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Narrator

Welcome to ThingLink. In this overview video we will briefly explore with ThingLink is some general instructions for how ThingLink content appears within Carmen courses and how to navigate the content. Why the ASC Office of Distance Education decided to implement this tool and some of the platform's key benefits.

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Narrator

ThingLink is a cutting edge educational technology that allows users to add annotations, links, polling questions, forms and more to a range of media, including standard images and videos, 360 degree images and videos, and 3D models. It also contains a branching scenario feature that allows users to navigate real world situations and environments.

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Narrator

Content created in ThingLink generally consists of a base media file that is then layered with additional text information, images, videos, external links or other embedded content that appears in the form of a clickable tag. In most cases, these icons are animated to let the user know that they are clickable.

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Narrator

Once a tag is opened, a pop up window will appear with additional information. One important feature to note about these tags and pop up windows is that each one contains an immersive screen reader which can be used to hear any text read aloud or to translate a single word or the entire document into another language.

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Similar actions apply to virtual tours. When navigating a virtual tour, users encounter tag icons that will lead to new scenes, some of which may present conditional questions that require the user to answer a question correctly before continuing to the next scene.

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Each 360 degree scene within a virtual tour contains a home button near the top left corner of any scene that allows users to quickly jump back to the starting point of the tour. Virtual tours also contain a form of radar map at the top right corner of the scene to help users identify where they are within the

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Narrator

image and where information tags are located. Each colored dot indicates a tag. Various settings also exist to allow users to enlarge the screen or to search for a specific scene within a tour. In addition to the types of content referenced in the previous examples, ThingLink also contains the ability to create branching scenarios.

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Branching scenarios can contain all of the types of content mentioned previously, with the main difference being the ability to link this content together utilizing different pathways and achievement goals. Though individual scenes within a scenario are still navigable via interactive tags,

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branching scenarios contain an additional navigational feature in the top right corner. The proceed button is what allows users to move from one block of content to the next, moving along a chosen pathway until they have met specific goals and eventually concluded the entire scenario.

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Narrator

As our mission states, the ASC Office of Distance Education is dedicated to supporting solutions in learning communities that ensure understanding, engagement, access and equity across the myriad of departments and fields of study that exist within the College of Arts and Sciences.

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Narrator

We continue to seek out and identify areas where faculty and staff across the college most need additional support to continue to meet these goals. In our continuous research of evidence-based, forward-thinking solutions, ThingLink has been recognized as a comprehensive tool that can help to overcome many of the online challenges that existing college approved tools may

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not currently mitigate, particularly in terms of being able to replicate environments and experiences that rely on the physical sciences. Its interactive components, the variety of media it supports, and the collaborative capabilities it affords for faculty and students alike,

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Narrator

all speak to the tool's immense potential for creating content and

learning environments that are increasingly supportive, engaging and accessible. The developers of ThingLink continue to find solutions to some of the most prevalent universal challenges that face educators and educational content creators alike.

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Narrator

The tool was created and continues to be improved upon with a commitment to keeping learners and viewers engaged and offering deep, transferrable learning experiences remotely. ThingLink was also designed in such a manner to ensure that content created using the tool is fully inclusive and meets the needs of all learners, and that the platform itself doesn't require extremely

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specialized skills such as coding in order to create engaging and accessible content. In addition, those at ThingLink understand the burden that high costs of educational technology tools place on instructors and students. With that understanding in mind,

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they seek to provide a tool that is both cost efficient and that can scale. For ThingLink usage in the College of Arts and Sciences at Ohio State both instructors and students can build and share course content that can easily be integrated with Carmen.

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Narrator

This includes lecture style or course presentations, video discussions or images that can contain annotations created by instructors and/or students, and creative discussion and community building exercises. Assignments and module items can be created from within Carmen using ThingLink and anything that is created from within the ThingLink platform can be easily accessed and pulled into ASC

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Narrator

Carmen courses via the Rich Content Editor. Thus, this single tool can be used to produce well-designed, interactive media that neatly integrates with existing platforms at OSU, offering a solution to help avoid digital fatigue and to provide positive, immersive learning experiences no matter the type of course content you want to include.