IRB Collaborative: Continuing to Build and Refine an Online Library of Audiovisual Educational Materials
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Submission Type: Programmatic
Topic Area: Education and Training
Poster Number: 22

Introduction: Maintaining a fresh continuing education program is a necessity and a challenge for IRBs; existing members need to remain topically current and new members are required to absorb large volumes of information. Now in its second year, an IRB Collaborative continues to develop multimedia educational material addressing a range of human subjects research–related topics. To date, the Collaborative’s multimedia library offers nearly 40 voiceover slideshows, and new offerings are added as frequently as twice per month.

Method: Presentations vary in duration and level of detail. Material is displayed in a visually interesting manner in order to hold the viewer’s attention. Most consist of broad overviews of their subject matter, gathering key points within three- to five-minute summaries. To explore certain topics more thoroughly, midsize presentations may run up to 10 minutes in length and may comprise two or more parts. For example, a recent two-part series on writing informed consent documents devotes a total of nearly 20 minutes to outlining and illustrating techniques for creating readable and comprehensible consent documents. To ensure accuracy and clarity, each presentation undergoes significant vetting and revision. In most instances, IRB’s technical writer begins by drafting a voiceover script, generally about 400 words in length. This draft is reviewed by the IRB’s director, assistant director, and senior education and regulatory coordinator, as well as other IRB staff identified as subject matter experts. After revising the script, the technical writer records the voiceover and pairs it with a slide set. Now in its near-final format, the multimedia presentation is previewed at an IRB staff meeting. If IRB office staff recommends corrections or improvements, the technical writer revises the presentation. Finally, the presentation is released to select institutional leadership and the IRB membership. In the rare event of any further recommended changes, the technical writer revises the presentation a final time before posting it on the IRB’s website for public viewing.

Conclusion: Researchers and IRB members commend the program for conveying useful messages in brief snapshot formats that are clear and consistent. To respond to institutional needs, the Collaborative periodically queries board members and IRB office staff to collect new topical areas for development.