Screencasting Tips Checklist

Objectives
“No wind serves him who addresses his voyage to no certain point.”

☐ Can you list the specific things you expect your viewers to learn from your screencast?
☐ What are the main points you wish to focus on?
☐ Will your viewers be familiar with the terms you use during the screencast or must you define those terms as part of the screencast?
☐ How will you assess your viewers’ understanding of the material covered?

Planning
“Measure twice, cut once.”

☐ What is the overall design approach you will take (demonstrating a process, static images accompanied by narration, writing on screen, ‘talking head’)?
☐ Have you created a storyboard?
☐ Are there files, images, or clips you will need to create before beginning? Are there copyright issues?
☐ If you are recording from an internal microphone, can you use a mouse and external keyboard to reduce clicking noises?
☐ Do you have a plan for how you will handle flubs? (For example, do you want to pause after mistakes so that you can more easily edit those portions out?)
☐ Have you run through the steps you will be recording to see where you need to speed up, slow down, pause or allow time to open/close windows?

Scripting
“Talk less, say more.”

☐ Does your screencast have a clear introduction and conclusion?
☐ Have you written a script and edited it for maximum clarity?
☐ Have you considered where you will describe what you are doing and where you can show instead of telling?
☐ Have you practiced reading the script to determine a good speaking speed and vocal inflection?
☐ If you plan to provide ACCESS with a transcription so your screencast can be captioned, does the transcription match the final screencast exactly?
Preparation
“Look before you leap.”

☐ Is your computer screen uncluttered?
☐ Are the files and programs you will need readily accessible? (Consider opening, then minimizing, the applications you will need.)
☐ Have you turned off reminders, pop-ups, and done updates to avoid interruptions?
☐ What’s visible during your screencast? Are there sensitive files open, browser windows or histories that you may not wish to share, recent searches that might be distracting (or worse, embarrassing)?
☐ If, during your preliminary run-through, you have opened windows, created sample files, clicked on links, etc., have you cleared those away so the actual screencast will appear fresh?

Recording
“Hope for the best, expect the worst.”

☐ If recording audio, do you have a quiet place to do the recording?
☐ Do you have a way to minimize interruptions from others?
☐ Have you done a test recording, without speaking, to determine if there are any annoying background sounds?
☐ Have you done a test recording with speaking to check audio levels?
☐ Have you practiced where you will be moving your mouse pointer so that you can avoid hesitant, repetitive, quick, or jerky movements?
☐ If you display any text onscreen is the font large enough to read?
☐ Is what you are saying at any given point related to what’s on the screen?

Post-production
“Where we cannot invent, we may at least improve.”

☐ Have you edited out extra footage, especially at the beginning and end?
☐ Do you need any text or drawing overlays to clarify specific points?
☐ If you have both speaking and music tracks are they balanced appropriately?
☐ Would zooms and highlights help your screencast?
☐ If your screencast is too long are there points where you can split it?
☐ Have you checked your captions or overlays for typos?

“There may be some points I’ve missed,’ as the monkey said when he fell over the hedgehog.”