



HYPACK Information Faster and Easier: YouTube, Twitter and RSS Feeds

By Judy Bragg

Last month, I wrote that I was looking into alternatives for delivering our video training presentations over the Internet. I had posted the presentations with reduced-resolution videos. It was the best I could find at the time with the file formats and tools I had, but I wasn't convinced that was the best way. I began investigating how YouTube worked to see if we could use their site or at least the process to stream videos with better resolution in a shorter amount of time. I mentioned the idea to Pat and he and his daughter Bailey had a lot of quality time together this summer as they worked on transforming our training materials to YouTube videos.

You can find these videos at the HypackTechSupport Channel (<http://www.youtube.com/user/HypackTechSupport>). In addition, on the HYPACK web site under "Support-YouTube", you can view a listing of the presentations, each with a link to view the video on the YouTube site.

FIGURE 1. HYPACK on YouTube

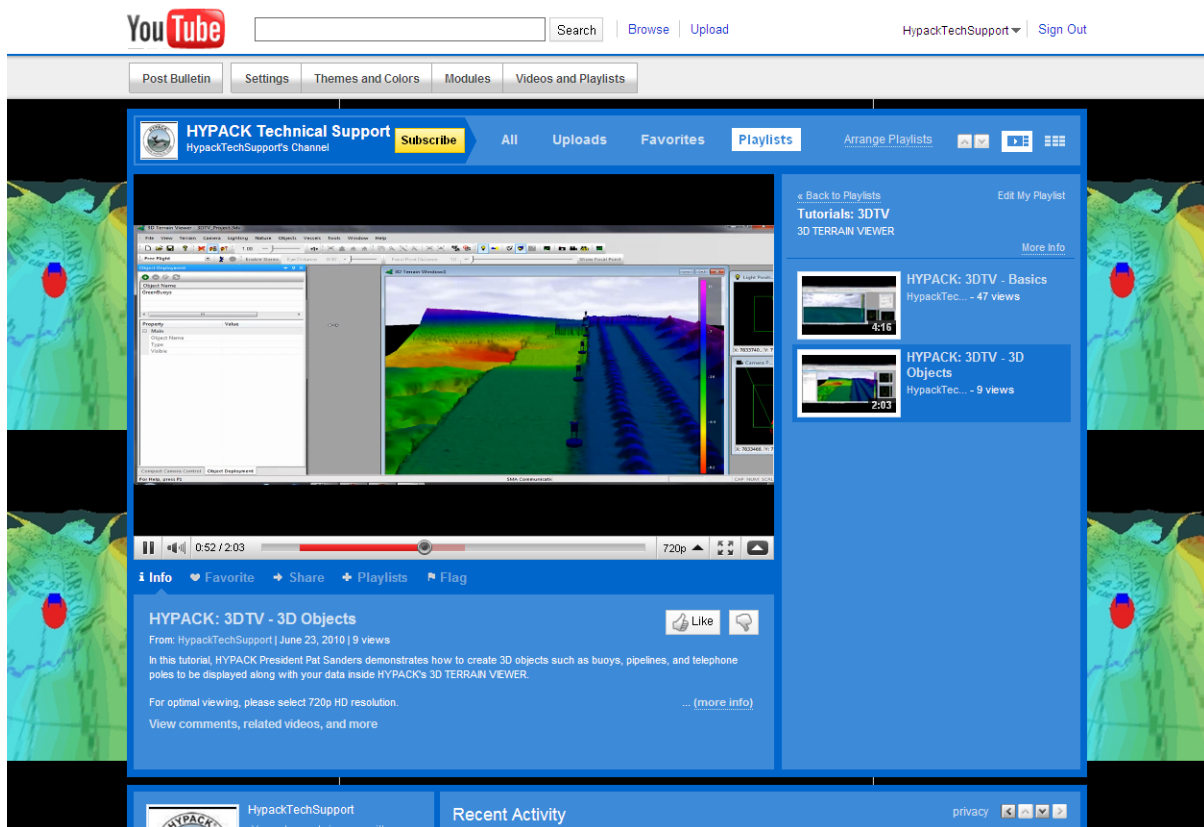
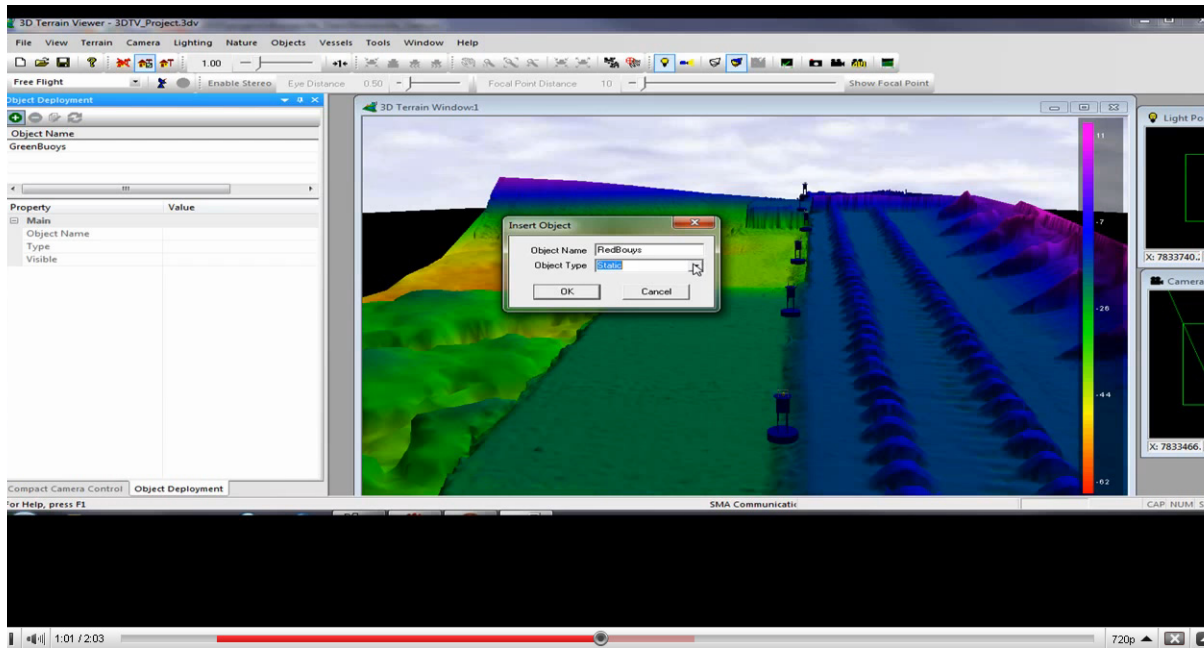


FIGURE 2. Presentation Viewed in HD in Full Screen Mode



RSS FEEDS AND TWITTER

Another challenge we have had for sometime is to effectively communicate important information in as timely a manner as possible.

Obviously, we maintain our web site with as much information as we can but, unless you are in the habit of checking at least certain key pages regularly, it could be some significant amount of time before you see new information posted there.

We also have a number of email lists that, hopefully, enable us to notify you of critical software patches and newsletter publications as well as other significant and often time-sensitive information. This is where the challenge lies. It takes constant effort to maintain these lists, as our user companies are bought and sold, our contacts come and go, and emails change, but the biggest challenge of all has been that many of our users have strict email security settings and our email messages bounce or are sent to the spam folder.

Our challenge, then, is how to get critical information to you in a timely manner by some manner other than email. Enter RSS Feeds and Twitter.

RSS FEEDS

DEFINITION: RSS Stands for Really Simple Syndication, a standard for publishing regular updates to web-based content. It is used for the specific purpose of conveying information that a website or blog has been updated.

In the past, I had experimented a little with RSS feeds to notify me of new articles to read on some of the sites I follow related to technical writing, but I didn't know how they worked or if they could be a solution to our communication challenge.

When you subscribe to an RSS Feed, you indicate what Feed Reader you are using. From then on, just visit your Feed Reader to see updates on the HYPACK site as well as from any other site you are following.

Feed Readers :

- **Web-based Feed Readers:** The most commonly known web-based aggregators are reader applications on the web. These are meant for personal use and are hosted on remote servers. Because the application is available via the Web, it can be accessed anywhere by a user with an Internet connection. For those of you with restrictions on installing software, perhaps this is an option for you. Just log on and configure the reader to follow updates from the HYPACK site.

Feed readers are used in **personalized home page services** like iGoogle, My Yahoo, and My MSN to put content such as news, weather, and stock quotes on the user's personal page. Content from the HYPACK site can also be added to that personalized page using feeds. These are handy if you follow only a few sites

- **Mobile Phone Applications:** RSS Feeds can be received on mobile phones with Internet access. Check your phone for RSS applications.
- **Some Email programs**, such as Microsoft Outlook, can receive RSS feeds. John tells me these messages arrive in your email without passing through your email server so the security settings are not an obstacle.
- **Desktop-based Feed Readers** are separate downloadable programs you install on your computer. Check with your IT dept. before you go this route!

NOTE: *RSS Feeds are not yet available from the HYPACK website.*

Our very knowledgeable web-master, John Marinuzzi is investigating this option for some of the key pages on the HYPACK site including Updates, Training and Conferences, Announcements and Sounding Better. Stay tuned for test results!

TWITTER

Twitter enables us to communicate in very short (140 character) messages called "tweets". If there's interest, HYPACK will tweet announcements regarding software updates, training conferences, publication of new issues of our *Sounding Better!* newsletter and other information that may be important for you to know.

You can follow our tweets on your computer or phone in either of the following methods:

- Follow us at <http://twitter.com/hypack> through your Twitter account.
- Subscribe to the RSS feed of our tweets by adding http://twitter.com/statuses/user_timeline/171180836.rss in your Feed Reader.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

We hope these developments will give you the information you need more easily and more quickly and reliably than we have been able to in the past. Please let us know what you think! Is it useful to you? Are there other avenues you can think of that we have yet to explore?

You can reach me by email (judy@hypack.com) or tweet us!