth of the portal coming into your school. So the best way to improve speed for multiple users is have the web site on your school server. Enter CurriculumVisions Express.

We can now send you a special hard drive version of the CurriculumVisions.com website to put on your own server and also to connect to your virtual learning platform if and when you install one. As a further benefit, children will also be able to access the site at home through your portal and their own profile logins.

Of course, with the videos physically on your server (as opposed to being cached by divX) all the videos are instantly available, even the first time, and you can play them all at the higher quality.

Firewall problems also disappear when you have the Express version on your own server.

CurriculumVisions Express is a very significant upgrade on the current service. It is a bespoke arrangement. If you choose it, then we will send you the server version of the website as it is on the day of invoicing and provide termly upgrades sent to you on discs (or by ftp download, see below). You will also have continuing access to the website online should you want to use anything that we add online during the term, for teacher access at home and so on.

Express is an add-on for schools with paid subscriptions. If you do not currently have a paid subscription, you may like to consider converting to paid (perhaps using the deals described below)

So now you have a real choice. You can stay as you are with access online, either by buying a subscription or buying books.

Or you can have your own server-based Express version to remove any delays and firewall problems as described above.

The Express add-on is additional to the paid subscription and is £100 a year. For that you get the whole website to go on your school server, plus as many staff laptops as you wish. The licence also allows you to use it as part of your own school's VLP to serve children at home.

You get a new disc set every 4 months and keep your online connection as well. For schools using this service agreement there will also be the opportunity to ftp download the latest additions to the website whenever they wish if they want to keep material absolutely current.

For those currently with a long free access period online due to buying books (6 months or more), we have deals for converting this access into discounts against paid access. Just ask.

There has already been an enthusiastic response to Express in our sample trials, so If this seems the answer to your needs, or if you have further questions, please us me know ([InteractiveAccounts@atlanticeurope.com](mailto:InteractiveAccounts@atlanticeurope.com))